

Dumb Things Smart Christians Believe

Introduction

Osborne: It is no news flash that smart people can *do* some pretty dumb things. But lots of times we forget that smart people can also *believe* some pretty dumb things. . . .

History is filled with examples of otherwise intelligent people who acted upon amazingly goofy assumptions—and paid a high price for doing so.

We, as Christians, aren't immune. Even a highly moral, deeply sincere, smart Christian, with the best theological pedigree, has no guarantee of protection from the consequences of a bad decision based on flawed assumptions. . . .

And therein lies the reason for this book. (pp. 1-2)

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Tentative Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

(1) Faith Can Fix Anything

Week 2: (2) Forgiving Means Forgetting

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Week 3: (4) God Has a Blueprint for My Life

(5) Christians Shouldn't Judge

Break

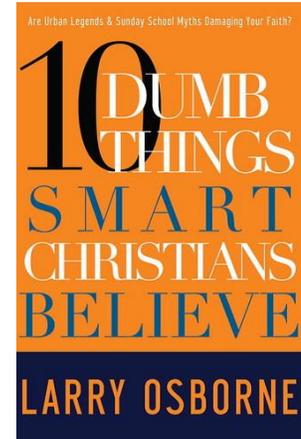
Week 4: (6) Everything Happens for a Reason

(7) Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide

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Dumb Thing #1: Faith Can Fix Anything

John's faith and Susan's cancer

Osborne: The word on the street is that faith is a potent mixture of intellectual and emotional self-control that when properly harnessed can literally change outcomes through positive thinking and clear visualization. (p. 9)

Why positive thinking can't change anything

Positive thinking doesn't _____ God to do anything

Bill Brandenburg: If you can replace, “In Jesus’ name I pray,” with, “Ready, set, go!” at the end of your prayers, you might have an idol problem.

The big problem with faith in faith

Faith must have an _____

Hebrews 11:1

Faith is not whatever you want it to be; faith is the present essence of a future _____

Hebrews 11:6

How the English language mucks up everything

Osborne: The kinds of faith the Bible advocates and God wants from us has far more to do with our _____ than our feelings. (p. 12)

How faith sometimes makes things worse

Hebrews 11:35b-40

Question: Are you OK with God if He chooses to end your life like those in Hebrews 11:35b-40?

The one thing faith can always fix

Faith may cause more earthly problems, but faith in God will always _____ us to God

John 1:12-13

Osborne: It may lead us to victory. It may lead us to prison. Which it will be is His call—not ours. (p. 14)

What a geographical moron and a GPS have in common with a life of faith

Osborne: When rightly understood and applied, it doesn’t matter how many doubts we have. It doesn’t even matter if we’re convinced that all is lost. Ultimately all that matters is whether we have enough faith (maybe just a mustard seed’s worth) to _____ God’s instructions. (p. 18)

Read the New Testament and see whom Jesus commended for their faith:

- In **Mark 2**, Jesus saw the paralytic man’s friends’ faith. They were taking the roof off at the time. Faith is active.
- In **Matthew 8**, Jesus healed a centurion’s son because the centurion acted on his faith and pursued Jesus. Faith is active.

Homework

Osborne: Read the story of Peter’s release from prison in **Acts 12:1-19**. Write down every element of surprise or doubt you can find in the story. . . . Now write down everything that shows faithful obedience despite any doubt. (pp. 179-180) Which list is longer?

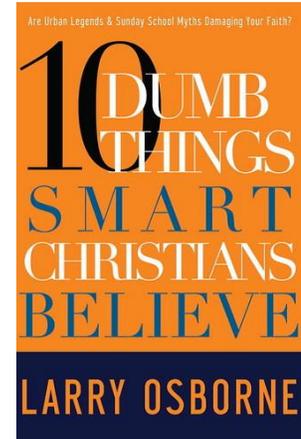
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Dumb Thing #2: Forgiving Means Forgetting

Four goofy ideas about forgiveness & The myth of a forgetful God

Does God forgive sin? _____

Psalm 103:12, Micah 7:19, and Jeremiah 31:34c

Two real realms of forgiveness

Osborne: Spiritual and eternal consequences are completely removed. Judicially, our record is _____.

