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FALL 2021

WORD ON THE STREET

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Word^{on the} Street MAGAZINE UW-STOUT EDITION

DISTRIBUTED AROUND THE GLOBE

— AN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE MAGAZINE —



University of Wisconsin-River Falls | **River Falls, Wisconsin**

University of Wisconsin-Stout | **Menomonie, Wisconsin**

University of Wisconsin-Superior | **Superior, Wisconsin**

Various College Campuses in **Cebu City, Philippines**

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WELCOME TO WOTS

Somehow you have stumbled upon a copy of *Word on the Street* (WOTS) Magazine.

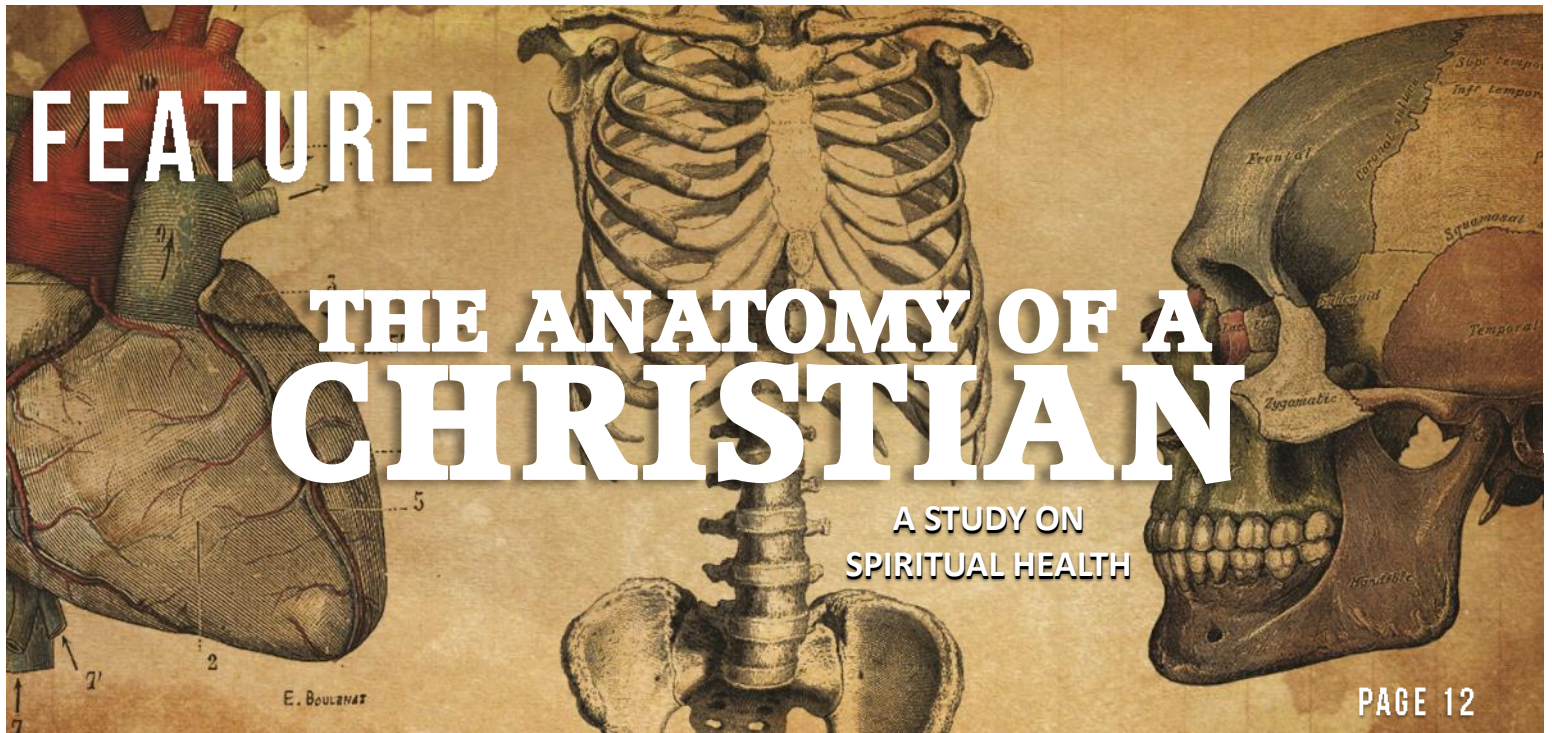
Maybe it was an accident, maybe you are just bored, but maybe it's because you want to know if it contains something worthwhile. We hope it does.

We exist as an outreach of Street Level Ministries, a college Christian ministry with groups in various cities. Check out how you can become a part of it by visiting streetlevelministries.com.

This magazine is written, laid out, and printed by young adults

in cities around the Midwest as well as in the Philippines and parts of South Asia. What brings us together is our love for Jesus. Our desire is to write about topics focusing on God, life, and college. We hope this magazine is helpful, challenging, and thought-provoking as it encourages you to pursue a strong relationship with God.

WOTS is released four times a year and has been published since 1999. All credit goes to God. We're not sure how else to explain it!



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STREET LEVEL

A COMMUNITY THAT WILL ROW AGAINST THE CURRENT WITH YOU



Do you feel that? It's that gentle, imperceptible force that is guiding you every moment you take a breath. Pleasant to yield to, yet so difficult to resist. Slowly, gently, you are pulled away from the course you once set your sights upon. Your sails have turned, and you're drifting. Now, do you feel it?

None of us are safe from the strong yet subtle currents of the rivers of life in which we cast our boats. The course we ride is determined by the current in which we sail – or sail against. Oh, you didn't think there was another way? Let me enlighten you, young sailor.

“

I KNEW WHAT JESUS SAVED ME FROM, BUT I HAD NO IDEA WHAT HE SAVED ME FOR, UNTIL I STARTED SERVING.

TO DRIFT IS TO DIE

I was once in your boat. I was following the current that society charted out for me. College was simply a coordinate that guided me to the next one to accomplish my version of "The American Dream." In hindsight, it did lead me onward. Yet, at some point, the next coordinate on the map was different than I had planned. Instead of following the

current society offered me – career, marriage, family, and retirement – I found a different way. I set my sails against the current, but I didn't do it alone. I did it with others who also realized that to drift is to die a slow, painful, meaningless death.

Street Level Ministries (SLM) is a Christian campus organization that provides students with an alternative to society's current. It is made up of a group of students and recent graduates who take the Bible seriously, seeking to know who Jesus is and center our lives around Him. We believe Him when He says, "The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."¹ Do you want an abundant life? To find it, you will have to set your sails in a different direction. You don't drift into abundant life. It requires a reset of your initial direction. If you're daring enough to set your course against the current of the rest of the world around you, here's how SLM can help you do it.

