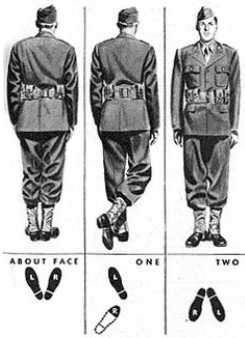


# BUT GOD



## "ABOUT FACE!"

"**ABOUT FACE**" is a common command in the military and signifies a complete reversal of direction as shown in the depiction above. While this picture is an excellent "metaphorical" description of the term "CONTRAST," it is also an excellent description of repentance, a complete reversal in thinking which results in a complete reversal in one's behavior! Too often I fear my "about face's" turn into 360's rather than remaining firm at 180, if you understand what I am saying! But that's another subject for another time. This article seeks to highlight the "about face" of all the uses of the great phrase "BUT GOD" in the Bible.

**WARNING:** *Understanding the value of just the one word "BUT" could change the way you read the entire Bible!*

**INTRODUCTION - But** is a word marking contrast and occurs over 4100 times in the Bible (NASB). **Contrast** is the juxtaposition of **dissimilar elements**, things that are **unlike**. **Contrast** sets off their dissimilar qualities and in so doing makes something sharp and clear by highlighting the differences. **Contrast** focuses on the differences, whereas comparison focuses on similarities.

**C H Spurgeon** said that the little word "but" is a very useful pause for all of us very busy saints of God.

**John Phillips** quipped "Oh, those revealing **buts** of the Bible. They are small hinges on which great truths and destinies swing." Always pause to ponder these little "**hinges**." And what do hinges on doors do? They allow one to open the door and enter, which is exactly the function of the little "hinge" word but (and related contrast words) You never know what great truth your Teacher the Holy Spirit might illumine as you read the text and [context](#) (**NB** [*nota bene*]: [Context](#) is "KING in interpretation) and carefully observe what and why and when and who and where the Spirit is contrasting!

**THOUGHT** - Train yourself for godliness (1Ti 4:7,8+) by learning to pause and ponder God's **CONTRASTS**. I can assure you without one iota of reservation that if you can develop just this one discipline of pausing at the "railroad track" and looking for oncoming trains (so to speak of course!) by observing and interrogating just this one word "BUT," it will change your Bible reading immediately. I have taught this one "hinge" word to a couple in India (via zoom) and the following week, the wife testified that his simply discipline had entirely transformed the way she read the Scriptures that week! That's God's Spirit honoring our willingness to slow down and meditate on His. And in a sense, isn't pausing and pondering the text not in effect a form of meditating on the Word? And both Psalm 1:2-3+ and Joshua 1:8+ tell us the incredible benefits of practicing Biblical meditation.

God's Spirit identifies a **contrast** by using several words or phrases - But (4108x), But rather (29x), However (127x), In spite of (14x), Instead of (24x), Nevertheless (71x), On the other hand (10x), Yet (474x with the caveat that in some [context](#) "yet" can be either a time phrase, so check the [context](#)).

Words of contrast should always be a clue that the Spirit is "changing direction." When a verse (or a clause in a passage) begins with a contrast word like "but", as a good inductive student, your "*natural reflex*" should be to re-read the preceding [context](#) to determine what the author is contrasting. Notice you are forced to slow down and engage your mind rather than speed reading across the crucial "intersection".

As noted there are over 4100 "but's" in the Bible, but this article will focus on the 41 occurrences of the great phrase "BUT GOD"....

Gen. 8:1; Gen. 17:19; Gen. 20:3; Gen. 21:12; Gen. 45:8; Gen. 48:21; Gen. 50:20; Gen. 50:24; Ex 21:13; Nu 22:22; Jdg. 15:19; 1Sa 23:14; 1Ch 28:3; Job 34:5; Ps. 49:15; Ps. 52:5; Ps. 64:7; Ps. 73:26; Ps. 75:7; Jon. 4:7; Mk. 2:7; Lk. 5:21; Lk. 12:20; Lk. 16:15; Acts 2:24; Acts 7:6; Acts 7:42; Acts 13:30; Ro 5:8; 1Co 1:27; 1Co 3:6;

1Co 3:7; 1Co 6:13; 1Co 7:15; 1Co 12:24; 1Co 15:38; 2Co 7:6; Gal. 3:18; Eph. 2:4; Phil. 2:27; 1Th 2:4

**Ken Hemphill** writes in his book [BUT GOD](#) (which I highly recommend) in his discussion of Acts 13:29-30+ writes

"This "**But God**" statement stands at the center of history. **Everything** in the Christian faith hangs on this great reversal. The crucifixion was the heart of Satan's strategy, but the resurrection was the profound answer of sovereign God."

Each of Hemphill's short devotional studies on "[BUT GOD](#)" would make a great small group discussion, Sunday School lesson or sermon. You can "check out" this book on archive.org (but since there is only one copy, it might be "Unavailable") or you can [purchase your own paper back copy here](#).

[Ray Stedman](#) writes "If you want a wonderful experience, take your New Testament and use a concordance to look up the two little words, "**but God**." See how many times human resources have been brought to an utter end; despair has gripped the heart and pessimism and gloom has settled upon a people; and there is nothing that can be done. Then see how the Spirit of God writes in luminous letters, "**But God**," and the whole situation changes into victory."

#### **Vance Havner - "But God..." (Eph. 2:1-7)**

Once I was blind, but God touched me.  
Once I was lost, but God bound me.  
Once I was under wrath, but God loved me.  
Once I walked according to the course of this world, but God turned me and now I walk as He walked.  
Once I walked according to the prince of the power of the air, but God stopped me, and now I follow the Prince of Peace.  
Once I had my manner of life in the lusts of the flesh and mind, but God gave me a new life, and Christ liveth in me.  
Once I was by nature the child of wrath, but God has begotten me into the family of love.

And all of this is the free gift of grace if one will by faith in God's Son come to that second birthday, the beginning of a new life that opens with those two precious words: "But God..."

All Christians are to welcome all Christians because of how God welcomed us. As Christians, we deserved-

Damnation, **BUT GOD** gave us salvation  
Condemnation, **BUT GOD** gave us justification  
Death, **BUT GOD** gave us eternal life  
Separation, **BUT GOD** extended us an invitation  
Punishment, **BUT GOD** gave us love  
Hell, **BUT GOD** offers us heaven  
Nothing, **BUT GOD** offers us his riches in glory.