But on the earthly level, things are different. God's forgiveness seldom if ever removes all the consequences or restores all that we've broken. Instead, it offers a _____ chance. (p. 27)

The strange math of score keeping—why it is nearly always inaccurate

Matthew 18:21-22 and Luke 17:3-4

Rebuke When Wronged, Forgive When Asked

Osborne: But what happens if the person who wrongs us doesn't want to be forgiven? (p. 32)

What was Jesus' response to those that were ignorant? [Luke 23:34a](#)

What did Jesus say to do when believers sin against believers? [Luke 17:3](#)

Osborne: God's call to forgive doesn't mean we . . . go through life as a _____ bag. (p. 33)

The prayer of permission

So what do you do when you don't want to forgive? Osborne: I . . . give God permission to change the way I _____, to make me want to forgive. (p. 37)

Dumb Thing #3: A Godly Home Guarantees Godly Kids

Where'd We Get That Idea?

[Proverbs 22:6](#)

What We Think It Says

Osborne: A child raised *correctly* will come _____ to the Lord *eventually* (p. 41)

What It Actually Says

[Proverbs 22:6](#): **Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.**

[Proverbs 22:6](#): **Train up** [an imperative meaning to dedicate, inaugurate, train—this word is used four other times in three other Scriptures and is always translated, 'dedicate'; the idea behind the word is that this is a _____ to a narrow way of use] **a child** [used in the Old Testament of humans from newborns to age twenty] **in the way** [journey, direction, manner, habit] **he should go** [literally, mouth; used elsewhere in Scripture to refer to how much someone could comfortably put in their mouths], **And when he is old** [first used in the Bible of Sarah when she was mocking Abraham regarding her own old age] **he will not depart** [turn _____, depart, avoid, end] **from it.**

The Forgotten Distinction

Osborne: This is a proverb, not a promise. . . . a proverb is different. It's an observation about how life generally works. It tells us what _____ happens, not what always happens. (pp. 41-42)

Why This Is Such A Devastating Myth

It produces two different sides of the same error (misplaced _____ and needless _____)

What The Bible Actually Says

Rebellion happens even in the _____ of environments ([Genesis 1-3](#))

Everyone is responsible for his or her _____ actions ([Ezekiel 18:1-32](#))

We can have lots of influence—we do not have any _____ ([Proverbs 21:30-31](#))

There are no _____ ([2 Chronicles 10-21](#))

1. Rehoboam (bad) 2. Abijah (bad) 3. Asa (good) 4. Jehoshaphat (good)

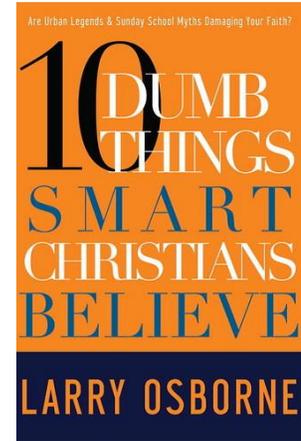
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Dumb Thing #4: God Has a Blueprint for My Life

Blueprints

Blueprints _____ be followed

Game Plans

Osborne: Sets forth general guidelines and principles, with lots of _____ and flexibility (p. 58)

Are You Sure You Want a Blueprint?

Osborne: God doesn't care where we work so much as _____ we work, where we live so much as _____ we live, and even whom we marry . . . so much as _____ we do marriage. (pp. 59-60)

Osborne: A blueprint mind-set does tend to turn our focus more toward *finding* rather than _____ . (p. 63)

Homework: Obey What We Know

Here are some verses to get you started: **Ephesians 5:17; 2:3; 1 Peter 4:3-4; Matthew 18:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:18; 1 Peter 2:15; 4:19; Revelation 4:11; John 6:39; John 6:40; Hebrews 10:10**

Dumb Thing #5: Christians Shouldn't Judge

Osborne: Jesus didn't say, "Judge not," followed by a period or an exclamation point. He said, "Do not judge," followed by a clarification of what type of judgments to make, when to make them, and how to make them. (p. 72)

What about Tolerance?