BIBLE

Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (NKJV). In SLM, we want to live radical lives of faith that are based on hearing, reading, and obeying God's Word as revealed in the Bible. Each branch of SLM meets every week to take an honest look at what the Bible says and discuss how it applies to our lives. You don't need to have any background in Christianity to join us. Just come

MINISTRIES



MONDAYS // DINNER, BIBLE STUDY & DISCUSSION 6:00PM // BLIND MUNCHIES COFFEEHOUSE

with an open mind and heart to see if what the Bible says is true. Skeptics are welcome.

COMMUNITY

College can be such a lonely place. Even though people surround you, you're out of your comfort zone and navigating unfamiliar territory. It's a strange time in your life, and the company you keep will either make or break you.² In SLM, you will find a diverse community of once-strangers who were brought together for a straightforward purpose: Jesus. Although we come from various upbringings and have many different interests, we find unity in our love for Jesus. We don't always agree, but we



can look past our differences and embrace them because our friendships run deeper than whether pineapple should be on pizza (which it should).

SERVICE

Life isn't about you. Has no one told you that before? Well, I just did. Glad we got that out of the way. Jesus set an example for us. He said, "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave."³ Don't you get it? True life is found when you take your eyes off yourself and put them on others. Even psychologists agree that doing good to others can decrease symptoms of depression and improve one's emotional well-being.⁴ By volunteering for one of the branches of SLM, you can use your passions, talents, and abilities to serve God and others. Even if you're not "qualified" (that was one excuse I gave), it doesn't matter. Jesus will use you if you're available and willing to learn (and fail...a lot). This was one of the most radical things I experienced as a student in SLM. I knew what Jesus saved me *from*, but I had no idea what He saved me *for* until I started serving.

CALLING

Did you know you were created for one singular grand purpose in life?⁵ Your life is not an accident. Why not discover what you were created for, right now, before all the trappings of society weigh you down? Many people think calling is an individual thing, but it has a lot to do with other people. When you become a Christian, you get adopted into the family of God,⁶ you are given gifts to serve others,⁷ and you have a role to play in the body of Christ.⁸ In SLM, we encourage students to connect to a local church where they can live out the purpose that God



has created them for. Jesus gave His life up for the Church.⁹ He didn't die for a campus ministry. So, don't wait until after college to join a church. If you claim you love Jesus, then you can't avoid loving His body – the Church.¹⁰

DON'T DRIFT

Dear college student, please take these words to heart. I was once drifting. I let society dictate who I was and where I was going. Stop and think about where you are right now. Do you want to drift along with the current? Or do you want to turn and fight against it? It's a matter of life and death. Don't wait to make your decision.

"Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last."

– C.T. Studd

¹ John 10:10 (ESV) ² Proverbs 13:20 ³ Matthew 20:26-27 ⁴ psychologytoday.com/us/blog/between-cultures/201805/in-helping-others-you-help-yourself ⁵ Ephesians 2:10 ⁶ Ephesians 1:5 ⁷ 1 Peter 4:10 ⁸ 1 Corinthians 12:27 ⁹ Ephesians 5:22-24 ¹⁰ Ephesians 5:29-30

ONE GIRL'S TRUE STORY

FROM DWELLING IN SECRECY TO BEING REVEALED

Hide-and-seek was one of my favorite games as a kid, but I still hid from people as I grew up. I dodged behind good things like being a decent daughter, going to church, and generally doing the “right” thing. However, I didn’t want to follow God as much as I wanted to control my own life. I wanted to do whatever sounded good to me. In my heart, I wanted to travel, have a career, make money, be entertained, and have good relationships, but no one found me out. At least that’s what I thought. I put on the attitude of a “good” person so that others would see me that way. I felt guilty because I knew deep down that I wasn’t a good person. I prayed, read the Bible, and memorized verses, but I still felt separated from God. Eventually, I gave up looking for God. I just started to do what I wanted by convincing myself that God could use my entertainment, job, family, and friends if He wanted to. I even felt better than other people because my life looked cleaner and more put together than theirs.

Throughout high school and into the first year of college, my sin ate at me from the inside. I secretly struggled with pornography, perfectionism, lying, and binge eating, among other things. I tried to lie and cover it all up by deleting my browser history and saying the right things. I was terrified of someone discovering that I was sinful. Instead of trying to get help, I covered it up and isolated myself. I looked like the perfect Christian on the outside, but on the inside, I was rotting.

One day while driving to work, I realized that I had to choose: live for God or for me. I realized that God loves me so much that He wanted a relationship with me, even though He saw my secret life and was

grieved to watch me try to live life apart from Him. Jesus died and rose again so that I could stand before God blameless under the sacrifice of His Son Jesus. I wanted to allow God to control my life, but I realized I never could on my own. I didn’t know what to do, but I prayed and asked God to show me. I started by confessing to a friend and joining a Bible study to get help and accountability. I started reading the Bible and learning more about who God is and what He is asking me to do.



**“ONE DAY WHILE
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REALIZED THAT I HAD
TO CHOOSE: LIVE FOR
GOD OR FOR ME.”**

Over the next year, I transferred to UW-Stout from home and moved to Menomonie, Wisconsin. Moving away felt like a new beginning. I started going to church regularly and found Street Level Ministries. I thought I was a good Christian before, but I began to see what I was lacking through interacting with other Christians and reading the Bible. My life felt messier and more complicated than before because I started to realize how much sin was in my life. The closer I got to God, the more I realized my need for Him. I began to understand that I needed God to save me, and after that, I needed Him to continue saving me.

I still struggle to keep God at the center of my life and against sin and temptation, but now He helps and guides me. God asks me to give up my pride, porn, laziness, selfishness, and self-pity. God asked me to start reading His Word daily, serving with a local church, and sharing my relationship with

God and testimony with others. I stopped trying to control the way my life would go and let God shape it. God is transforming my mind and forming me into the woman He created me to be (Romans 12:2). I am a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).

– Shiloh

STOUT HAS WHAT? PRINTING WITH AN IMPACT



UW-Stout Typographical Society Goes Further Than Just Another Pretty Font



Screen printed bag for the Sustainability Club produced by STS

The Stout Typographical Society (STS) is a student-run organization that takes on printing jobs from different campus clubs and businesses to help serve the UW-Stout campus and Menomonie community. *Word on the Street Magazine* (WOTS) had the opportunity to interview one of their members, Rachel, a senior in graphic design.

WOTS: So, fill us in on some background of STS.

Rachel: This club has many artistic capabilities, including design, screen printing, and printing. A distinctive fact about our group is that we have been around for 80 years. It also works as a business, which is excellent for getting real-world experience since we work with clients and deal with deadlines. Projects come from other Stout organizations and range from t-shirts to photographic prints. We recently completed a job for the Sustainability

Club by designing and printing over 500 bags. When I see people walking around campus with one, it reminds me that we're contributing to the campus and the student body.