All Christians are to welcome all Christians because of how God welcomed us. As Christians, we were-

Pushed down **BUT GOD** picked us up  
Filthy, **BUT GOD** washed us in the blood of Jesus  
Deceived **BUT GOD** revealed to us his truth  
Despised, **BUT GOD** loved us without limits  
Stripped naked, **BUT GOD** clothes us with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. (George Brooks)

**Jerry Sutton** - "Everything stops and revolves around that declaration, "**but God**"! No circumstance, condition, problem, difficulty, or even impossibility is a matter for this simple yet profound idea, "but God"! When Noah faced the flood all would have been loss, "but God"! When Abraham stood in the precipice of losing Isaac, "but God"! When Joseph could have reaped revenge, "but God"! When Moses faced the Red Sea in front and Pharaoh's army behind, "but God"! When David the shepherd boy faced Goliath, "but God"! When the world was lost and hell-bound, "but God"! No circumstance is a model for the truth contained in that one simple declaration, "but God." (From a sermon on Ephesian 2:1-7)

#### **Annie Johnson Flint - BUT GOD**

##### **BUT GOD**

I know not, **BUT GOD** knows;  
Oh, blessed rest from fear!  
All my unfolding days  
To Him are plain and clear.

Each anxious, puzzled "Why?"  
From doubt or dread that grows,  
Finds answer in this thought:  
I know not, but He knows.

I cannot, **BUT GOD** can;  
Oh, balm for all my care!  
The burden that I drop  
His hand will lift and bear.  
Though eagle pinions tire,  
I walk where once I ran, This is  
my strength to know  
I cannot, but He can.

I see not, **BUT GOD** sees;  
Oh, all sufficient light!  
My dark and hidden way  
To Him is always bright.  
My strained and peering eyes  
May close in restful ease,  
And I in peace may sleep;  
I see not, but He sees.

**Isaac Watts** wrote

If sin lay covered in my heart,  
While prayer employed my tongue,  
The Lord had shown me no regard,  
Nor I His praises sung.

**BUT GOD** (His name be ever blest)  
Has set my spirit free;  
Nor turned from Him my poor request,  
Nor turned His heart from me.

## "BUT GOD" IN THE NASB

Genesis 7:24-8:1+ The water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days. 8:1 **BUT GOD** remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided.

*We have a God Who remembers.*

**Ray Pritchard** - When the text tells us that God "remembered" Noah, it doesn't mean that God had forgotten him. It simply means that in the midst of the great flood, God stayed true to his promises. He promised to deliver Noah and his family and all those animals, and during the flood, with all its death and destruction, the Lord looked down on the earth and remembered to have mercy on eight people floating in a big barge with all those animals. Perhaps Noah felt forgotten by God. If so, he is in good company because the greatest saints of the ages have felt the same way. One man wrote of the "dark night of the soul" when he felt completely alone and abandoned by God. The psalms are full of similar sentiments. Consider Psalm 42:9-10, "I say to God my Rock, 'Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?' My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, 'Where is your God?'" And in the Lord Jesus we have the supreme example of the righteous man feeling abandoned. In his darkest moments on the cross, he cried out, "My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?" Our text contains an important message of hope. In the midst of judgment, God always remembers mercy. He remembers those who suffer and he keeps his eyes on them. Though they suffer long and often feel forgotten, the Almighty will not abandon them. As God remembered Noah, even so he will remember you and me. There is no trial so severe that it can separate us from the God who loves us. ([But God Remembered Noah: Hope for Those Who Feel Forgotten](#))

**Kenneth O. Gangel** To "remember," as it is used in Scripture, is not merely to recall to mind. It is to express concern and care for

someone. For example, in the postexilic period Nehemiah desired that God “remember” him and act “with favor” (Neh. 5:19; 13:31). In Genesis 19:29 God “remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe.” In Genesis 30:22 God “remembered Rachel; he listened to her and opened her womb.” God is gracious when he remembers his people. (Holman Old Testament Commentary)

**John Phillips** - The figure of speech used is anthropopatheia, whereby human feelings and experiences are ascribed to God. As though God could ever forget! It is a touching and lovely way to bring before us God’s loving and tender care for His servant. Indeed, God’s compassionate concern extended to all the creatures that were in the ark. How interminable the days and weeks and months must have seemed after the silence descended and the waters lapped ceaselessly around the ark. Had God forgotten? Was the experience to go on forever? No. God remembered. (Borrow [Exploring Genesis page 88](#))

**Martin Luther** - Being trapped inside that floating container for such a long time was no joke and could hardly be described as fun. Noah and his family saw the torrential downpour and were tossed back and forth on the rising floodwaters. Noah felt that God had forgotten them. Moses makes a point of this when he wrote that God finally remembered Noah and his family. Through faith, Noah and his family were able to overcome their feelings of abandonment. But they had to struggle with their human natures. Because Noah had never experienced anything this serious in the past, he wondered if God would show compassion and remember him and his family. In the end, they conquered their anxieties. But it came with a tremendous struggle. In the same way, young people who want to live a pure and virtuous life must make a determined effort to control their sinful desires. Our human nature is weak. It cannot tolerate the idea that God may have forgotten or abandoned us. We even want to brag and take the credit for ourselves when God remembers us, looks on us with kindness, and gives us success. Is it any wonder that we become hopeless when we feel as though God has abandoned us and everything seems to be going wrong? Don’t forget that this story gives us a model of faith, patience, and perseverance. It teaches us that we must believe and trust God. It also makes us aware of our need for patience. Yet patience is unnecessary if we have no personal struggles and doubts. Even Christ calls us to persevere in difficult situations when he says in the New Testament, “But he who stands firm to the end will be saved” (Matthew 24:13).

**Matthew Henry** “Those that remember God, shall certainly be remembered by Him, no matter how desolate their condition.”

**R Kent Hughes** - The hinge between the two halves of the flood story is in 8:1, “But God remembered Noah ...” And the function of that hinge is this: God’s remembering is more than a recollection because when God remembers, he acts. When God remembered Abraham, he saved Lot (19:29). When he remembered Rachel, she conceived (30:22). As Brevard Childs said, “God’s remembering always implies his movement toward the object.... The essence of God’s remembering lies in his acting toward someone because of a previous commitment.” (Allen P. Ross, *Creation & Blessing* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), p. 197) So now God acted to bring restoration and re-creation to the flooded world: “But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided” (8:1). This wind echoed “the Spirit” (“wind” and “Spirit” are the same Hebrew word) in Genesis 1 hovering over the waters at creation. (Borrow [Genesis: Beginning & Blessing page 142](#))

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Genesis 17:18-19+ And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before You!” **19BUT GOD** said, “No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

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Genesis 20:2-3+ Abraham said of Sarah his wife, “She is my sister.” So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. **3BUT GOD** came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, “Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married.” (SIGNIFICANCE? ASSURED THE PRESERVATION OF THE MESSIANIC LINE THROUGH ISAAC.) (See Ken Hemphill’s [But God page 2](#))

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Genesis 21:11-12+ The matter distressed Abraham greatly because of his son. **12BUT GOD** said to Abraham, “Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named.

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Genesis 45:8 “Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, **BUT GOD**; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt. (See Ken Hemphill’s devotional in [But God page 6](#))

**Ken Hemphill - BUT GOD Places Us Where He Wants Us Genesis 45:8 It was not you who sent me here, but God.** Seven years of plenty had been followed by seven years of famine, and Jacob and his entire family had been placed at risk by the drought. So when he learned that there was grain to be had in Egypt, he commissioned his sons to go buy some to ensure their family’s survival.

