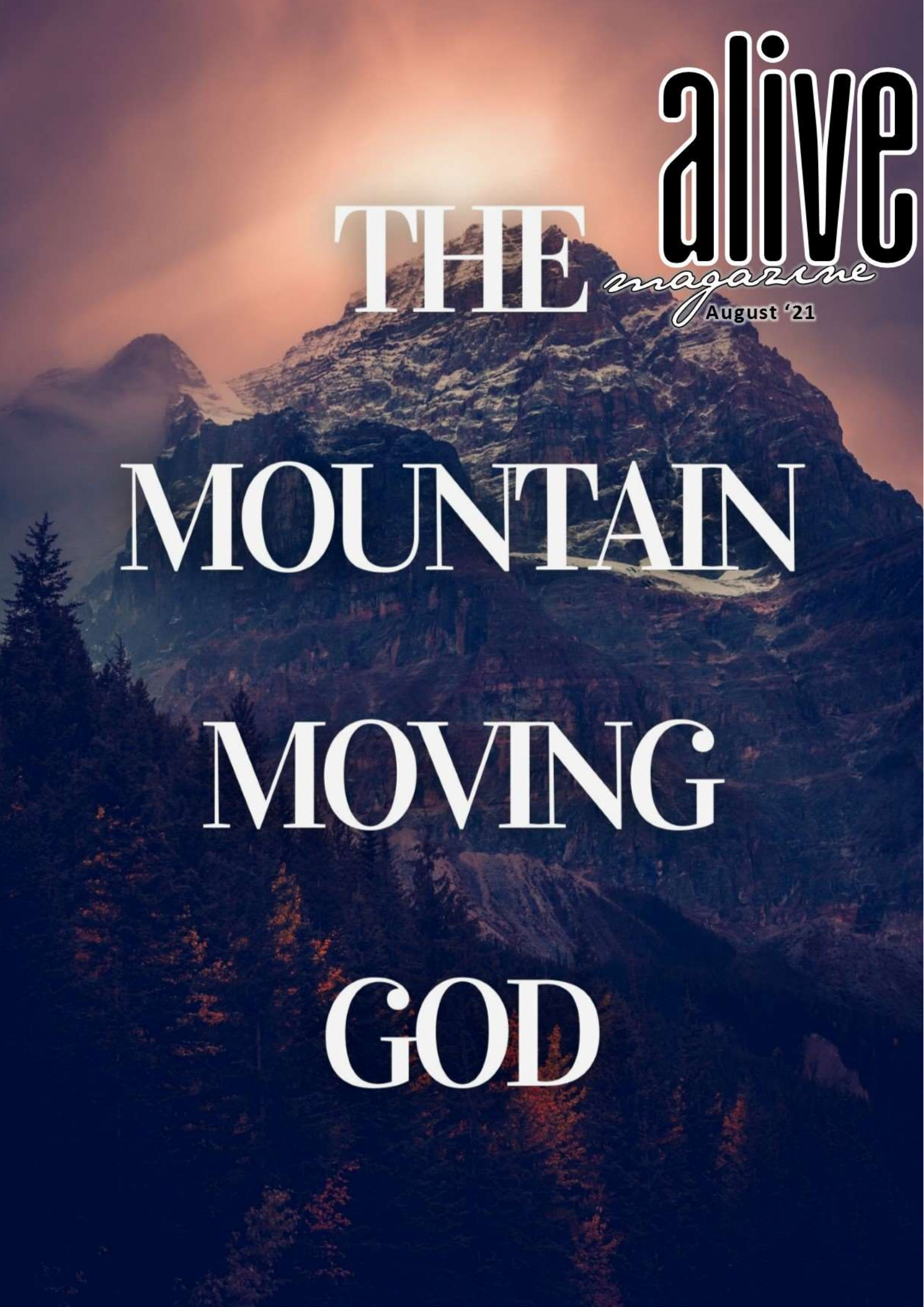




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August '21

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO

ABIDE

IN CHRIST?



BY: GOTQUESTIONS.ORG

To “abide” is to live, continue, or remain; so, to abide in Christ is to live in Him or remain in Him. When a person is saved, he or she is described as being “in Christ” (Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17), held secure in a permanent relationship (John 10:28–29). Therefore, abiding in Christ is not a special level of Christian experience, available only to a few; rather, it is the position of all true believers. The difference between those abiding in Christ and those not abiding in Christ is the difference between the saved and the unsaved.