WOTS: What role has STS played in your education?

Rachel: A lot! I'm surprised more people aren't aware of it. I'm its account manager and officer, and that has given me a lot of experience. I was drawn to the account manager position because I knew I wanted to interact with people and clients. Because I hadn't done any hands-on finances like billing or putting together project quotes before, I knew it would give me professional experience, and it has.

WOTS: How and when did you get involved?

Rachel: I went to STS my freshmen year because I had a friend who was involved, and even though it was a

slow start, I stuck with it. It has been one of the best decisions I've made.

WOTS: What is your favorite part?

Rachel: The whole experience of it, especially seeing the projects start to finish, is satisfying. I like that it is a collaborative, hands-on club. It's cool to work in a group with various people, from clients to students of different majors. I also really love that I'm making a difference on campus and in people's lives when they come to us for services.

WOTS: If your group were an animal, what animal would it be?

Rachel: I think of a spider monkey. They move so fast running around, which is like us when we have a lot of projects to complete.

If you want to contact STS for more information, go to UW-Stout Connect.



QUARTERLY MUSIC BEAT

TUNE INTO 101.7 FM
IN MENOMONIE

AN UPDATE FROM OUR FRIENDS AT BURNING DOG RADIO

Burning Dog Radio is a college-led, volunteer-based radio station based out of Menomonie, Wisconsin. We play underground Christian and indie music, Bible teachings, news regarding Christian ideas around the world, and last but not least, audio-based *Word on the Street* articles. We also feature Daily Devotions with Pastor Tim Dodson Monday-Friday. Subscribe to the podcast in iTunes or listen online at believerstogether.com.

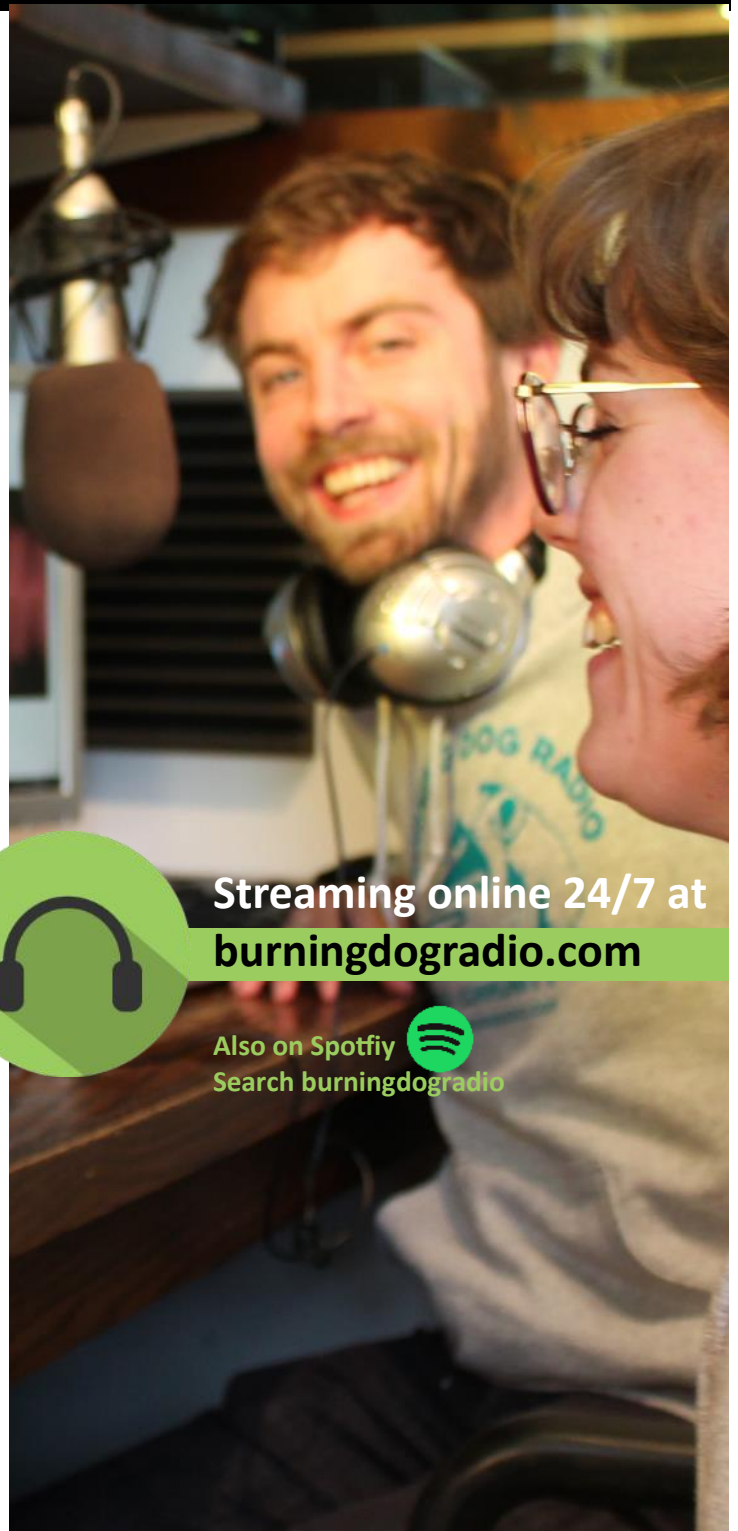
Our home base is in Menomonie, broadcasting from the top floor of our home church, Believers City Church, at the frequency 101.7FM. We have internet hubs running full time in River Falls, Wisconsin, and Duluth, Minnesota - and we stream online 24/7 at burningdogradio.com.

This semester, check out our broadcast of Believers Campus Church - Street Level Ministries' new church starting in September 2021. We will be broadcasting services live at 7 pm - and you can find out how you can get involved by listening to our station or visiting believerstogether.com and clicking on Believers Campus Church!


We seek to engage the world for God through good music. We can be seen out-and-about in Menomonie, River Falls, and Duluth broadcasting live, or "not seen," as we work on production, music purchases, and general maintenance. In each of these ways, we seek to give our lives to serve God and our local (and now global) communities. If radio is something that interests you as a student - email us at wrijfpl@gmail.com.

Our sister station, Street Level Radio, is also broadcasting out of the Philippines. Street Level Radio engages campuses in the Cebu City region and beyond. The regular programming on "SLR" varies from Burning Dog Radio, but twice a day you can hear our programming on their station thanks to technology! Connect at streetlevelradio.com.

Check us out online or locally in Menomonie, Wisconsin. We love to hear from our listeners and appreciate your feedback!