We know, of course, that there was more going on in this story than just a business transaction. Jacob's favored son, Joseph, who was thought to have been killed years earlier by a wild animal, had actually been sold to slave traders by his brothers. In fact, Joseph himself was the mastermind who had developed this whole strategy of storing grain during the time of plenty so that Egypt could sell grain to needy nations and people ... like Jacob.

You remember well the rest of the story—how a silver cup was placed along with the grain in the youngest son's sack, how the brothers were accused of theft, and how Judah pled with Joseph to remain behind as a hostage in Benjamin's place.

But seeing the change in the attitude of his brothers, Joseph revealed to them his identity. In his famous speech to them, the phrases “not you” and “but God” pointed out the Lord's overarching providence in caring for his people. Yes, his brothers had sold him, but God had sent him. It was God himself who was truly behind the event that had turned his life around.

Here we see the biblical view which somehow incorporates the free will of man with the sovereign provision of God. He is not the cause of evil, but neither is his sovereign design thwarted by our failings. His will is accomplished even in the midst of sin and mistakes.

I find this promise wonderfully comforting. I serve a God who can indeed work together in all circumstances to accomplish his purpose and conform me to his image (Rom. 8:28—29). When you encounter the phrase “but God,” be assured that God is always at work. (Borrow [But God page 6](#))

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Genesis 48:21 Then Israel said to Joseph, “Behold, I am about to die, **BUT GOD** will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers.

There is a parallel passage in the NET Translation of Acts 7:9 The patriarchs, because they were jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt. **But God** was with him.

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Genesis 50:20 “As for you, you meant evil against me, **BUT GOD** meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. (SIGNIFICANCE? THE ROMANS 8:28 OF THE OLD TESTAMENT TESTIFYING TO GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER EVERY EVENT IN OUR LIVES, WHETHER WE SEE IT AS GOOD OR BAD!)

**Setbacks** - "You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good" (Genesis 50:20).

I am thankful and reassured that God is so wise and so powerful that nothing, absolutely nothing, can cause His purposes to fail. In fact, He is able to take even those things meant for evil and make them work for good.

Joseph's brothers hated him so much that they plotted his murder. Instead, they sold him as a slave to some Ishmaelite traders. In Egypt he gained the favor of Pharaoh, who gave him a position of responsibility second only to that of the king. During a famine, his brothers came to him for food, not realizing who he was. When Joseph finally identified himself, he spoke this assuring word to them: "Do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life" (Gen. 45:5). Later he said to his brothers, "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about, as it is this day, to save many people alive" (Gen. 50:20).

To me, that's both exciting and encouraging. I am reassured to realize that no matter what someone might do to harm me, the Lord is able to turn it into my benefit and His glory.

When we are discouraged because of distressing circumstances, we can rejoice in God's wisdom, power, and sovereignty. Romans 8:28 is still true. God is working all things for our good. —R.W.D. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Setbacks pave the way for comebacks.

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**Vance Havner - BUT GOD....**

All these things are against me. Genesis 42:36.

Ye thought evil against me; **but God** meant it unto good.... Genesis 50:20.

Joseph's early life was filled with severest adversity. Sold into Egypt, thrust into prison, he might well have decided that all his early dreams were brainstorms. He might have asked, "What's the use?" But God turned the evil designs of men to the good of many. One cannot say, "All these things are against me," if he believes that all things work together for good to God's people. Throughout the centuries when things grew darkest there was daylight when God intervened. Stop counting all "these things" that seem against you. If you trust God, He is over all things, including "these things." Down the road, the way takes a turn and the sign reads but god!

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Genesis 50:23 Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim's sons; also the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were born on Joseph's knees. 24 Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, **but God** will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob."

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Exodus 21:12+ "He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. 13 "But if he did not lie in wait for him,**but God** let him fall into his hand, then I will appoint you a place to which he may flee.

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Numbers 22:21+ So Balaam arose in the morning, and saddled his donkey and went with the leaders of Moab. 22 **But God** was angry because he was going, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him.

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Judges 15:18+ Then he became very thirsty, and he called to the LORD and said, "You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant, and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" 19 **But God** split the hollow place that is in Lehi so that water came out of it. When he drank, his strength returned and he revived. Therefore he named it En-hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day.

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1 Samuel 23:13+ Then David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the pursuit. 14 David stayed in the wilderness in the strongholds, and remained in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, **but God** did not deliver him into his hand.

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**Jon Courson - "But God..."** How I love this phrase that appears throughout Scripture. Saul is after David. But God was there for him. And the same thing is true for you. Satan seeks to devour you as a roaring lion, but God is with you. And greater is He that is in you than the one who comes against you (1 John 4:4).

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**Ken Hemphill - [BUT GOD Protects Us \(page 14\)](#) 1 Samuel 23:14**

Have you ever felt like someone was out to get you? Have you had that uneasy feeling that there is something or someone lurking out there who desires to do you harm? We can learn a lesson from a great man of the Bible who had an adversary like that who "searched for him every day."

Saul was still the titular king of Israel, but his days were numbered because he had disobeyed God's instructions and had become arrogant in his own achievement, even going so far as to set up a monument to himself. Samuel, then, was given the difficult assignment of telling Saul that God had rejected him. David would become king in Saul's place.

From the very beginning we see a totally different attitude and spirit in David than in Saul as he willingly served the very king he was destined to replace. When Saul was tormented by an evil spirit, David played his harp to comfort him. When Saul was frightened by the giant Goliath, David defeated the Philistine who dared defy the army of the Lord. But David's success only served to breed greater hatred in the heart of Saul, who began an all-out campaign to kill David.

As this threat became more overt and obvious, David refused to respond in kind. He had several opportunities to take Saul's life but refused to lay a hand on him. His strategy was simple but clear — stay away from Saul! He took steps calculated to provide protection, moving from place to place, seeking out remote, desert areas and easily defensible places — "in the wilderness strongholds and in the hill country" (1 Sam. 23:14).

The key to David's protection, however, was not his own ingenuity. He understood that the Lord was his protection, and therefore we are told, "But God did not hand David over to him."

We can take every precaution to avoid conflict with those who would harm us. But the Lord is our true protector, and he will do the hard work of keeping us safe.

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1 Chronicles 28:2+ Then King David rose to his feet and said, "Listen to me, my brethren and my people; I had intended to build a permanent home for the ark of the covenant of the LORD and for the footstool of our God. So I had made preparations to build it. 3 **"But God** said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name because you are a man of war and have shed blood.'

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Job 34:5 "For Job has said, 'I am righteous, **But God** has taken away my right;



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Psalm 49:14<sup>±</sup> As sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd; And the upright shall rule over them in the morning, And their form shall be for Sheol to consume So that they have no habitation. 15 **But God** will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, For He will receive me. Selah.

