



TRUTH & RIGHT

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THE REAL LESSON

Sometimes the most entertaining offerings on television are the commercials. One of the more amusing ads currently airing is the one for Toyota minivans, in which Bob the safety engineer is showing two young boys how automobiles are crash-tested. By remote control, Bob slams one vehicle after another into the testing wall, as the boys squeal with delight — “Do another one! Do another one!” When at last Bob announces that he has exhausted the supply of test vehicles, the lads pipe up, “What about your car, Bob?” Clearly, the message of safety was lost

on these two youngsters. Many people are like those boys in the Toyota commercial. You can spend a great deal of time and effort attempting to teach them a particular lesson, and at the lesson’s end, they have completely missed the point you were trying to get across. In reality, I suppose we’ve all been guilty of being that kind of student at one time or another. Jesus had plenty of experience with people who took away one message when He was trying to teach something else. When Jesus fed the crowd of five thousand, many of them followed Him to his next stop. He

said to them, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life”* (John 6:26-27). Jesus had performed a miracle to demonstrate His power and deity, and all they had learned was that He could provide a free meal. As that conversation continued, Jesus spoke to them of *“the true bread from heaven...the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world”* (John 6: 32-33). They presumed He was speaking of literal bread, like the manna God had given their ancestors in the days of Moses. So they said, *“Lord, give us this bread always.”* Again, here was Jesus trying to convey to them the word of life, and all they could think about was eating. Later, after considerable

explanation, Jesus said, *“I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world”* (John 6:51). Now they thought Christ was advocating cannibalism: *“How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?”*

By the end of the chapter, most of the multitude had deserted Jesus, because He kept saying all these peculiar things. They failed to comprehend the message He was revealing to them, because their own selfish interests and perspectives kept getting in the way.

Jesus' apostles were not immune to this way of thinking. After three years of hearing the Master's teaching about the nature of His work, His coming sacrifice, and His kingdom, they still expected Him to establish a material throne in the likeness of David

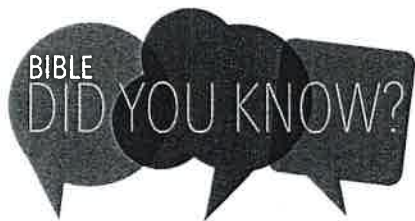
and Solomon's Israel. Immediately before His ascension into heaven, they asked Him, "*Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*" (Acts 1:6). Despite Jesus' death and resurrection, they still were looking for the wrong kinds of answers.

So much of the misunderstanding and misinterpretation that occurs in religion has this phenomenon at its root — people don't really listen to what God's word says, because they are too busy listening to hear something different. To borrow the metaphor of the Toyota ad, they miss the safety lesson because they get so excited about watching cars crash.

Jesus didn't come into the world to crash cars. His primary mission was not healing the sick, feeding the hungry, casting out demons, or raising the dead, even though He did all of these. In His own words, He came into the

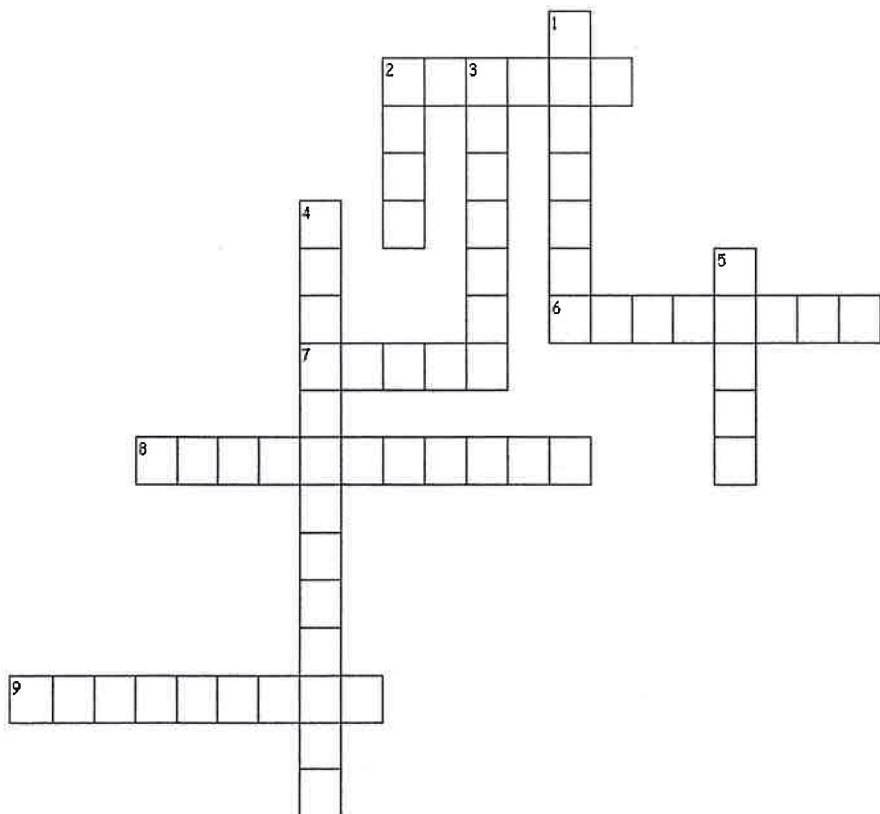
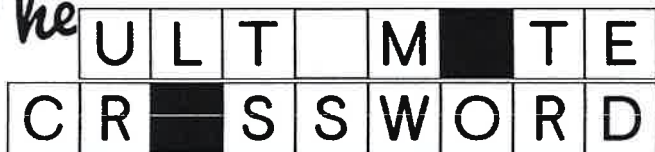
world to seek and save the lost (Matthew 18:11; Luke 19:10). Indeed, He came to sacrifice Himself so that sinners might be made just (Romans 5:6-11). Therefore, when we listen to His word, let's make sure we don't miss the real lesson.

— Michael D. Rankins



"The first to plead his case seems right, until another comes and examines him. The cast lot puts an end to strife and decides between the mighty ones. A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a citadel. Proverbs 18:17-19

The



ACROSS

2. Blessed are the poor in _____, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 5:3)
6. Blessed are the _____, for they shall receive mercy (Mt. 5:7)
7. Blessed are the pure in _____, for they shall see God (Mt. 5:8)
8. The _____ shall be called the sons of God (Mt. 5:9)
9. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be _____ (Mt. 5:4)

DOWN

1. Blessed are the persecuted, for theirs is the _____ of Heaven (Mt. 5:10)
2. You are the _____ of the earth (Mt. 5:13)
3. The gentle shall _____ the earth (Mt. 5:5)
4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for _____ (Mt. 5:6)
5. You are the _____ of the world (Mt. 5:14)