Streaming online 24/7 at
burningdogradio.com

Also on Spotify 
Search [burningdogradio](https://open.spotify.com/search/burningdogradio)

As a Matter of Fact:

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?



character, holiness, and laws of God. It also tells the history of His chosen people, the nation of Israel. The New Testament (NT) was added to the Bible later after Jesus ascended to heaven. It recounts Jesus' life in the four Gospels, the start of the early church in the book of Acts, the direction for living as Jesus' followers in the Epistles, and the consummation of all things in Revelation.

Together, both testaments tell the story of creation, the fall of humanity, the redemption for sinners, and the restoration of the world as God intended.

MORE THAN JUST A BOOK

The Bible not only gives us the story behind God's plan for humanity, it also reveals the power of God, which lies in its divinity. Some critics question its legitimacy because men wrote it. But the prophets in the OT and Jesus' disciples in the NT who wrote the Bible were divinely inspired. They received authority to proclaim the Word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. The evidence of this power is clear today because anyone that reads the Bible with a heart eager to know its Author is changed.

There are stories in the Bible that don't always make sense, but it doesn't mean it's impossible to discover the truth it contains. God's Holy Spirit will help you understand if you ask. As you read, you will learn how various parts of the Bible weave together, which will help you make sense of it as a whole. Then you will discover that the Bible is a love letter containing

God's message to humanity, not a dusty list of archaic rules.

Christians believe that the written words of God are holy, living, and active (Hebrews 4:12), so reading and obeying the Bible is an essential part of practicing the Christian faith. It instructs us to persevere in goodness and charity, share the Gospel, and proclaim the love of God to humankind.

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER

The Bible was written by approximately 40 men, in many different places, over 15 centuries, and its last chapter was written thousands of years ago. And yet, the truths that it reveals are as relevant today as they were then. That is because

"THE BIBLE NOT ONLY GIVES US THE STORY BEHIND GOD'S PLAN FOR HUMANITY, IT ALSO REVEALS THE POWER OF GOD, WHICH LIES IN ITS DIVINITY."

we have something in common with these men and women: we all experience sin and death. It's not very hard to see that. We feel it every day and observe it in the world around us. That's what makes the existence of the Bible all the more amazing. How is it that it came to be except through the sheer power of God? If it was solely up to humans, there's no way we would have collectively come up with this impossibly cohesive book. That fact alone makes it supremely trustworthy. It was not written and compiled for us to win debates or memorize verses to boost our self-esteem. It was given to us so we could receive, experience, and fall in love with the One whom the whole Bible revolves around: Jesus Christ.

At times Christianity can be confusing. When you start to read the Bible, there can be names of people and places you have never heard before, words that have little to no meaning outside of the world of faith, and recognizable things that have a more profound purpose than you'd ever imagine. Let's jump into understanding where the Bible came from and its purpose.

WHAT IS IT?

The Greek word "ta Biblia" means "the books" and is where the term Bible originates. The Bible contains various forms of literature: narrative, poems, songs, history, laws, wisdom, prophecy, and letters. The first part, The Old Testament (OT), was written before Jesus' time on Earth and was the original Hebrew Bible. It outlines the

Why Read the Bible?

AND HOW TO STUDY SCRIPTURE FOR YOURSELF

I love broccoli. My 8-year-old self, who found the little trees disgusting, would be surprised to see it frequently on my current meal plans. Whether in a stir fry or served raw, broccoli has become a favorite of mine. The problem is, those green dot things do get stuck in my teeth. Unless there's a friend discreetly scratching their tooth while making eye contact with me, only the next glance in a mirror will reveal the current situation: something is wrong and needs fixing.

The Bible, in the same way, acts as a mirror. It is one overarching story of the depravity of humanity and God's plan to make right what went so very wrong after sin entered the scene. It explains the reason for evil in the world, how God created us, and why Jesus needed to come to save all humanity. It tells us what is wrong and needs fixing, both in the world and in our lives individually. When the law was given to Israel for the first time (see Exodus 19-24), it gave God's people commands for how to live, and it wasn't long before they rebelled. They turned away from God to follow other gods and pursue whatever they felt was best. Rebellion has been the pattern of humanity ever since, and unless we look into the perfect mirror and ask God to transform our hearts and minds, repeating the cycle is our default, too.

PRAY FOR CHANGE

If you desire to know God more and be like Jesus, reading Scripture is where to start. We read the Bible to learn who God is and what He's like by seeing how He interacted with those throughout history. Scripture tells us what's important to God, and as a result, where we're off base. Without the Word of God as our authority and standard, we wouldn't know when we're not living as God designed us to live. Likewise, reading about the life and ministry of Jesus while He was on earth is the only way we can start to be like Him. As you read, pray you'd be ready to change some things. Pray that when your life and Scripture don't line up, you'd be willing to submit to its authority. In Psalm 51:10, David prays, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right

spirit within me" (ESV). May this always be our heart towards God and His Word.

A PATIENT COMMITMENT

Modern Christians have cheated themselves by substituting daily Bible reading for short devotionals. Commit to reading a portion of the Bible each day, and you will see its unified story come through. 2 Timothy 3:16 says that Scripture is "God-breathed," meaning it is God's words to us. Devotionals can be a helpful tool, but God Himself has inspired only the Bible. Yes, you will get to portions of the Bible that don't make sense right away. Yes, you will want to sleep in some days instead of reading about ancient kings. But in the long run? You'll see how God uses His Word to change the way you think, experience His comfort at just the right time, and grow in your knowledge of the Bible. Psalm 1:1-3 says, "Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked...but they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do" (NLT). Discipline yourself and press on in your studies.

REAL-LIFE APPLICATION

The Bible refers to the absurdity of not picking the hypothetical broccoli out of your teeth once you know it's there. James 1:23-25 says, "For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it" (NLT). The writings found in Scripture aren't just good ideas or optional suggestions. They actually list what God sees as necessary. Not only that, but God has a job for His people to do. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (ESV). When we read accounts in the Bible of people living radically for God (or worse, those who didn't), taking action ourselves should be the natural result.

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BIBLE READING RESOURCES:

As you start reading the Bible consistently or open it tomorrow for the 7,302nd time, I hope you let it change you. I hope it makes you pick the broccoli out of your teeth. I hope you see progress in knowing who God is, and I pray that seeing the real Him will make you want to be a part of His story. Below are a few more resources to help your study:

Bible Reading Plan

There are many opinions out there on how to read the Bible, but the most important thing is consistency. Read through every book of the Bible, rather than only snacking on easier verses, and don't waste time wondering if you're reading enough. Just read it daily. It's God's time with you, and it's vital to your walk with Him.

Journal

Writing helps with memorization and comprehension. Try writing down a verse that stood out to you or a lesson you've been learning lately. Plus, you'll have fun (or cringe) reading your notes later on in life.