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Psalm 52:4<sup>±</sup> You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue. 5 **But God** will break you down forever; He will snatch you up and tear you away from your tent, And uproot you from the land of the living. Selah.

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Psalm 64:6<sup>±</sup> They devise injustices, saying, "We are ready with a well-conceived plot"; For the inward thought and the heart of a man are deep. 7 **But God** will shoot at them with an arrow; Suddenly they will be wounded.

### **Ken Hemphill - BUT GOD Repels Our Enemies Psalm 64:6-7**

This is a wonderful promise about God's righteous judgment of sin and his desire to protect his children from evildoers. But to fully appreciate it, we need to look at the entire passage.

Note how Psalm 64 begins—with a simple yet important request. The psalmist asked the Lord to hear him and deliver him from the terror or dread of the enemy. The emotion spoken of is one of paralyzing fear, a state of mind that would keep him from thinking clearly and taking positive action.

Perhaps you can identify with this. What or who is it that terrorizes you? Have you asked the Lord to deliver you from your dread?

After this the psalmist turned to the enemy's strategy. The terms he used tell us that his adversary had no intention of fighting fairly. He spoke of the "scheming of the wicked" and "the mob of evildoers" (v. 2). Those who would destroy us, he said, "sharpen their tongues like swords and aim bitter words like arrows" (v. 3). They attack without warning from "concealed places" (v. 4). They "encourage each other" in their evil scheming (v. 5). When they devise a plan, they declare it to be perfect (v. 6). Sound familiar? I am sure you've met this kind of enemy before.

The solution for turning back the assault, however, is swift and appropriate — "But God will shoot them with arrows." Yes, our adversary is defeated by his own weapons. When I read this verse I am reminded of the biblical truth that we will reap what we sow.

So the request from verse 1 —to be delivered from dread—is more than abundantly answered by the promise of God's action. Judgment may not occur until sometime in the future, but it is certain and it will be swift. Therefore, we can begin to rejoice now and "take refuge" in the Lord (v. 10).

Our vision is limited and we often despair when we see the unrighteous prosper. Remember—But God! (Borrow [But God page 30](#))

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### **"BUT GOD . . ."**

They [the wicked] encourage themselves in an evil matter; they speak of laying snares secretly . . . **But God** . . . (Psalm 64:5, 7)

The arresting phrase "**But God**" occurs frequently in the Scriptures. There is the "But God" of salvation (Rom. 5:8), the "But God" of the spiritual harvest (1 Cor. 3:7), the "But God" of marital peace (1 Cor. 7:15), and the "But God" of the victory over temptation (1 Cor. 10:13). One could cite many more such references in the Word, but today we shall call your attention to the "But God" of divine protection!

It is good for us to realize that we may be hindered, delayed, and sometimes greatly tried by the enemy of our soul, but then, just at the right time our blessed Defender steps in and frustrates the foul plans of the adversary. David experienced such divine intervention when his enemies had encouraged themselves in an evil matter and had plotted against his soul. They laid snares for his feet, "But God" in His well-timed providence put a halt to their diabolical schemes.

[Bishop Gobat](#), while laboring among the wild tribes of the Druses, was one day invited by a chief to visit him. Desiring to gain some influence over that wicked man, he eagerly accepted. Regrettably (or so he thought), he became ill, and could not go. When the invitation was repeated, circumstances again interfered. A third summons came and this time he set out with a guide. First the native lost his way, and then when a hyena crossed their path the superstitious guide, in line with certain tribal taboos, would go no farther. As a result the Bishop was obliged to forgo the visit. Later he learned that by these means he had been hindered from falling into the hands of those who had determined to murder him. The treacherous chief exclaimed, "That man must be the servant of God; for though I sent messenger after messenger to bring him, he was always hindered."

When you are frustrated, Christian, remember it may be due to the "But God" of our Lord's providential leading and protection.

If God permitted no trials, we should enjoy no triumphs!

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Psalm 73:25+ Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, **But God** is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

In earth or Heaven above  
Who is there that I love  
Compared with Thee?  
My heart may faint with fears,  
**But God** my strength appears,  
And will to endless years  
My portion be.  
-- The Psalter

### **Ken Hemphill - BUT GOD Is Our Strength Psalm 73:26**

Have you ever been envious of the prosperity of the wicked? Do you ever wonder why those who cut corners seem to get all the breaks in life? If you had to answer “yes” — and who wouldn’t? —you are in pretty good company. When the psalmist Asaph looked at the wicked, he noted that they have an easy time, their bodies are well-fed, they are not in trouble, and they are not “afflicted like most people” (vv. 4—5). They mock God and appear to get away with it.

The bottom line is clearly stated in Ps 73:12: “Look at them—the wicked! They are always at ease, and they increase their wealth.” Just to look at them, you’d think they had everything in the world a person could possibly want.

Does this description bring anyone to mind? Do you sometimes find that you too are envious of those who have all the stuff you can’t afford and can’t attain? What is the solution?

We can see the beginning of victory in Ps 73:16—17. “When I tried to understand all this, it seemed hopeless until I entered God’s sanctuary. Then I understood their destiny.” The light came on when Asaph turned to the Lord in worship. There he discovered the eternal contrast—that those who live for themselves with no regard for God are certain to fall into ultimate and eternal ruin.

So how foolish of us to be bitter and envious toward the wicked, when we are being held even now by the hand of God and are assured of one day being taken up to glory (Ps 73:23—24). What else could we really want? A relationship with God is more than enough.

In the meantime, yes, our “heart” may feel low and discouraged. Certainly at some point, our physical “flesh” will die. But no matter — God is both the “strength” of our heart and our “portion” forever, both the power for present day living and the promise of our eternal inheritance.

Why, then, should we envy anyone? (BORROW [But God page 34](#))

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Psalm 75:6+ For not from the east, nor from the west, Nor from the desert comes exaltation; 7 **But God** is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another.

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Jonah 4:6 So the LORD God appointed a plant and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head to deliver him from his discomfort. And Jonah was extremely happy about the plant. 7 **But God** appointed a worm when dawn came the next day and it attacked the plant and it withered.

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Mark 2:6+ But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7 “Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins **but God** alone?”

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Luke 5:20+ Seeing their faith, He said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.” 21 The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, **but God** alone?”

### **Ken Hemphill - BUT GOD Forgives Our Sins Luke 5:21 Who is this man**

Psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, and the rest of us have pondered the questions related to man’s sin problem. Some have actually tried to dismiss it altogether, hoping that by denying sin, our problem with it will somehow go away. It doesn’t work, though, does it? We know intuitively what the Bible declares unequivocally: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).



Perhaps you remember the event surrounding today's "But God" verse. Jesus was teaching and the crowds had gathered to hear him, with the Pharisees and the teachers of the law among them. Several men had brought a paralyzed friend to Jesus for healing. But since the room was packed to capacity, they removed the tiles from the roof and lowered the man into the middle of the crowd. A grand entrance!