Abiding in Christ is taught in 1 John 2:5–6, where it is synonymous with “knowing” Christ (verses 2 and 3). Later in the same chapter, John equates “remaining” in the Father and the Son with having the promise of eternal life (verses 24 and 25). Biblically, “abiding in,” “remaining in,” and “knowing” Christ are references to the same thing: salvation.



The phrase abiding in Christ pictures an intimate, close relationship, and not just a superficial acquaintance. In John 15:4–7, Jesus tells His disciples that drawing life from Him is essential, using the picture of branches united to a vine: “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” Without that vital union with Christ that salvation provides, there can be no life and no productivity. Elsewhere, the Bible likens our relationship with Christ to that of a body with a head (Colossians 1:18)—another essential union.

Some people take the warning of John 15:6 (branches that do not abide in the vine are thrown away and burned) to mean that Christians are always in danger of losing their salvation. In other words, they say it’s possible to be saved but not “abide,” in which case we would be cast away. But this could only be true if “abiding” were separate from salvation, referring to a state of intimacy with Christ we must strive to attain post-salvation. The Bible is clear that salvation comes by grace and is maintained by grace (Galatians 3:2–3). Also, if a branch could somehow fall away from the vine, resulting in the loss of salvation, then other, very clear passages of Scripture would be contradicted (see John 10:27–30).



It is best to interpret the True Vine metaphor this way: Jesus is the True Vine, obviously. The branches who “abide” in Him are the truly saved—they have a real and vital connection to the Savior. The withered branches who do not “abide” in Him are the unsaved pretenders who feigned an attachment to the Vine but drew no life from Him. In the end, the pretenders will be seen for what they were: hangers-on who had no authentic attachment to Jesus. For a while, both Peter and Judas seemed identical in their walk with Christ. But Peter was attached to the Vine; Judas was not.

John restates the withered-branch principle this way: “They [people now opposed to Christ] went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us” (1 John 2:19).



One of the proofs of salvation is perseverance, or sustained abiding in Christ. The saved will continue in their walk with Christ (see Revelation 2:26). That is, they will “abide” or remain in Him. God will complete His work in them (Philippians 1:6), and they will bring forth much fruit to the glory of God (John 15:5). Those who fall away, turn their backs on Christ, or fail to abide simply show their lack of saving faith. Abiding is not what saves us, but it is one of the signs of salvation.

Proofs of abiding in Christ (i.e., proofs that one is truly saved and not just pretending) include obedience to Christ’s commands (John 15:10; 1 John 3:24); following Jesus’ example (1 John 2:6); living free from habitual sin (1 John 3:6); and the awareness of a divine presence within one’s life (1 John 4:13).

THE
M O U N T A I N

M O V I N G
G O D

BY: ANDREW ROEBERT



WE HAVE A MOUNTAIN MOVING GOD

Have you ever felt like you are unable to cope with the challenges that are in front of you? Perhaps you are facing mountains of challenge and difficulty right now. In life we can find ourselves facing obstacles that seem to be insurmountable. When the nation of Israel finally got into the promised land, the first thing that they were confronted with was a fortified and walled city (Jericho). This was the first obstacle they had to overcome in the process of possessing the land God had given them.

But God was with them, and He would bring those mighty walls down right in front of their eyes. Our mountain moving God wants to go before you and level the way ahead of you.

Isaiah 45:2 'I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron.' (NIV)

Notice these wonderful things that HE will do for you:

He will go before you.

He will level the mountains.

He will break down the gates.

He will cut through the bars of iron.

He will make the rough places smooth.

He will make the crooked places straight.

Isaiah 45:2 'I will go before you and make the crooked places straight' (KJV)

THE LEVEL PATH OF LIFE

As God's son and daughters, we are asked to believe that God will make a way where there seems to be no way. We are asked to believe that God can and will remove the Jericho's, the obstacles, and the mountains that stand in the way. As a young man I used to enjoy hiking. It was such an enjoyable experience to be out in nature and hike for up to five days.





Some hikes were badly designed and you ended up climbing and descending without any recovery time. Other hikes were well designed and you would climb a bit and then follow the contour (the level path) and enjoy a time to recover and see the view, before descending or climbing again. I believe that the path of life that God has prepared for us is well designed. It is designed to be something we can achieve, and with His help, it can be something we will be victorious in. The Bible speaks of 'the level path of life' and this is something we can know as a reality in our lives. In order to experience this, mountains will have to be removed.