Study Bible

A study Bible has notes at the bottom of each page, offering additional thoughts to consider. Many also have maps, charts, cross references, and more. They're not divinely inspired as Scripture is, so don't feel pressured to read each one. Focus on the verses themselves, but the study notes available in them help you gain more historical context (like in the ESV Study Bible). Consider The Life Application Study Bible for notes that feature practical application to your daily life.

Bible Commentary

A Bible commentary is a written resource designed to explain and provide insight into Scripture. Blue Letter Bible (blueletterbible.org) has tons of great free ones that can be extremely helpful if you're intimidated by reading specific passages. Think of them as cliff notes for the Bible.

BibleProject

BibleProject is a organization that creates videos with short explanations of biblical themes, word studies, and illustrated overviews of each book of the Bible. Each video shows biblical events and how it contributes to the larger narrative of the Bible as one story that points to Jesus. Find them on YouTube or bibleproject.com

YouVersion Bible App

Available on iOS and Android, this app allows you to download different translations of the Bible to read on the go. You're able to highlight, make notes, share verses with friends, and complete devotional plans on various topics such as prayer, forgiveness, dating, addiction, etc.

An anatomical illustration of the human heart and ribcage. The heart is shown in red, with various vessels and structures labeled with numbers and letters. The ribcage is shown in a light blue/grey color, with the spine visible in the background. The title 'THE ANATOMY OF CHRISTIANITY' is overlaid in large, bold, white letters.

THE ANATOMY OF CHRISTIANITY

A STUDY ON SPIRITUAL HEALTH

A simple paper cut under the wrong circumstances and left untreated is enough to kill a person. For Ryan Taylor, it almost did in 2018. Ryan got a small paper cut at his office job and didn't think anything of it until the next day when his hand became swollen. He developed necrotizing fasciitis, a rare bacterial infection. As he reported to the *New York Post*, "It had spread from my finger to my elbow in 12 hours. They rushed me into [surgery] straight away and told me there was a possibility they would have to amputate my arm if it kept spreading, or there could even be loss of life." Luckily, Ryan sought medical help in time and fought the infection through ten surgeries and weeks in the hospital.

The human body is truly fascinating. It is an incredibly complex system of highly specialized parts designed to work together. A person is healthy when each part is functioning correctly, doing its job, and cooperating with the rest of the body. However, accidents, injuries, viruses, infections, natural degeneration, improper diet, exercise, or simply a lack of sleep can all compromise your health. When things like these happen, we often seek help from medical professionals (or at least check the symptoms on WebMD) to be restored to proper health, but how do you know if you are spiritually healthy?

Read through these twelve spiritual "body parts" to get an overall assessment. If you have further questions and want to dig in deeper, read the Bible references. You can also find an entire sermon by Pastor Justin Thomson of Believers Church - Duluth on each of these parts here: jfbduluth.com/PAST_NT_Sermons.html.

A N

“WE OFTEN SEEK HELP FROM MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS TO BE RESTORED TO PROPER HEALTH, BUT HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE SPIRITUALLY HEALTHY?”

HEAD

The head is superior to the rest of the body. It is the control center, and if disconnected from the body, renders it useless immediately. Jesus is to be your head as the highest place in your life and have complete control of it. When He is in the proper place, your body will work efficiently, effectively, and you will experience abundant life. Without Jesus in this role, the rest of your body is useless. Who is in control of your life? (Eph. 1:22-23, Prov. 3:5-6)

MIND

The mind is responsible for thoughts, emotions, reasoning abilities, and personality. The Bible tells us we are born with a mind that is greatly affected by sin, hostile toward God, and leads us to death. Jesus came to this world and died so that you could have the opportunity to get a brain transplant from Him. If you accept His offer, you can start to think and live as He does, which will bring mental stability, joy, and life. Do your thoughts bring you closer to or further from God? (Rom. 12:1-2, Col. 3:2, Rom. 8:6-11)

EARS

The outer ear collects sound waves from the environment, and the inner ear is responsible for organizing and transmitting that data to the brain. Even if the ear looks good on the outside, it doesn't guarantee auditory function. Jesus frequently spoke the phrase, "He who has ears, let Him hear," during His ministry because He surrounded Himself with people who, on the outside, looked like they were able to hear from God. Their daily actions looked moral and religious, but they would not or could not hear Him when God was standing directly in front of them. Sure, they could listen to Him audibly, but what they heard did not affect their lives, so they might as well not have heard anything He said. Can you hear Him? (Mark 4:13-20, Gal. 3:2)

EYES

90% of data processed in the brain is visual. The eyes are responsible for seeing this information clearly, but they can only work if there is light. The Bible speaks of people living in either darkness (separated from God) or light (having a close relationship with God). Sometimes it is more comfortable to stay in the dark rather than turning on the blinding light of truth in our lives. Do you see the world around you clearly, or are you stumbling through the dark, fearful of someone flipping on the exposing light? (John 8:12, Eph. 5:8-14)

TONGUE

This three-inch-long muscular structure in your mouth is essential for communicating clearly. For the Christian, the tongue wields a lot of power for either good or evil. Christians are to speak the truth, share the gospel, encourage one another, and worship God. Lies, slander, cursing, and gossip should not come out of the mouth of a Christian. Simply avoiding a list of certain words or topics isn't what's at stake here. What you say reveals the deeper issues of what is in your heart. The words you say indicate what you believe. What kinds of words come out of your mouth when you speak? (Eph. 4:29, James 3:5-12, Luke 6:45)

HEART

The average human heart pumps 100,000 times a day to deliver life-giving blood to the rest of the body. The Bible explains that everyone is born with a desperately wicked and deceitful heart. If left in this condition, it will prove to be eternally fatal. Similar to the mind, Jesus offers a heart transplant. We can love like He loves and have compassion on those He has compassion. Even after this transplant, though, these new hearts can still be prone to disease if we're not careful. How's your heart doing? Is it beating in time with Christ's, or is it slowly succumbing to bitterness, pride, or rebellion? (Ezek. 36:26, Jeremiah 17:9)

...continued

“IT IS HARD TO KNOW IF A PERSON IS A CHRISTIAN JUST BY LOOKING AT THEIR PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, BUT IT SHOULD BE EVIDENT IF THEY ARE BY THE LIFE THEY LIVE.”