Jesus first words were unexpected. "Friend, your sins are forgiven you" (5:20). It would have been less startling if he had said, "Get up and walk." After all, what did a paralyzed man need most? But Jesus' primary purpose was to deliver man from the paralysis of sin that, left unchecked, will ultimately lead to spiritual death.

These words provoked an immediate reaction from the learned theologians. Their first assertion, formed in the guise of a question, was actually correct: "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" But their conclusion was wrong—that Jesus spoke blasphemy when he pronounced forgiveness. They could never understand that Jesus' relationship with God was such that he was indeed able to forgive sin. (In fact, he went on to demonstrate this authority by healing the paralytic's physical illness.)

And so in the end, the man bore the cot that once bore him, but he left with praise on his lips for more than legs that functioned and a body that could walk upright. Who can forgive sin? God alone through his Son, Jesus. Have you experienced the forgiveness of your sin? (BORROW [But God page 50](#))

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Luke 12:19+ 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" 20 **But God** said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?'

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Luke 16:15+ And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, **but God** knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.

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Acts 2:23+ this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. 24 **But God** raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

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Acts 7:5+ "But He gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot of ground, and yet, even when he had no child, He promised that HE WOULD GIVE IT TO HIM AS A POSSESSION, AND TO HIS DESCENDANTS AFTER HIM. 6 **But God** spoke to this effect, that his DESCENDANTS WOULD BE ALIENS IN A FOREIGN LAND, AND THAT THEY WOULD BE ENSLAVED AND MISTREATED FOR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS.

**BUT GOD Keeps His Promises** - BORROW Ken Hemphill's [But God - page 56](#)

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Acts 7:41+ "At that time they made a calf and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. 42 **But God** turned away and delivered them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, 'IT WAS NOT TO ME THAT YOU OFFERED VICTIMS AND SACRIFICES FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS, WAS IT, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL?'

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Acts 13:29-30+ "When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. **But God** raised Him from the dead;

**BUT GOD Raised His Son** - BORROW Ken Hemphill's [But God - page 62](#)

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Romans 5:7-8+ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 **But God** demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

**Robert Morgan - Romans 5:8** But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us! — Romans 5:8

When Charles Evans Hughes, America's secretary of state in the 1920s, attended an important meeting of the Pan-American Conference, he gave his interpreter an unusual request. He wanted a summarized translation of what was being spoken in Spanish or Portuguese, but he added, "I want you to give me every word after the speaker says **but**."

The word **but** is a conjunction that implies a sudden change of direction in the thought. And when we see this word in the Bible, it's important to understand every word that follows it, especially if the phrase is but God...!

- **But God** said, "No. Your wife Sarah will bear you a son." (Gen. 17:19)
- It was not you who sent me here, **but God**. (Gen. 45:8)
- I am about to die, **but God**... (Gen. 50:24)

- Do not be afraid or discouraged,... the battle is not yours, **but God's**. (2 Chron. 20:15)
- **But God** was watching over the Jewish elders. (Ezra 5:5)
- **But our God** turned the curse into a blessing. (Neh. 13:2)
- **But God** will redeem my life from the power of Sheol. (Ps. 49:15)
- My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart, my portion forever. (Ps. 73:26)
- **But God** was with him. (Acts 7:9)
- **But God** raised Him from the dead. (Acts 13:30)
- **But God** gave the growth. (1 Cor. 3:6)
- **But God**, who comforts the humble, comforted us. (2 Cor. 7:6)
- **But God**, who is abundant in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, made us alive with the Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses. (Eph. 2:4-5)

Romans 5:8 is perhaps the greatest of all the **"But God"** statements in the Bible: **But God** proves His own love for ([huper](#)) us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us!

### Memory Tip

If we read and study a verse in its context, we can more easily memorize a verse and its reference. This verse is found in the middle of the paragraph in Romans 5 that runs from Ro 6-11. The whole paragraph is worth memorizing, for it contains some of the richest verses in the Bible about the willingness of Jesus Christ to offer Himself for our sins. Read this paragraph repeatedly to understand the context for Ro 5:8, and memorizing it will come much more naturally.

"Christ died for us." Here is a simple sentence in four words. The first two words state a historical fact: 'Christ died.' The second two add the theological significance: 'for ([huper](#)) us.' The full four form the crux of the Gospel: 'Christ died for ([huper](#)) us.' Never did four short words hold bigger or better message. —J. Sidlow Baxter (BORROW [From this Verse - page 58](#))

**Ken Hemphill - But God Loves Us** - Borrow [But God page 64](#)

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1 Corinthians 1:26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 **but God** has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,

**Ken Hemphill - BUT GOD Chooses the Unworthy page 66**

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1 Corinthians 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, **but God** was causing the growth.

**Ken Hemphill - BUT GOD Does the Work** - Borrow [But God page 70](#)

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1 Corinthians 3:7+ So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, **but God** who (present tense - continually) causes the growth.

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See related commentary on Mark 4:27 (The Farmer) goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know.

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This is the "BUT GOD" of spiritual harvest from God the divine Horticulturist Who Alone can create a new creation in Christ (2Cor 5:17ESV+)

**THOUGHT** - Are you sowing seed, so that God might cause the growth. It reminds me of the old Greyhound Bus commercial "Take the bus and leave the driving to us!" Sow the see and leave the "germinating" to God! May the words of Psalm 126:5-6 be true of all of us...

Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting. 6He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, Shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

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**Jonathan Bagster - Daily Light on the Daily Path -**

"Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets."

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. . . . And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

“The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea.”

For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! . . . I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.—“So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose.”—**So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.**

Luke 5:5; Matt. 28:18–20; Matt. 13:47; 1 Cor. 9:16, 22; Gal. 6:9; Isa. 55:11; 1 Cor. 3:7

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**Rick Renner - 1 Corinthians 3:7 - [Your Most Valuable Partner](#)** - What has God called you to do that you never dreamed you would be doing? I've learned that as we walk with God as our most important Partner in life, we often find ourselves doing what we would have never thought possible. ([For full devotional click here](#); See related devotional [Do You Know the Role You're Supposed to Play?](#))

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### **Vance Havner - ONLY GOD IS ANYTHING**

So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 1 Corinthians 3:7.

God lays aside His co-workers as the carpenter his tools. Some are castaways, disapproved. Some are old and spent. A preacher who once swayed multitudes fades out in seclusion. We have our day and some finish early, dying in full bloom. All that matters is that the work goes on, the building goes up. We are not mere pawns on a chessboard, for God is our Father, but we serve our generation by the will of God and then fall asleep and are laid with our fathers. The planters and builders come and go and are nothing—only God is anything and everything.

