

“The answer to skepticism is truth.”



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Are you a skeptical person? Do you need to weigh facts, figures, and evidence in order to make decisions, validate your thoughts, and be convinced you are doing the right thing? Or do you go with the flow, trust the insight of

others, and conform to what sounds good without discovering truth on your own?

In this day and age, and especially after what we’ve all experienced in the last year, the questions I just asked seem more loaded than ever. With the internet at our fingertips, we are able to research subjects in minutes and oftentimes we can make the outcomes align specifically with how we were already thinking simply by clicking on the sites that validate our thoughts. For this reason, without getting politically charged or charged in any other way, I’d like to unpack skepticism in a variety of subjects in order to open your mind to new perceptions, new ways of thinking and guide you in possibly researching things in new ways so that you can better form your own opinions based on actual facts.

Let us start with a subject that is very near and dear to my heart—our German Shepherd, Hazel. If you remember, we brought our beloved Hazel home on Valentine’s Day in 2019. She didn’t have to do a single thing to steal our hearts right out of the gates. She was exactly what we all hoped for after losing our precious, ten-year-old black lab, Sadie the previous year.

Determined to be the best shepherd raising family, we dove into learning together and training on various levels over the next two years. We sought professional help in order to do it well and we worked hard in to implement our new skills to have a great shepherd. Oh, how quickly she learned and how smart she was—not only in obeying common commands but she seemed to have an extensive vocabulary as well. She learned to pick up her toys, jump on our shoulders, spin, play peek-a-boo, and so much more. When I told her who was home, she instantly knew which person in our family I spoke of in how she responded differently to each of her beloved people.

When things suddenly went awry two months ago, it threw us all for a loop. But we are not quitters—we are overcomers who persevere. However, when things are outside of our area of expertise, we also know when it is time to see professional help—from vets to trainers to many others in the doggy industry. I was skeptical of some advice. So, I sought the advice of others. I needed facts and guidance in how to help our sweet girl. For several weeks we sought professional help, had testing done, and did everything we could to help Hazel and educate ourselves in order to make the best decisions.

What makes decision-making even more difficult is when there are no clear-cut answers to problems, when there are high emotions involved, and when there are opinions from many. In this case, a decision cannot be made from facts alone, there is much more involved and it suddenly makes a wise decision more complicated and almost impossible.

Have you had to make decisions like this? Was it difficult for you? How did you determine the right course of action?

If you know me at all from my previous writings, you may already know that I don’t base my decisions just on what I know externally from facts and evidence, I seek the help of the Lord. His insight, wisdom, and guidance after much prayer and

petition are key in helping me discern truth and come to the right decision.

Perhaps after hearing this, you are skeptical—skeptical of the way I go about decisions, skeptical of any of my ways based on my beliefs, and maybe even skeptical of God in general.

Skepticism is not a bad thing—it just means more information is needed in order to form a decision. Skepticism on any subject means we need to ask more questions, scour evidence, search for facts, seek understanding, and explore options. And when we are talking about a controversial subject as deep and as loaded as religion, extensive research is sometimes needed, especially when you have preconceived notions, negative feelings, and/or bad experiences with Christians in the past.

I’ll be the first to admit, I was skeptical of Jesus. In life, I have learned that if things sound too good to be true, they probably are ... until I met Jesus.

You see, I’ve done life with Him and I’ve done life without Him. What I have come to find is that the incredible fulfillment He offers, not only through His saving grace but in living life in Him, is so much more preferable than living my life without Him.

You don’t have to agree with me. But I wonder, have you given Jesus a chance? What are some things in your life that you struggle with? What are sins that you desire to be free from? Are you living your best life? And finally, are you willing to take the ultimate risk that comes with not knowing and believing in Him—an eternity in hell?

I shared with you last month how I met Jesus and how my relationship with Him grew. What I didn’t share were my doubts along the way. My stumbles and how I would sometimes become skeptical if He was real and truly present in my life. Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now, faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”

Do you wonder why so many people put their faith in Jesus and “blindly” trust Him? Have you ever wondered if there was truly evidence, besides the Bible that supports the existence of Jesus, why He came, and what He offers?

Last year, John Dickerson came to my church, Eagle Brook, to share his experience in diving deep into this subject. As a true journalistic skeptic, he embarked on a journey to discover the truth based on factual historical evidence which he revealed in his book, *Jesus Skeptic*. I listened to all that he said and have since read his book, dug into evidence myself, and added it to what I have learned in God’s Word over the years. My beliefs were solidified with true, factual evidence—not by something I was able to find on the internet based on my preconceived notions or what others have to say without any evidence at all

I find it interesting how facts and evidence have become buried over the years. You would think the opposite would be true since we have access to so much at our fingertips. But when there are so many people with so many differing opinions, being raised in so many different environments, being educated by opinions sometimes more than facts, being tainted by groups that have agendas that we may not see, it is a recipe for disaster.

The answer to skepticism is truth. We are not a people designed to live in the darkness where truth is not in the light so that we can see clearly. I believe this is why the last year has been increasingly more difficult—so much has been skewed for so many different reasons to align with so many different opinions and agendas with so many people following others without knowing what is real and what is fabricated that it becomes nearly impossible to make decisions or have a clear reality of what is.