Proverbs 5:21 'For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He maketh level all his paths.'
(English Revised Version)

The Lord wants to teach you and show you the way, if only you will put your hand in His and take hold of it.

Psalms 27:11 'Teach me Your way, O LORD, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies [who lie in wait].'

NO OBSTACLE IS TOO BIG FOR GOD

We must never limit what God can do. He is the all-powerful and the almighty God, and nothing is too difficult for Him. As you look at the challenges you are facing, lift up your eyes and look to the One Who is greater than those challenges or issues you are facing, and keep your eyes on Him, and He will bring you through it on the level path that He has prepared for you.

In the city in which I live there is a mountain that separates two sections of the city. During the great depression, men were assigned to build, by hand, a roadway up the side of this mountain to create easy access over the mountain and to link the two sections of the city. What was insurmountable became very manageable and still to this day it allows ease of access, and remains a remarkable feat of handmade engineering. What would have required incredible energy to climb, can now be crossed by vehicle in less than a few minutes. The Lord wants to do the same for you. He wants to step in and remove the obstacles that you think will never be overcome. He wants to make a way where there seems to be no way. Don't limit God, there is no pit or valley deep enough that He cannot fill. There is no mountain high enough that He cannot deal with, and there is no crooked road that He cannot make straight.

Luke 3:5 'Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth.'

FOLLOWING GOD LEADS TO LIFE

When we follow God, it leads to life and to the level path He has prepared for us. But when we follow our own ideas, our own choices, to the exclusion of the Lord in our lives, the path can become a struggle. We can make mistakes or rely on our own wills and opinions. We can depend on ourselves, when we

should be depending on Him, and this leads to unexpected consequences and a path that is choked with problems and issues. But when we follow Him, it opens the way for us to discover the pathway that leads to life.

Proverbs 12:28 'Living right is a pathway that leads to life and away from death.' (Contemporary English Version)

Sometimes we simply don't know which way to go, and even there the Lord is waiting to take us by the hand and turn things around.



He may not take us down the road we were expecting, but He will take us to the place that He wants us to be.

Isaiah 42:16 'I will lead the blind by a way they did not know; I will guide them on unfamiliar paths. I will turn darkness into light before them and rough places into level ground. These things I will do for them, and I will not forsake them.'

He will lead you and He will never leave you nor forsake you.