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**Moravian Daily Texts** - Paul wrote: So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 1 Corinthians 3:7

Father, we praise you;  
Jesus, we love you;  
Spirit, we thank you,  
for these new days;  
help us to know, Lord;  
help us to grow, Lord;  
help us to sow, Lord,  
your love always. (535\*)

God of the harvest, you make things grow. As gardeners in this world let your spirit work through us as we tend to the growth of others so that they will become what you meant for them to be. Amen. (C. Daniel Crews)

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### **THE SELF-DISCIPLINE APPROACH**

Neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. (1 Cor 3:7)

There's no doubt that disciplined people, both believers and unbelievers, can effect change in themselves. But in the self-discipline approach to holiness, a major temptation is to rely on a regimen of spiritual disciplines instead of on the Holy Spirit.

I believe in spiritual disciplines, and I seek to practice them. But those disciplines are not the source of our spiritual strength. The Lord Jesus Christ is, and the Spirit's ministry is to apply His strength in our lives. To paraphrase 1 Corinthians 3:7, we can plant and water, but we cannot make things grow. Only the Spirit can do that. We must plant and water if we're to make progress in holiness, but only the Spirit can change us more and more into the likeness of Jesus.

*Edwards was disciplined, but he was also dependent.*

[Jonathan Edwards compiled a series of seventy resolutions](#) to govern his own spiritual disciplines and conduct. Talk about spiritual discipline! His resolutions would make most of our present-day disciplines look like spiritual kindergarten. But at the beginning of his list he wrote these words: "Being sensible that I am unable to do any thing without God's help, I do humbly entreat him, by his grace, to enable me to keep these Resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to his will, for Christ's sake." Edwards was disciplined, but he was also dependent.

I'm sure those of us who tend toward the self-discipline school of holiness agree that we must depend on the enabling power of the Spirit. We give lip service to it, but do we practice it? Do we each day and throughout the day acknowledge our dependence on Him? Or do we in fact seek to pursue holiness in the strength of our own willpower? (BORROW Jerry Bridges [Holiness day by day : transformational thoughts for your spiritual journey page 94](#))

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### [Glory to the Grower](#)

So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 1  
Corinthians 3:7

Today's Scripture & Insight : Mark 4:26–29

One day, I noticed an unexpected splash of yellow to the right of our driveway. Six stalks of daffodils, sandwiched between two large stones, bloomed bright and tall. Because I hadn't planted, fertilized, or intentionally watered the bulbs, I couldn't figure out how or why the flowers had sprouted in our yard.

Jesus illustrated a mystery of spiritual growth in the parable of the growing seed. He compares the kingdom of God to a farmer scattering seed on the ground (Mark 4:26). The one who scattered the seed may have done what he could to care for the soil. But Jesus said the seed sprouted whether or not that man slept in, woke up, or even understood the growth process (vv. 27–28). The land owner benefited from the harvest (v. 29), though its development didn't depend on what he did or his understanding of the workings beneath the surface of the soil.

The maturing of the seeds in Jesus's parable, like the blooming of my daffodils, occurred in God's time and because of God's growing power. Whether we're considering personal spiritual growth or God's plan to expand the church until Jesus returns, the Lord's mysterious ways aren't dependent on our abilities or understanding of His works. Still, God invites us to know, serve, and praise the Grower, reaping the benefits of the spiritual maturity He cultivates in and through us. By: Xochitl Dixon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, thank You for growing us spiritually and using us to serve Your people, as You grow Your kingdom.

God deserves the glory for the growth of His people and His kingdom.

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### **The Richness Of Humility**

Read: 1 Corinthians 3:1-10

Neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. —1 Corinthians 3:7

She lived out spiritual humility, yet she had much on a human level to be proud of. As an author of over 70 books and a translator of many others into Afrikaans, Annalou Marais had much cause to brag—but she was more concerned about honoring Christ than advancing herself. She worked behind the scenes of the Bible conference, doing a servant's tasks with a smiling face and a joyful heart. It would have been natural for her to desire, and even deserve, the spotlight. Instead, she quietly served, joyfully weeping as God worked in people's hearts. It was an impressive humility, because it was completely genuine.

I have heard it said, "It is amazing what can be accomplished when we don't care who gets the credit." This is certainly true of Christian service. Paul told the church at Corinth, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6-7). Paul had learned that great lesson of the servant's heart, as Annalou has learned—it's entirely about God. What we do is accomplished by His power and grace, and all the glory must go to Him.

It was a lesson in humility watching Annalou, and one that reminded me of the richness of serving God. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

God often uses lowly things  
His purpose to fulfill,  
Because it takes a humble heart  
To carry out His will.  
—D. De Haan

Pride and grace cannot dwell in the same place.

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### Let God Do His Work

Read: 1 Corinthians 3:1-11

Neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. —1 Corinthians 3:7

In our zeal to serve the Lord, it's easy to think that it's our responsibility to produce results. This causes us to place too much faith in our ability and too little faith in God's.

Paul observed this same tendency in the Corinthian church. Certain believers extolled the seed-planting ministry of Paul, while others favored the seed-watering ministry of Apollos. In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul reminded them that it is God who brings the seed to fruition (vv.4-7). Yet Paul acknowledged that their faithful efforts were part of God's plan, "and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor" (v.8).

Imagine a farmer sitting on his front porch. You ask him what he's doing. He answers, "Farming." You ask him what he's growing. He replies, "Wheat." "But your fields look unplowed and unplanted," you say. "That's right," he answers, "I'm farming by faith. Believing God for a harvest." "But shouldn't you be doing something?" you protest. He replies, "I am. I'm praying and believing!"

This story reminds us that God won't do our work for us, and 1 Corinthians teaches us that the results are not up to us. The best way to serve is to faithfully plant and water the seed, then trust God for the results.(Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

God does not expect us  
To make the seed bear fruit;  
Jesus said to plant it,  
And pray that it will root.  
—Pendergraft

We can plant the seed, but only God can give the harvest.

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1 Corinthians 6:13+ Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, **but God** will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.

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1 Corinthians 7:15+ Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, **but God** has called us to peace.

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1 Corinthians 12:24+ whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. **But God** has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked,

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1 Corinthians 15:38+ **But God** gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.

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2 Corinthians 7:5-6+ For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within. **BUT GOD**, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

**Ken Hemphill - BUT GOD Comforts Us** - Borrow [But God page 74](#)

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**Cynthia Heald** - After Paul acknowledged his fears to the Corinthians, in the very next sentence he wrote, "But God ..." (2 Corinthians 7:6). When we are overwhelmed with apprehension, we must learn the "**BUT GOD**" response. "**BUT GOD**" sent Titus to

encourage Paul. **"BUT GOD"** revealed Himself to Asaph in the sanctuary. **"BUT GOD"** was David's light and salvation. **"BUT GOD"** calmed the storm for the fearful disciples. **"BUT GOD,"** when we turn to Him whether plagued by doubt or by fear, is our Rock: There is no other. Whenever we begin to doubt, we must not waver in our faith, but be fully assured that what God has promised, He is also able to perform (see Romans 4:21). God has pledged Himself to be our defense, our refuge, our strength, and "He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises" (2 Peter 1:4). He is our hiding place when we are fearful, and He is our confidence when we are doubtful. Our trust in His love and strength are indispensable to staying on course in the race that is set before us....What have you discovered in this lesson that could help you develop a **"BUT GOD"** mindset in response to your doubts and fears?