To drive my point home, I work in an industry known for skepticism.

People wonder if mechanics are being honest about what is found with their vehicles. They sometimes question price thinking they could do the service(s) for less, they wonder if they are being “upsold”, and they even wonder if because of their gender, age, or other factors if they are being taken advantage of.

Here’s the deal: there are evil people in our world. Sure, there are crooked mechanics here and there. But there are also deceptive people in every industry—because there is evil in our world! That being said, just because there is one bad mechanic, one bad police officer, one bad doctor, one bad plumber, one bad lawyer, etc. doesn’t mean they are all bad.

We have a duty to look for truth in any situation. Not truth from the perspective of others (reviews, internet, media, etc.), but the truth from our own experience—based on our situations, research, facts, feelings, and opinions formed on all of these.

Here’s the truth about what I know of our shop (and many others). We work hard every single day to overcome any negative preconceived notions of auto repair shops. Besides having a great caring team, to give it our all, years ago we began using digital inspections complete with pictures and sometimes videos of exactly what our mechanics see so that we can be as transparent as possible. Our service advisors do their absolute best to give our customers a clear report of what is found as well as helping them prioritize service in what is needed immediately, what is needed soon, what can possibly wait, and what is recommended based on time and mileage.

As for skepticism with our industry, let me touch on a few things people wonder about and relate them to other industries.

Can I do it for less?

Just as with any industry, you can always do something yourself at a less expensive rate. For example, if you have a cow, you can butcher it yourself and then cook your own steak for less than a restaurant would charge. If you don’t have a cow, you can buy a steak at any grocery store (some will be less expensive than others based on a variety of factors including quality) and cook it yourself for less than a restaurant would charge. Your steak may taste better, it may not—it depends on your abilities, the restaurant’s quality of meat, and the expertise of their chefs.

There are so many components to DIY vs. a professional including the time you are willing to invest. But you always have a choice in what you want to do based on your circumstances and even your pocketbook. It’s just important to keep in mind quality, time, etc. when you are deciding to do something yourself or seek out professionals.

As for me, I can cook a mean steak! Filet mignon, ribeye ... you name it, I can prepare it to your mouth-watering satisfaction. But sometimes, on special occasions or in a moment I just don’t feel like cooking, I’ll splurge and let a professional chef make my tastebuds dance!

Am I being upsold?

There are times when a vehicle is inspected and a list of recommendations are made for repairs and maintenance that a customer feels they are being “upsold”. To this, I wonder: if you go to the doctor and it is found upon testing that more testing is needed or more problems are revealed from the testing done, would you feel that they are up-selling you? Likely not—you would be glad you know everything so that you can make informed decisions based on facts.

So, your mechanic has two options, well three options really. #1) They can tell you like it is based on facts, their expertise, and maintenance recommendations. #2) They can tell you what you want to hear and leave off other things so that you feel good that



they are not “upselling” you by telling you everything. #3) You can give them your expectations and let them know that you only want the current problem fixed and you don’t want the rest of your vehicle inspected. When they know this, it certainly saves them time and it will allow you to have just what you want.

As for me, if I go to the doctor with a specific symptom and the reason for the symptom is found but they also discover I have cancer, I know I’d want the full diagnosis—not so that I can be happy but so that I know truth, can live in light of the situation and make educated decisions. And I know I want this same thing for my vehicle.

Was I taken advantage of?

The best advice I have for this question is: Don’t go bouncing around to different mechanics who don’t know your vehicle’s history just because you want the cheapest price. Find a mechanic you can trust, build a relationship with them, and know the value of what you are getting (quality, time, expertise, etc.). If you are skeptical, ask questions! If you have reservations, seek wisdom from others! An honest auto repair shop with integrity will welcome questions and do their best to guide you and make you feel comfortable in the process. They want you to feel cared for and have a safe and trustworthy vehicle.

The best other-industry example I can relate this to is the salon. I have had the same amazing hairstylist, Misty, color and cut my hair for many, many years. I follow her wherever she goes. I trust her, we have a great relationship, she does what I ask, if there is ever a problem, she makes it right, and she is excellent at her craft.

As for me, I don’t want the cheapest. I want someone I can trust, have built a relationship with, and know the value of what I am getting in the experience and when I look in the mirror for the next three months. Plus, since I have always cut the hair of all of my kids and husband, I think of the money we have saved and feel that I can splurge every three months with Misty!

At this point, we’ve covered a lot of skepticism. I hope that I have given you some new views and new ways or at least some food for thought and a great book recommendation in *Jesus Skeptic*.

And now, perhaps you now wonder about our Hazel—does her story have a happy ending? Well, it seems her sweet brain was ill. We tried everything in our power to help her while the professionals guided us as we walked this devastating journey. We also sought the aid and wisdom of God as we and others prayed. In the end, there was nothing that could be done, and our sweetest beautiful black German Shepherd, Hazel, who stole our hearts right out of the gates has gone to Heaven to be with my dad and our Sadie. Our hearts are completely broken by these happenings. However, because of our faith, we have hope and confidence that we will see her again one day and she will jump on our shoulders with a big smile on her face as we enter the gates of Heaven.



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AND FIX CARS”**