YOUR MOUNTAIN MOVING GOD HAS A SPECIFIC PATH FOR YOU

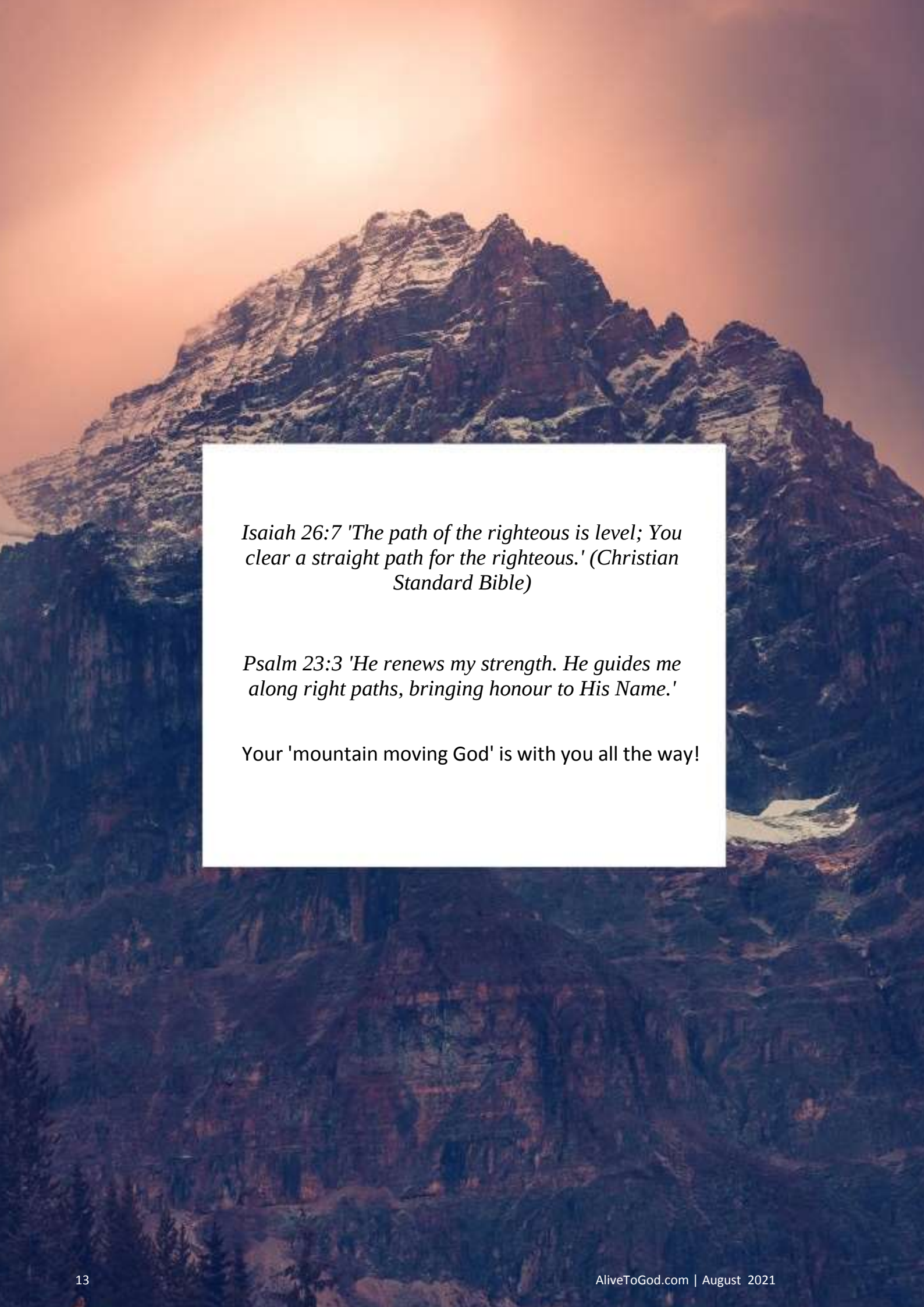
No two individuals travel the exact same path through life. Every person has his or her own path to find and to walk. When we look at others, we may think that their path is much easier or better than ours, but that is not the case. Each person has their own issues, challenges, and struggles, but the Lord wants to lead each one of us along the best particular pathway for us as individuals.

Hebrews 12:1 '...let us run with patient endurance and steady and active persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before us.'

Each one of us has a different race to run and a different path to follow, but we have the same Lord Who will bring us all through it all. Enroute, He will remove mountains and fill valleys and bring us out victorious.

Acts 2:28 'You have made known to me the paths of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence.'





Isaiah 26:7 'The path of the righteous is level; You clear a straight path for the righteous.' (Christian Standard Bible)

Psalm 23:3 'He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honour to His Name.'

Your 'mountain moving God' is with you all the way!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN



**THAT THE EYES OF
THE LORD ARE
UPON THE RIGHTEOUS
(1 PETER 3:12)?**

By: [GotQuestions.org](https://www.gotquestions.org)



Peter described several graces that reflect the love of Christ in the life of believers, including like-mindedness, sympathy, brotherly love, compassion, and humility (1 Peter 3:8). Christians who emulate these characteristics enjoy spiritual blessings and favor from the Lord: “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil” (1 Peter 3:12).

Peter was quoting from Psalm 34 to describe the blessed life to which Christians are called: “The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to blot out their name from the earth” (Psalm 34:15–16).

Other passages of Scripture affirm Peter’s thought that God looks with favor on the righteous (Genesis 6:8). The psalmist says, “Surely, LORD, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield” (Psalm 5:12).

The “righteous” Peter referred to are born-again Christians who live out their new lives in Christ, practicing unity,

love, compassion, sympathy, and humility. They “don’t repay evil for evil” and “don’t retaliate with insults” when they are insulted. Instead, they “pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing” (1 Peter 3:9, NLT).

The phrase eyes of the Lord is an anthropomorphic expression that ascribes humanlike qualities to God. The initial encouragement we receive from knowing that the Lord’s eyes are upon the righteous is that God is

omniscient and sovereign over all creation. God knows everything (1 John 3:20) and sees all people, both the evil and the righteous. His eyes “are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good” (Proverbs 15:3). Nothing escapes the Lord’s purview.



If the eyes of the Lord are everywhere and always upon us, then we can count on His presence to always be with us: “If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.



If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,’ even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you” (Psalm 139:11–12).

We can rest knowing that God will never leave or forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:8; Joshua 1:5; Hebrews 13:5). We are never alone, “never abandoned by God” (2 Corinthians 4:9, NLT) or separated from His love (Romans 8:38). God is omnipresent or present everywhere. His eyes “range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him” (2 Chronicles 16:9).