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Galatians 3:18+ For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; **but God** has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.

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Ephesians 2:3+ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 **But God,** being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

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**Ray Pritchard** - Grace Given—"But God" Note the two little words in verse 4: "But...God." Our salvation hangs entirely on those two words. We were dead...**But God!** We were enslaved...**But God!** We were trapped...**but God!** We were self-destructing...**but God!** We were lost in sin...**but God!** Now circle three words in Eph 2:4-5—love, mercy, and grace. Love is that in God which causes him to reach out to his creatures in benevolence. Mercy is God withholding punishment. And grace? Grace is the unmerited favor of God. Think of it this way. Imagine a vast reservoir of God's love. As it begins to flow toward us, it becomes a river of mercy. As it cascades down upon us, the mercy becomes a torrent of grace. These two verses offer three words which answer to the desperate state of mankind: Love Mercy Grace Here's a good way to remember the difference between mercy and grace. Mercy is God not giving us what we do deserve—Judgment. Grace is God giving us what we don't deserve—Salvation. The picture of a torrent of grace rushing upon us is especially apropos since grace always comes down from God to man. Grace never goes up; it always comes down. Grace by definition means that God gives us what we don't deserve and could never earn. ([Amazing Grace](#))

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**Tony Dungy** - Ephesians 2:4 begins with two of the most important, exciting, and life-changing words in the Bible—"but God." "But God" are words that will reverse any situation. "But God" will bring life where death existed because of what God has done for us in grace.

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**Robert L. Deffinbaugh** said, "the words, '**But God**' ... are a beacon of light and hope in a sea of despair." Right in the midst of sinful misery God steps on the scene.

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**John Piper - THE MEANING OF GRACE: BUT GOD ...**

Then comes one of the most precious phrases in the Bible (v. 4): **'But... God.'** We were foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to sinful pleasures, malicious, envious, hated and hating. But ... God ... "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God appeared, he [God!] saved us."

This is the same amazing sequence that we saw in Ephesians 2:3-5: "[We were] carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. **But God,** being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved." We were dead, but God made us alive. This is the meaning of grace. The dead can do nothing to make themselves live. **But God** ...

That's what we have here in Titus 3:3-5. We were slaves to desires and pleasures that were so powerful we could not taste and see that the Lord was good. So far as our ability to know and trust and love God was concerned, we were dead. **But... God.** Verses 4-5: "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit." ([Through the Washing of Regeneration](#))

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### Vance Havner - "But God ..." (Eph. 2:1-7)

Once I was blind, **BUT GOD** touched me.

Once I was lost, **BUT GOD** bound me.

Once I was under wrath, **BUT GOD** loved me.

Once I walked according to the course of this world, **BUT GOD** turned me and now I walk as He walked.

Once I walked according to the prince of the power of the air, **BUT GOD** stopped me, and now I follow the Prince of Peace.

Once I had my manner of life in the lusts of the flesh and mind, **BUT GOD** gave me a new life, and Christ liveth in me.

Once I was by nature the child of wrath, **BUT GOD** has begotten me into the family of love.

And all of this is the free gift of grace if one will by faith in God's Son come to that second birthday, the beginning of a new life that opens with those two precious words: "**BUT GOD**..."

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Philippians 2:27+ For indeed he was sick to the point of death, **but God** had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow.

**Ken Hemphill - BUT GOD Shows Mercy - [Borrow But God page 76](#)**

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1 Thessalonians 2:4+ but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, **but God** who examines our hearts.

## "BUT GOD" IN NIV & NOT IN NASB

**Explanation** - These passages are occurrences of **BUT GOD** in the NIV which are not found in the NASB.

**NIV** - Ge 3:3; Ge 31:42; Ge 41:16; Ge 45:7; Ex 24:11; Nu 22:12; 1Sa 6:19; 1Sa 14:37; 2Sa 14:14; Job 24:12; Job 24:22; Job 34:5; Ps. 49:15; Ps. 66:19; Eccl. 6:2; Jer. 10:12; Jn. 1:18; Acts 3:15; Acts 7:5; Acts 7:9; Acts 10:28; Acts 10:40; 1Co 2:10; 2Co. 12:3; Gal. 3:20; 1Th 4:8; Heb. 3:4; Heb. 5:5; Heb. 8:8; Heb. 12:10

Genesis 3:3 **BUT GOD** did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'

Genesis 31:42 If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been with me, you would surely have sent me away empty-handed. **BUT GOD** has seen my hardship and the toil of my hands, and last night he rebuked you."

Genesis 41:16 "I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "**BUT GOD** will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."

Genesis 45:7 **BUT GOD** sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

Exodus 24:11 **BUT GOD** did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.

Numbers 22:12 **BUT GOD** said to Balaam, "Do not go with them. You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed."

1 Samuel 6:19 **BUT GOD** struck down some of the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh, putting seventy of them to death because they looked into the ark of the Lord. The people mourned because of the heavy blow the Lord had dealt them.

1 Samuel 14:37 So Saul asked God, "Shall I go down and pursue the Philistines? Will you give them into Israel's hand?" **BUT GOD** did not answer him that day.

1 Samuel 23:14 David stayed in the wilderness strongholds and in the hills of the Desert of Ziph. Day after day Saul searched for him, **BUT GOD** did not give David into his hands.

2 Samuel 14:14 Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. **BUT GOD** does not take away life; instead, he devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged from him.

Job 24:12 The groans of the dying rise from the city, and the souls of the wounded cry out for help. **BUT GOD** charges no one with wrongdoing.

Job 24:22 **BUT GOD** drags away the mighty by his power; though they become established, they have no assurance of life.

Job 34:5 "Job says, 'I am innocent, **BUT GOD** denies me justice.

Psalms 49:15 **BUT GOD** will redeem me from the realm of the dead; he will surely take me to himself.

Psalms 66:19 **BUT GOD** has surely listened and has heard my prayer.

Ecclesiastes 6:2 God gives some people wealth, possessions and honor, so that they lack nothing their hearts desire, **BUT GOD** does not grant them the ability to enjoy them, and strangers enjoy them instead. This is meaningless, a grievous evil.

Jeremiah 10:12 **BUT GOD** made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.

Acts 3:15 You killed the author of life, **BUT GOD** raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

Acts 7:5 He gave him no inheritance here, not even enough ground to set his foot on. **BUT GOD** promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child.

Acts 7:9 "Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him

#### **Vance Havner - "But God Was with Him" Acts 7:9.**

This is one of the many "But Gods" in the Book that spell quite a difference. Joseph's brothers sold him into Egypt, but God was with him. Joseph himself put it this way: "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good" (Gen. 50:20). What men thought was overruled by what God wrought. "Man proposes but God disposes."

