

# Connections

February 2026

*Apropos* by Melissa Brogdon

A flatline in the medical field is the equivalent of death. Besides our first breath at birth, it is the most critical moment in our existence. With regard to life and death, the Bible has much to say. And it gives its readers a transcendental definition, describing a phenomenon science has yet to explain. It proclaims that life and death are much more than a physical state. In fact, there is one of greater importance: the spiritual state of a man. Scripture gives us several passages which describe two paths. One leads to death and the other leads to life.

Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."

Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

It seems improbable that anyone would choose death and yet ironically, we experience it from birth. Here, we can step into the scientific theory of nature versus nurture and affirm that Scripture says yes to both! As fallen humans we were naturally born into sin through our father Adam. As we come of age we can choose to follow in his disobedient footsteps. Or, through the graciousness of our Father God, we can be nurtured into a different way of life. Thankfully He has provided a way of escape, and this is where the Bible explains how one can literally come back from death—a scientific impossibility—a crucial and mystifying transformation for those that put their trust in Jesus Christ.

We should begin with the big story of Scripture, how God our Creator perfectly designed life and then breathed His essence into ours. And with this simple act of love, the story of man began. In this perfect state we thrived, having all that was necessary for life.

So, what went wrong? An article printed in the London Times posed this question to the world, with many scholars chiming in on what they believed was a solution. A man named G.K. Chesterton gave a response, "Dear Sir, I am the problem. If we externalize all that is wrong with the world, we will believe the solution is inside of us. We will then try harder, work smarter, be better, and do the work. But when we realize the problem is in us—all of us—

we realize the solution must be outside of us. We need someone to come and save us. When we personalize sin, we realize we no longer need to hide behind trees but to embrace the Man who hung on the cursed tree in our place."

The problem is not the world; it is us. In a perfect environment paradise was lost because in the eyes of man, it was lacking. Like stubborn and rebellious children, Adam and Eve did not mind the instructions of their God and instead walked away from the only relationship which determined their survival. So as simply as life was breathed into man, so death began its insidious plan to deconstruct all God had perfectly designed. From then on, God's exiled image bearers began the arduous journey "East of Eden." The walking dead took their place in human history and did what only mindless things do. With empty, untrained, and impatient hearts, we welcomed forbidden allurements which made grand promises of fulfillment. "East of Eden" we all crave the rich meats of ancient Egypt and with fat and greedy hands we each mold golden calves of incantation. Yet all that glitters isn't golden. It is a trickery of the mind, fool's gold, and soon the brief high dissipates and the void deepens. As man continues walking the path of death, our dull eyes and immense appetites consume the hand of time, demanding from creation what only the Creator can provide. Life becomes Salvador Dali's melting clock and before one can consider a better path, physical death overtakes us, and flesh returns to dust. This is the state of every exiled man.

So, what went wrong? Let's repeat the words of G.K. Chesterton, "Dear Sir, I am the problem." And the solution comes from the Man hung on a cursed tree, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In Luke 23:32-43, we read of two guilty criminals, and one innocent King...all hanging from a roman cross. Each bearing witness to one another's shame. As death encroached the scene, we read that "One of the criminals who were hanged railed at Jesus, saying, 'Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.' And he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into

your kingdom.' And he said to him, 'Truly I say to you today you will be with me in paradise.'"

This unnamed criminal was witnessing the death of a King. This revelation was something that even the disciples failed to truly comprehend until after years of walking with Christ. Yet in this shared suffering, this criminal felt the weight of his cross lifted by the One who could redeem it. And in a moment of complete surrender, he gazed into the eyes of eternity and paradise was rediscovered. This misfit of old surrendered to the glory of his Lord and witnessed the enthronement of the kingdom of God on earth. There, at the "place of the skull" the alchemy of God's plan to redeem was revealed: God incarnate came to rescue the world. His imminent death became the staircase to heaven. At the cross, war and peace did battle: one man chose self-sufficiency, one confession, and One chose death in exchange for all of mankind. And here is where the bridge of life was built. And for those who traverse the hills and valleys of this path a message is given: Matthew 16:24-25, "If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up

his cross, and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me will find it. For what will it benefit someone if he gains the whole world yet loses his life? Or what will anyone give in exchange for his life?"

So many in the world desire comfort, the wide road of perdition. But Jesus calls us to the road less traveled, the one with the cross as our compass. And we are not called to it once but daily, rehearsing the truths of His kingdom as we carry it. Calling us to obedience, this path is often paved with stones of loss and pain, yet believers must remember the mark of death is a flatline and we are made for eternity. Each step brings us closer to the paradise we lost and the one our reigning King restored. Apropos of God's summation of life and death, we see a simple yet consequential choice: once we discover the light of the world, we must choose to follow Him. "For from Him and through Him, and to Him, are all things. To Him be the glory, forever, Amen (Roman 11:36).



## A Victorious Marriage Conference

Friday, February 20 | 5:30 - 8:30pm  
Community Center Auditorium  
\$50 per couple

Learn to love and prioritize your marriage at the "Victorious Marriage" Conference! Enjoy an evening out with your spouse for a delicious dinner and the fellowship of other couples. Learn from special guest speaker Michael Sampley how to overcome common marital difficulties and how to experience a healthier marital relationship taught through Biblical principles. Register [online](#) or at the Sunday kiosk. Childcare available by request only.



## Women's Bible Study

Draw close to the Lord and other women, find support and grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ in a small group environment. You may choose Thursday mornings or Tuesday evenings for fellowship, discussion, prayer, and encouragement. Join us as we walk through the books of 1 & 2 Corinthians. A children's program is available for both morning and evening groups.

### RiverLakes Women Tuesday PM

Education Bldg.,  
Room 210/212  
6:00 - 8:00 pm  
Registration Fee: \$25

### RiverLakes Women Thursday AM

Community Center  
9:30am - 11:30am  
Registration Fee: \$25



## Made to Serve Seminar

Friday, March 6  
5:30pm - 8:30pm (Dinner Provided)  
Saturday, January 7  
8:00am - 12:00pm (Breakfast Provided)

Matthew 20:28 tells us, "Jesus came not to be served, but to serve, and give us His life as a ransom for many." We were created to serve. At this seminar, we will explore how Jesus modeled serving and how you can find the most effective serving opportunity for you based on your personality, spiritual gifts, experience, and passions. Sign up [online](#) or in the church lobby after services.