The Truth About Spiritual Truth

The reality is that there is such a thing as spiritual _____.

Why We Need to Judge

If we live in a world with no judging, we would never evaluate _____ against the truth of the scriptures.

Judge as We Want to Be Judged

Matthew 7:2

Deal with Our Own Stuff First

Matthew 7:3-5

One goal of our judgment should always _____

Don't Judge If God Hasn't Spoken Clearly

Closed hand vs open fist

Osborne: I learned long ago that anything left out of the Bible was _____ left out by mistake. (p. 81)

Christians and Non-Christians

Is there a difference in how we engage in judging Christians vs. non-Christians? _____

Osborne: The Bible specifically _____ us to judge non-Christians by Christian standards. (p. 82)

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

What is the Goal?

Spiritual Leaders

Fellow Christians

One goal of our judgment should always

Non-Christians

Homework: The Hurdles to Clear

Matthew 7; Galatians 1:6-9; 6:1; 1 John 2:3-5; 4:1-3; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 6:18-20; Romans 14:1-15:7; 2 Thessalonians 3:13-15; 2 Timothy 2:23-26

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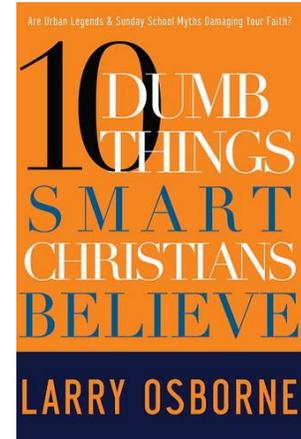
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Dumb Thing #6: Everything Happens for a Reason

Where Did We Get This Idea Anyway?

Romans 8:28: **And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**

Osborne: It simply says that God is at work in all things. . . . God can and will accomplish his good purposes no matter _____. (p. 90)

The reality is that some _____ apply

Don't Blame God

Osborne: Those who assume that everything that happens has God's fingerprints . . . fail to distinguish between . . . what God _____ and what God _____. (p. 93)

Self-Inflicted Wounds, Life in a Fallen World, and Foolish Decisions

Osborne: When it comes to the consequences of the fall, we aren't offered immunity. We're offered _____. (pp. 94-95)

Osborne: Every trial or hardship calls for the same response: _____

Dumb Thing #7: Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide

Where'd We Get That Idea?



When you get in trouble
and you don't know right
from wrong
Give a little whistle! Give a
little whistle!
When you meet temptation

Not just a little squeak, pucker up and blow
And if your whistle's weak, yell, "Jiminy Cricket!"

Take the straight and narrow path
And if you start to slide
Give a little whistle! Give a little whistle!
And always let your conscience be your guide.

and the urge is very strong

Give a little whistle! Give a little whistle!

Thermometers and Thermostats

The conscience is not a thermometer (telling us right vs. wrong—this is black and white). It is a thermostat (telling us our _____ of right and wrong—this is set).

Osborne: Our conscience doesn't tell us when we're violating God's standards. It tells us when we're violating _____ standards. (p. 110)

What does the Bible say?

1 Corinthians 4:4

Sin Nature and Blind Spots

Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; Romans 7:11: sin . . . deceived me; 1 Corinthians 3:18: Let no one deceive himself; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 15:33, Galatians 6:7, James 1:16: Do not be deceived; Galatians 6:3: he deceives himself; Ephesians 5:6, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 1 John 3:7: Let no one deceive you; 1 John 1:8: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves

So What's It Good For?