STOMACH

The stomach is full of acid and enzymes that help turn what we eat into the energy and nutrients the body needs to survive. It is also the only organ that God says people turn into an idol by giving in to whatever desire or appetite they please. A Christian's diet should consist of nutrient-rich truth. But often, we tend to fill up on spiritual junk food by chasing after whatever we crave in the world. Doing so leaves no room for truth or godliness in our life. What does your diet look like today? (Phil. 3:19, Gal. 5:16-24)

LUNGS

The lungs function automatically to keep vital air exchange going through our body. For the body to move, the lungs need to be working. The Christian life is a race full of twists, turns, and obstacles that will last the rest of your life. It is not a sprint or a short jog around the block. We need endurance. Jesus is the perfect example of how to finish this race well, so we should look to Him to understand how we can too. Do your lungs allow you to keep going through difficulty, or do you take a seat on the sidelines, gasping for air, with every hint of trouble that comes your way? (Heb. 12:1-3, 1 Corinth. 9:24-27)

HANDS

The human hand's brilliant design makes 58 distinct motions possible, rendering them one of the most complex tools we use daily. Having an opposable thumb makes us able to do much more than we could if we only had paws or hooves. With our hands, we can accomplish a lot of work. The work we do can either serve God and others or ourselves. God intended that we use our hands for the good of others by making our hands available for the tasks He wants us to do in the world. Who determines what your hands do? (1 Peter 4:9-10, Matt. 25: 35-40)

FEET

In addition to supporting the weight of our entire body, our feet are responsible for getting us everywhere we need to go. Jesus walked a lot while He was ministering to people. If you say you follow Jesus, you should constantly be on the move, allowing Him to lead you wherever He

wants, whether that be across the street to help a neighbor or across the world. Are your feet taking you anywhere? (Matt. 28:19-20, Micah 6:8, 1 Peter 2:21)


SPINE

The spinal column is comprised of 33 vertebrae, which provide structure, flexibility, and strength to the body. For Christians to remain flexible and mobile, they must continue to obey God. The more a person says no to what God is asking of them, the more inflexible their spine becomes. Fear can also strike a blow to the spinal column, leaving a Christian paralyzed, unable to move forward in their life with God. Do you let God change you how He wants, or do you stiffen at the thought of doing what He asks? (John 14:15, Rom. 1:18-24, 2 Tim. 1:7)

BLOOD

Usually, we cannot see if people have blood in their bodies, but you can tell if a person is alive or not. Likewise, it is hard to know if a person is a Christian just by looking at their physical appearance, but it should be evident if they are by the life they live. Your physical blood flows to each part of your body, giving it life. If you are a Christian, each aspect of your life should have the mark of the blood of Jesus: your thoughts become like His thoughts, your feet become His feet, and your desires are His desires. Have you had this blood transfusion? (Rom. 5:6-11, Rom. 3:23-27, Isaiah 53:5)

When you go to a doctor, it does no good to pretend you're not sick. The problem won't just go away if you pretend it's not there. If you've read through these aspects of the Christian life and find yourself less than healthy, turn to God and ask Him for help. Like physical ailments, your chances for spiritual recovery will increase the earlier you begin treatment, so don't procrastinate on these matters. Remember, your body is temporary and will die one day, but your spiritual health has significance for eternity.

"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Mark 2:17 

TV WORTH YOUR TIME:

A FEW SHOWS THAT WOTS RECOMMENDS

Sometimes, TV is terrible, but watching a show or a movie is something most of us like to do. So, why not spend your time watching something worthwhile? We gathered together a short list of Christian movies and TV shows that are not merely entertaining. Be prepared to learn from and be impacted by them! We promise they're not cheesy, either.



The Chosen—TV Series

Have you ever imagined what interacting with Jesus in person might have been like or pictured the personalities of the disciples? *The Chosen* brings this to life. The series is based on biblical people and stories but brings them alive by imagining more about their daily lives and backstories. It is a lot of fun to watch and see how the writers portray each one. The characters become relatable. For example, Matthew battles with social skills and displays great attention to detail. Peter battles with pride and is ready to fight for everything. Although the episodes are not a step-by-step account of the Bible, each one leaves you with a greater understanding of the humanity of Jesus along with other people in the Bible.

There are currently two seasons of *The Chosen*, and it's free to watch. You can find it on YouTube or download *The Chosen* app from the Apple App Store or Google Play.



Sheep Among Wolves—Documentary

Christianity is typically not thought of when thinking about the country of Iran, but it is alive and well there. *Sheep Among Wolves* is a documentary about a discipleship movement happening in Iran among the Muslims. It showcases the amazing work God has been doing and the difficulties people face following Jesus in a country against Christianity. These Christians have given up and taken more risks to follow Jesus than most of us have ever considered.

It is a two-part documentary. The first volume is introductory, whereas the second volume highlights the church leaders in Iran: women.

It is free to watch on YouTube. Find it along with some other documentaries they put out on their channel.



Free Burma Rangers—Documentary

The documentary *Free Burma Rangers* is a good reminder that God is still here, doing great works around us. It tells the true story of a family that left the comforts of America to go to Burma and live alongside those facing genocide. As they met people and grew relationships, the mission grew from Burma to Iraq and then to Syria. This act of risky faith is unmistakable as they recount all the ways God worked through them and around them. The footage throughout the film is actual footage from the mission. At one point, the Rangers go into a building controlled by ISIS to save wounded people. While in the building, they run into an area layered in empty cans but, through prayer, manage not to be heard by ISIS.

You can rent this movie on Amazon for \$7.99. They also have a YouTube channel where you can see clips of their work.

A NIGHT AT THE SYMPHONY

PLAYING YOUR PART IN GOD'S GREAT HALL

Imagine you enter a behemoth of a room with balconies, hundreds of rows of chairs, ornate decorative stylings, and a brightly lit stage at the very front of it all. Large, oddly shaped carpets adorn the walls of this venue. You find your dimly lit seat in the middle of a narrow aisle surrounded by thousands of others eagerly waiting to enjoy a night of thunderous sounds, sweeping melodies, and enchanting music—a night at the symphony. You've found your seat early, and you notice that the musicians are already on stage warming up. Listening to these master craftsmen tune, strum, beat, and pluck, it's clear they've spent hours preparing for tonight's performance, but it sounds frankly disastrous at the moment. The resounding booms from the tubas overpower the screeches from the violins. The thunder from the timpani clashes out of sync with the cellists' melodious bellows. The trumpet section is so shrill it's obnoxious.

But then the conductor shows up. They confidently stride to the conductor's podium at the front of the orchestra as the audience surrounds them in applause. When they raise a single hand, the great hall falls instantly silent. Like a soldier awaiting orders, the musicians

focus intensely on the baton in the conductor's hand, ready to follow along and play whatever they've planned and rehearsed.

STRUCTURE

God is a lot like a conductor. He's in charge and has a plan and a desire for how things will go to keep everyone moving forward at the appropriate time. As the night of music unfolds before you, you can't help but wonder, what if the whole orchestra decided not to listen to the conductor in charge? Without the cooperation of every musician, the music the conductor planned suffers. God, too, cannot stand rogue players. Proverbs 17:11 tells us, "An evil man seeks only rebellion" (ESV). However, when God's people follow His plan like musicians playing their instruments according to His instructions, a beautiful song results.