"He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5, 6). No plottings of men, no combinations of circumstances can defeat the man who has God as his helper. Here is the secret of many a life, conspired against by ill health, poverty, evil men, foes in the household, the world, the flesh and the devil, but victorious, anyway—God was with him. The devil and men often overstep themselves, sell Joseph into Egypt, but God makes him Prime Minister! "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

And even in the last dark chapter we need not tremble at our Adversary, but triumph with our Ally—"I will fear no evil, for thou art with me."

But God was with him. What a difference that makes (Vance Havner)

Acts 26:22 But God has helped me to this very day; so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen—

1 Corinthians 2:10 **BUT GOD** has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

2 Corinthians 12:3 And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, **BUT GOD** knows—

Galatians 3:20 A mediator, however, implies more than one party; **BUT GOD** is one.

1 Thessalonians 4:8 Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being **BUT GOD**, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 3:4 For every house is built by someone, **BUT GOD** is the builder of everything.

Hebrews 5:5 In the same way, Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest. **BUT GOD** said to him, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father."

Hebrews 8:8 **BUT GOD** found fault with the people and said: "The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.

Hebrews 12:10 They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; **BUT GOD** disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness.

#### **Ken Hemphill - BUT GOD Corrects Us for Our Good Hebrews 12:10**

"This hurts me worse than it does you, son!"

"I'm doing this for your good!"

"One day you'll thank me for this!"

I can still hear vividly some of the things my dad used to tell me, right before he would discipline me. I must confess, at the time I found them hard to believe. As time progressed, though, and I accepted the responsibility of being a father, I came to appreciate my dad's discipline.

If you are a believer, you've experienced the discipline of the Lord as he has brought correction and reproof. For that reason it would be worth your time to read all of Hebrews 12. The writer reminded us that God calls us his children and that we should not take that privilege lightly. Only in the context of our sonship can we understand the Lord's discipline as an act of great love for his children.

The writer of Hebrews then compared God's perfect parenting skills to those of earthly, fallible parents. Their discipline is for a brief period, based on what seems best at the time. But every parent would admit that they've made mistakes while disciplining their children. Sometimes we discipline from anger or embarrassment. At other times we act without all the facts.

But the good news is, God disciplines us "for our benefit." God is perfect in character, and therefore his discipline flows from that perfection. Even when we don't fully understand it, we can rely on the fact that God in his perfect wisdom and love can never impose discipline on us that is not in our best interest. Remember, he created us and knows us better than we know ourselves.

We sometimes misunderstand God's discipline because we lose sight of his ultimate desire for his children — "so that we can share his holiness." God disciplines us so that we continually become more like him. When we understand this precious truth, we will welcome God's discipline as a gift more precious than gold. (Borrow [But God page 82](#))

## "BUT GOD" IN NET & NOT IN THE NASB

**Explanation** - These passages are occurrences of **BUT GOD** in the NET which are not found in the NASB.

**NET** - Ge 21:17; Ge 31:7; Ge 31:24; Ge 31:42; Ge 41:16; Ge 45:8; Nu 22:12; 2Sa 14:14; 1Ki 12:22; Ezra 5:5; Job 24:12; Job 24:22; Ps. 64:7; Ps. 74:12; Acts 7:9; Acts 10:40; 1Co 5:13; 1Co 10:5; Gal. 3:20; 1Th. 4:8; 1Jn. 5:18

Genesis 21:17 **But God** heard the boy's voice. The angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and asked her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Don't be afraid, for God has heard the boy's voice right where he is crying.

Genesis 31:7 but your father has humiliated me and changed my wages ten times. But God has not permitted him to do me any harm.

Genesis 31:24 But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and warned him, "Be careful that you neither bless nor curse Jacob."

Genesis 31:42 If the God of my father – the God of Abraham, the one whom Isaac fears – had not been with me, you would certainly have sent me away empty-handed! But God saw how I was oppressed and how hard I worked, and he rebuked you last night."

Genesis 41:16 Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "It is not within my power, but God will speak concerning the welfare of Pharaoh."

Genesis 45:8 So now, it is not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me an adviser to Pharaoh, lord over all his household, and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Numbers 22:12 But God said to Balaam, "You must not go with them; you must not curse the people, for they are blessed."

2 Samuel 14:14 Certainly we must die, and are like water spilled on the ground that cannot be gathered up again. But God does not take away life; instead he devises ways for the banished to be restored.

1 Kings 12:22 But God told Shemaiah the prophet,

Ezra 5:5 But God was watching over the elders of Judah, and they were not stopped until a report could be dispatched to Darius and a letter could be sent back concerning this.

Job 24:12 From the city the dying groan, and the wounded cry out for help, but God charges no one with wrongdoing.

Job 24:22 But God drags off the mighty by his power; when God rises up against him, he has no faith in his life.

Psalms 64:7 But God will shoot at them; suddenly they will be wounded by an arrow.

Psalms 74:12 But God has been my king from ancient times, performing acts of deliverance on the earth.

Acts 7:9 The patriarchs, because they were jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt. But God was with him,

Acts 10:40 but God raised him up on the third day and caused him to be seen,

1 Corinthians 5:13 But God will judge those outside. Remove the evil person from among you.

1 Corinthians 10:5 But God was not pleased with most of them, for they were cut down in the wilderness.

Galatians 3:20 Now an intermediary is not for one party alone, but God is one.

1 Thessalonians 4:8 Consequently the one who rejects this is not rejecting human authority but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

1Jn 5:18 We know that everyone fathered by God does not sin, but God protects the one he has fathered, and the evil one cannot touch him.

## "BUT GOD" IN ESV & NOT IN THE NASB

**ESV** - Ge 3:3; Ge 31:7; Ge 31:24; Ex 13:18; 2Sa 14:14; 1Ch 21:7; Ps. 68:21; Eccl. 5:7; Acts 7:9; Acts 10:28; Acts 10:40; Gal. 3:20; 1Th 4:8

Genesis 3:3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'

Genesis 31:7 yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times. But God did not permit him to harm me.

Genesis 31:24 But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream by night and said to him, "Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad."

Exodus 13:18 But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle.

2 Samuel 14:14 We must all die; we are like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. But God will not take away life, and he devises means so that the banished one will not remain an outcast.

1 Chronicles 21:7 But God was displeased with this thing, and he struck Israel.

Psalms 68:21 But God will strike the heads of his enemies, the hairy crown of him who walks in his guilty ways.

Ecclesiastes 5:7 For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity; but God is the one you must fear.

Acts 7:9 "And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him

Acts 10:28 And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean.

Acts 10:40 but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear,

Galatians 3:20 Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

1 Thessalonians 4:8 Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

## RESOURCES ON BUT GOD

- But God by Ken Hemphill - recommended - you can [buy it](#) or [borrow it](#).
- [But God](#) - Jon Bloom