Osborne: When rightly understood and functioning properly, our conscience is a valuable early _____ . (p. 118)

Homework

- Osborne:** Read **Romans 12:2** and **2 Timothy 3:16-17**. What are you currently doing to be sure your conscience is properly calibrated? Is there anything you should start or stop doing to better align your conscience with God's heart and values? (p. 191)
- More verses about the conscience: **Acts 24:16** (Paul's desire for his conscience); **Romans 2:15** (the knowledge the conscience can bring); **1 Corinthians 8, 10** (toward being aware of others' consciences); **1 Timothy 1:5, 3:9, 2 Timothy 1:3, Hebrews 13:18**, and **1 Peter 3:16** (clean conscience); **Titus 1:5** (defiled conscience); **Hebrews 9:14** (God cleaning the conscience)

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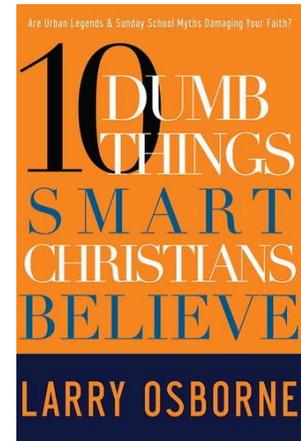
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Dumb Thing #8: God Brings Good Luck

The prosperity theology proponents promise health and _____

Dave Barber calls this a “Do-good-get-_____, do-bad-get-bad” theology

Osborne: It's Eddie _____ Christianity. (p. 127)

If we are honest about our _____, people will see how great a savior that Jesus is.

Osborne: There is ___ guarantee. (p. 132)

Homework

1. **Osborne: Read Psalm 73. Have you ever felt the same kind of confusion that Asaph felt? If so, what caused it? Did anything happen to put things in proper perspective? (p. 192)**

2. **Osborne: Here are some passages that suggest following God doesn't always bring such good luck. Read each one and jot down your observations. Job 1-2, Proverbs 11:8, Proverbs 24:15-16, Mark 13:13, Luke 9:22-23, Ephesians 1:17-21 (p. 193)**

Dumb Thing #9: A Valley Means a Wrong Turn

Have you ever been in a valley?

Osborne: A miracle needs a _____ (p. 140)

Osborne: Something . . . changes when the deep and lengthy valley is _____ valley (p. 141)

So What Does a Valley Mean?

_____ am I here?	How should I respond?	What can I _____?	Examples
God sent me (p. 143)	Hang tough and refuse shortcuts	God has a plan	Joseph in Egypt and Jesus' disciples in the boat, Daniel
I messed up (p. 144)	_____ directions	Don't go there again	Israel's cycles of subjugation (p. 145), David, Jonah
Beyond my understanding (p. 147)	Faith and obedience	God has a plan	Job, Judges 1:19

Osborne: Never judge the appropriateness of obedience by the short-term or even lifelong _____. (p. 149)

Homework

Read [Exodus 14:1-31](#), [2 Samuel 11:1-12:20](#), [Proverbs 19:3](#), and [Judges 10:10-16](#).

Dumb Thing #10: Dead People Go to a Better Place

Have you ever been to a funeral where you thought the deceased was in hell? Did anyone say that?

Osborne: Eternal destiny isn't determined by where we _____ people would go. (p. 159)

Osborne: The cross and salvation are central to the gospel. Once we lose any real concept of hell, the natural consequence is more than just putting us at odds with Scripture; it eventually devalues the cross, redefines salvation, and turns obedience into an extra-credit spiritual add-on. (p. 163)

Osborne: One of the worst side effects is what this myth does to evangelism. (p. 163)

- A loss of _____
- A fear of coming off as arrogant
- A secondary _____ (p. 196)

Homework

Read [Matthew 7:13-14](#), [10:28](#), [18:9](#), [23:15](#); [Mark 8:36](#); [John 14:6](#), [15](#), [15:10](#); [Galatians 2:21](#), [5:19-21](#), [6:7-9](#); [Acts 4:12](#); [1 Corinthians 6:9-11](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:6-9](#); and [Revelation 20:10-15](#)