DISSONANCE

When people play out of tune, it's not pretty. The abrasive sound is jarring and can cause physical discomfort. J.R.R. Tolkien knew this when he created the world of Middle Earth in his series, *The Lord of The Rings*. Tolkien's fictional representation of God in this saga sings all of creation into existence. He lets some of his angelic creations join in song



“

WHEN PEOPLE PLAY OUT OF TUNE, IT'S NOT PRETTY. THE ABRASIVE SOUND IS JARRING AND CAN CAUSE PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT.

to help take part in further creation, but one rebellious creation didn't want to sing in unison with the rest and rebelled in disobedience. This act of selfish, uncooperative, disjointed rebellion ends up introducing all the evil, sin, and chaos into creation.¹ In the first book of the Bible, the third chapter of Genesis tells of Adam and Eve's rebellion and their disobedience to God. They chose their way over what God had for them, and it resulted in the fall of all humanity and introduced sin, evil, and pain into our lives. All of the creation became fractured by sin. We still suffer the consequences of this to this day.

HARMONY

It's essential to play your part correctly. Musicians need to spend time practicing on their own to know their part in the symphony. More importantly, when gathered together, they need to follow along with the one in charge to play together properly. God is in control, not just on Sunday or at a Bible study. He's in charge always. He's got a plan for you, and He's trying to lead you there. He wants you to listen to Him. Thankfully, God is good, like really good. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (ESV). Not listening to God in your life will result in dissonant, disjointed pain. Your relationship with Jesus will suffer, the relationships you have with others will suffer, and the Christians around you trying to make beautiful music by obeying God and fighting sin

will suffer. If you trust God every day with your life, the symphony He is writing you into will be infinitely better than anything you could have come up with on your own.

MUSIC TO MY EARS

When you join God's meticulously crafted and intentionally arranged plan, it produces a kind of music far above our human capabilities to describe. God lets us enjoy it, allows us to create it, and lets us partake in it. When we join with others and cooperate, our individual "noise" winds up in its perfect spot. We're not describing uniformity here, where every instrument plays the same droning note, but unity, where each one contributes its unique sound and timing to the same song. Getting on board and cooperating with Him is the first step to a lifetime of playing our predestined part. If we want to produce anything beautiful and have harmony with each other, where everyone is in sync, on the same page, on the same mission, and with the same end goal in mind, we need to follow along and listen to the One in charge.

"The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang: "He is good; his love endures forever." Then the temple of the LORD was filled with the cloud."

2 Chronicles 5:13

IF YOU TRUST
GOD EVERY DAY
WITH YOUR
LIFE, THE
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IS WRITING YOU
INTO WILL BE
INFINITELY
BETTER THAN
ANYTHING YOU
COULD HAVE
COME UP WITH
ON YOUR OWN.

”



DREAMING OF DROWNING:

& the night I didn't wake up

There was salt in the air, and the sun was out as I walked down the long, white shoreline. I wanted to sit and enjoy it but glancing behind me, I noticed that I wasn't alone. A long way off, there was a figure. The only detail I could make out was the long, hooded cloak it wore. It was hunched over and not really running but lurching forward with an eerie gait. It made me nervous. I tried to walk a little faster and kept moving.

It wasn't long before clouds drifted over the sun and a wind picked up. The waves grew aggressive, and thunder rumbled. I stopped to look up at a black sky and realized that I was on the edge of a massive storm. I didn't know what to do. There was nowhere for me to go and I was terrified.

My frantic thoughts were interrupted when a large hand grasped my shoulder.

I spun around and found myself face-to-face with the cloaked thing, alarmed that it had managed to get to me so quickly. Up close, it was grotesquely proportioned, looming

over me at least three heads taller with broad shoulders and a sickly skinny waist. Its ragged shroud was filthy, whipping about in the wind but never revealing its face. It smelled like decay. I wanted to get away, but I felt like I couldn't move. The thunder roared, and raindrops started to hit my cheeks.

It raised a gray arm and pointed out at the sea. It had long, dirty fingernails. I looked out at the black water, and somehow I understood. I was being instructed. The only way out of the storm was to swim across that furious ocean. If I was going to survive, I would have to save myself.

My body responded before I had a chance to think it through. Seconds later, I was waist-deep in the icy waves. I took a deep breath and dove under the foam as lightning lit up the sky.

It wasn't long before I was numb, then sputtering, then choking on mouthfuls of briny black water. There

was salt water in my eyes, filling my nostrils, burning the back of my throat. My feet couldn't reach the bottom, and waves slammed into my face, pulling me under, making me lose all sense of direction. I was rolling under the water and couldn't tell which way was up. I panicked. I was going to drown, and there was nothing I could do.

Then I woke up. I was cold, sweaty, and so wonderfully relieved. But for months, I kept having that same nightmare. At first, only once every few weeks. After a while, I had it almost every night.

Some nights I did better than others, but I never got very far. I always woke up feeling like I had just barely escaped my own death, the fishy tang of salt water still in my mouth. But I always woke up before the water got into my lungs, and I took comfort in that. Until one night.

*"Salt water came in
through my cracked
lips, filling my
mouth and
hitting the back of
my raw throat..."*

I had just dove in and was cautiously starting to carve my arms into the waves. Then came the freezing, the choking, and the sinking. Only this time, I kept sinking. My heart slammed against my ribs. My lungs felt like they would burst. The pressure from the deep made my head and body ache. I couldn't see anything. I could only hear the dull roar of waves and muffled thunder. Any moment I'll wake up, I told myself.

But I didn't wake up. Holding my breath had become unbearable, so I exhaled. I didn't want to die, but I couldn't see a way out. Salt water came in through my cracked lips, filling my mouth and hitting the back of my raw throat as my body began to breathe in as a final reflex.

Then, somehow, I could see, and I managed to stop. I wasn't alone anymore. There was a gray, ragged cloak floating next to me down there in the depths. It was the thing from the beach. It lifted its hand to pull the shroud from its face, and to my surprise, it was a man, not a monster.

I can't describe him. I had never seen him before, but he was familiar. I liked him. He made me feel calm and cared for. Then he asked quietly, "If you could not swim across, why didn't you ever ask to be carried?"

Immediately I was angry. I wanted to defend myself. I hadn't known that being carried was an option. Why hadn't he told me that before?

Then my lungs started to burn, and I remembered I was on the brink of drowning. It didn't matter if I hadn't been told. How could I have thought

that I could make it on my own? My defenses gave way to shame. Then a thought came: perhaps this man would help me?

I was startled by the simplicity of it. Why else would he have come? In fact, I found myself certain that he would save me if I asked. Overjoyed, I opened my mouth again to beg for mercy.

But he vanished. The waters rushed in. My lungs grew cold and heavy with liquid, and I started to fade out.