The eyes of the Lord also refers to His individualized care. God sees every step His children take (Job 34:21). “He gives them security, and they are supported, and his eyes are upon their ways,” assures Job 24:23 (ESV). Just as God cared for Israel “as the apple of his eye” (Deuteronomy 32:10), He continues to keep watch over “those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love” (Psalm 33:18).

Knowing the eyes of the Lord are always on the righteous, we can be confident of His constant protection. Our heavenly Father “will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep” (Psalm 121:3–4).

The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous like those of a loving shepherd tending the sheep of his flock (Psalm 23:1; Revelation 7:17). God’s blessings of favor extend to eternal life (John 3:16; 17:3; 1 John 2:25) yet also fill our days on earth with good things: “Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow” (James 1:17, NLT; see also Psalm 85:12; 107:9).



SHOULD A CHRISTIAN get a COVID-19 vaccine?

By: GotQuestions.blog

Let me say from the outset, I am not going to directly answer the question. Why not? Because I believe it is a decision every Christian presented with the opportunity to get a COVID-19 vaccine should make based on his/her own convictions. My purpose in writing this post is to address some misconceptions about the vaccines so Christians can prayerfully consider the decision from a perspective of truth, not misinformation. These misconceptions are based on questions we receive at GotQuestions.org.

Mistruth: The COVID-19 vaccine is the mark of the beast.

As a background, please read “What is the mark of the beast?” In summary, the mark of the beast will be recognizable by the following five items:

- (1) It will be instituted in the end times during the reign of the Antichrist. See Revelation chapter 13.
- (2) It will be required for anyone to be able to buy or sell. See Revelation 13:17.
- (3) Some form of worship of and/or allegiance to the Antichrist will be required to receive it. See Revelation 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; and 20:4.
- (4) It will somehow relate to the number 666. See Revelation 13:18.
- (5) Anyone who refuses to take the mark of the beast will be killed. See Revelation 13:15.

Since none of those five factors are involved with receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, no, a COVID-19 vaccine is not the mark of the beast.

Partial truth: The COVID-19 vaccine is created using the cells from an aborted baby.

It is important to know that there are multiple COVID-19 vaccines. There are numerous different vaccines in various stages of availability and testing. Some of the vaccines are at least partly connected to aborted fetal cell lines from the 1960s and 1970s.

Does the fact that some aspects of some of the vaccines are connected to abortions that occurred 50-60 years ago mean the vaccines themselves are unethical? Possibly. But, it is not as clear cut as those who oppose vaccines make it out to be. If we refused to have any part in anything that had any connection to something unethical in the past, we would likely be very surprised at how many things we would have to give up.

If you are convinced that you should have no part in a vaccine from aborted fetal cell lines, and therefore refuse to get a COVID-19 vaccine, I applaud you for standing by your convictions. But, there are, or will be, COVID-19 vaccines that do not come from this ethically questionable background.

Mistruth: The COVID-19 vaccine permanently reprograms your DNA.

Again, there is more than one COVID-19 vaccine. The different vaccines work in different ways. Some of the vaccines work in a very traditional manner. Even with the new mRNA vaccines, the above description is a distortion. Essentially, the mRNA vaccines instruct your cells to create a harmless (on its own) part of the virus so that the body will recognize it as a threat and attack it. Should an actual virus infection occur, your body will then be pre-equipped to attack the virus. The mRNA vaccines do not reprogram your DNA and the effect they have on your RNA is not permanent.

Unproven: The COVID-19 vaccine is not safe because it was rushed.

It is true that the COVID-19 vaccines were produced in record time. Supposedly, the time savings were made possible by the removal of unnecessary delays and by running the tests and trials simultaneously, rather than one after the other. Over the long term, some of the vaccines may turn out to have serious side effects. But, so far, the vaccines are proving themselves to be both safe and effective. Something being developed quickly, or even in record time, is not necessarily a sign of danger. It could, in fact, be evidence of God's mercy.

Should a Christian get a COVID-19 vaccine?

I am convinced that getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a matter of personal conviction and discernment, not of right vs. wrong or good vs. evil. Do balanced and thorough research and speak to medical experts whom you trust. Ask God for wisdom (James 1:5). Whatever you decide, do it in faith (Romans 14:23).

Show grace and peace to those who come to a different decision than you (Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 4:6; James 1:19).

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