They say if you die in a dream, you die in real life. I wonder if that means you can also be brought back to life in one?



*"Out of the depths
I cry to you, O Lord!
O Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
to the voice
of my pleas for mercy!
If you, O Lord,
should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
But with you
there is forgiveness,
that you may be feared.*

*I wait for the Lord,
my soul waits..."
Psalm 130:1-5 (ESV)*



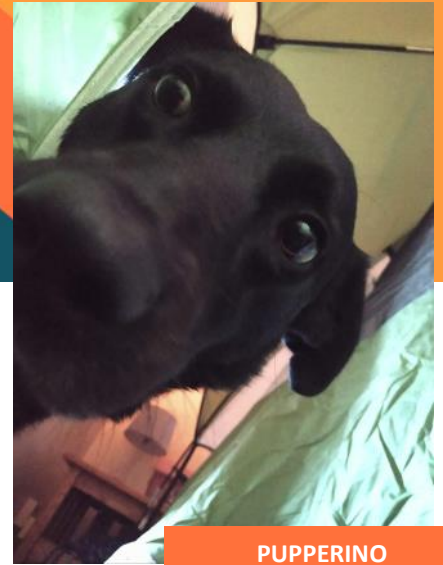
CAPTION THIS

WHAT'S GOING ON?

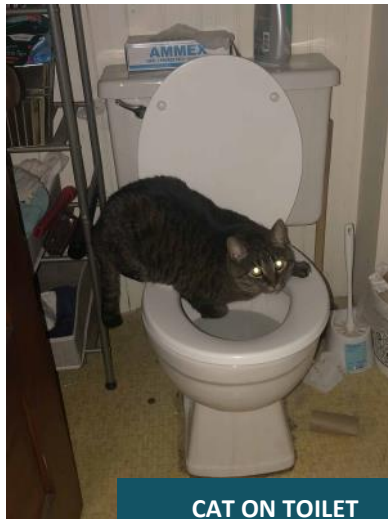
What do you think is going on in these photos? What captions can you imagine? If you've got an idea, snap and edit one of these photos. Get creative with thought bubbles, text, and conversations. Share a joke that seems fitting to you!

SUBMIT A CAPTION

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PUPPERINO



CAT ON TOILET



CHAINSAW



ROADKILL HELPER



BURIED IN SNOW



TIME TRAVEL?

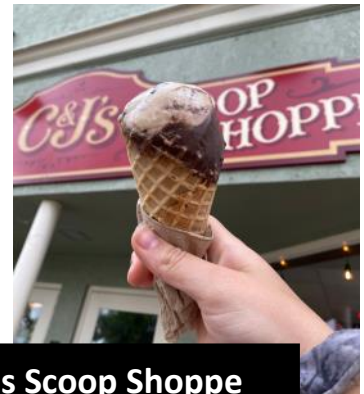


A JOLLI-BEE

GET THE LATEST SCOOP

Where to Dine on Dairy Goodness in the Chippewa Valley

Did you know the origins of ice cream date back to the Persian Empire in 550-330 BC, when people poured concentrated grape juice over snow and ate it?¹ We have come a long way since then, offering more flavors than can be listed, from Ube (Filipino) to classic and delicious chocolate. Is your mouth watering yet? Look no further than Menomonie and the surrounding area. Read on to get the scoop on some local sweet spots to satisfy your craving for the frozen goodness.



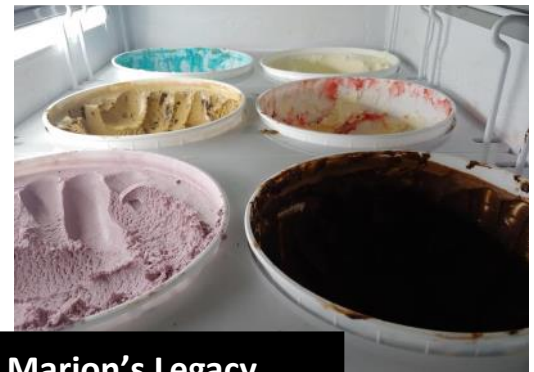
C & J's Candy Store & Scoop Shoppe

Head down to Main Street for a tasty treat. They boast of Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream fresh from Madison, Wisconsin. It is served by the scoop with options for add-on toppings. They rotate their ice cream selection to keep things fresh. Keep in mind there is also a non-dairy option.

C&J's Scoop Shoppe

Marion's Legacy

This local shop off Broadway serves up Olson's Ice Cream by the scoopful. The ice cream is made right in Chippewa Falls. Pick up a bag of chocolate-covered espresso beans while you're there to offset the sugar crash.



Marion's Legacy

Dairy Queen

Located closest to UW-Stout's south campus, they sport everything soft-serve, delivered in various forms from cones to cups to ice cream in cakes. They offer a dairy-free Dilly Bar for those who prefer that route.

BUDGET-FRIENDLY OPTIONS

Burger King

They usually have a deal going on for standard vanilla soft serve ice cream cones. Score a cone for less than \$1.

Wendy's

There is a way to procure a free Junior Frosty with every purchase made at Wendy's. Pick up the frosty key tag for \$2 at the restaurant or use the mobile app. It's good for up to one year. See their website for more info.



Burger King

¹Book of Firsts, c.550-330 BC



THE "ALMOST ICE CREAM" CATEGORY

Culver's

Custard is what they do. If you are looking for a pint of it, be sure to visit on Sundays. They offer a pint of deliciousness for \$2.50 (Menomonie location only).

Raw Deal

Whenever you stop in for a delicious treat here, you'll be surprised no cows were involved! Their vegan-only ice cream boasts flavors like Chai Pistachio or Sangria Sorbet.



Raw Deal

DESTINATION ICE CREAM LOCATIONS AROUND THE AREA

A Little Slice of Italy - Colfax

Since 2007 in the heart of Colfax, they serve the sweet treat heaping in cones, or there is the option to float it in your favorite soda. Pick up some ice cream with a pizza to go for a complete meal.

Casey's Creamery - Eau Claire

They cream their competition by making ice cream in-house. Casey's offers fun flavors like Pink Velvet Cake Batter and Triple Berry Cheesecake with a few gluten-free options, too. If you desire toppings, be sure to pick up some homemade chocolate goodies.



Casey's Creamery

Knoke's Chocolates and Nuts - Hudson, WI


Their vast ice cream selection boasts 32 different options. Mix and match flavors and pair them with a freshly made waffle cone.



WOTS writers "researching" ice cream at C&J's Scoop Shoppe.

DO THE #WOTSCOOPING CHALLENGE

Take up the ice cream cone baton and scoop up your roommates for a weekend treat! Send us your photos to join the #WOTSCOOPING challenge. Share your photo with us on Instagram or Facebook.

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