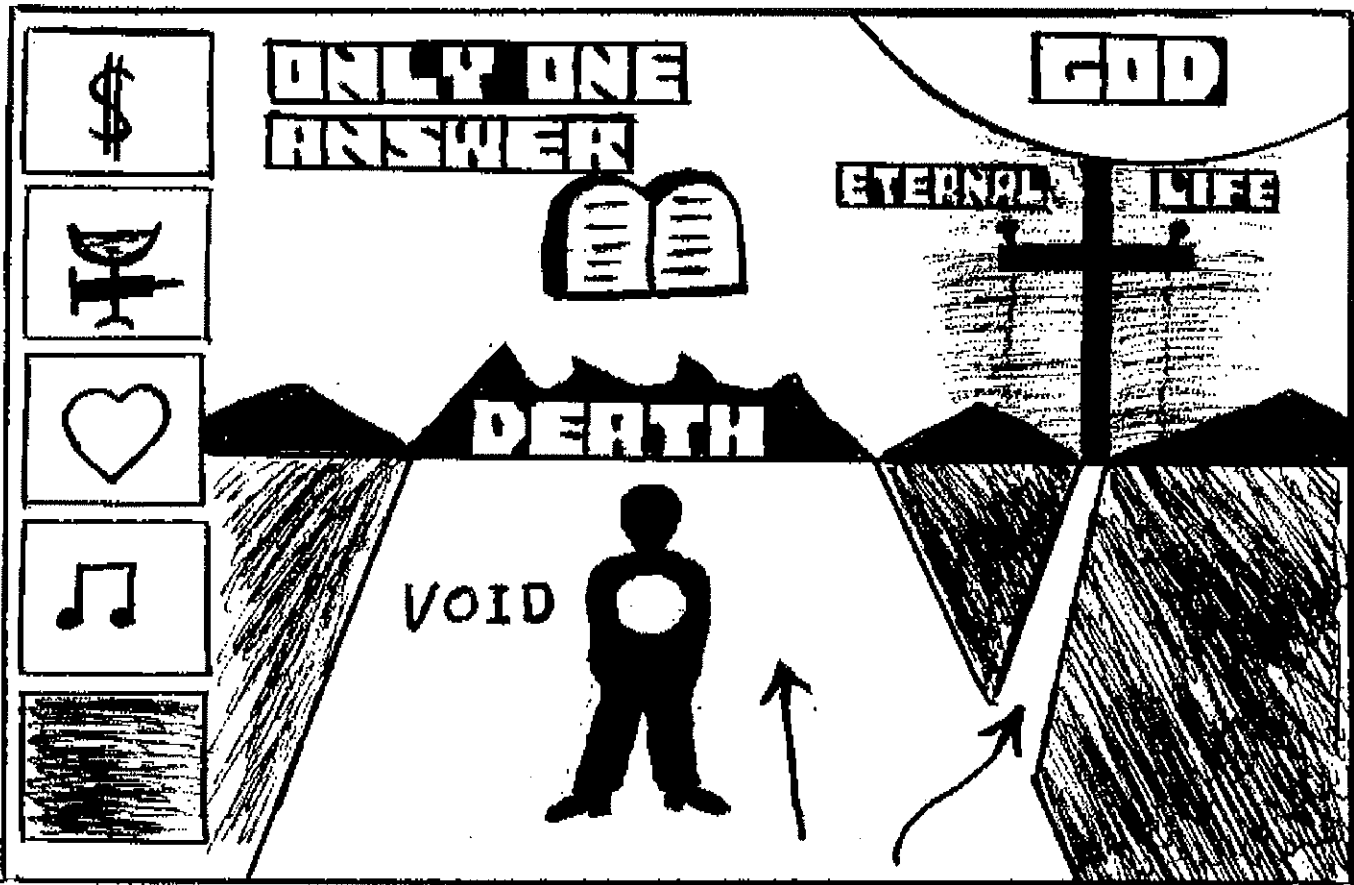


# JOE



**ALL OVER THE WORLD**, people are searching for happiness. Take the typical American, let's call him JOE (or JANE), who is trying to fill a great void that lies deep within. Something is missing in his life, which nothing seems to fill. . Every day we make choices to fill this void, but these choices can have great consequences. Today I want to share with you the answer to this problem that all of us face.

**JOE TRIES MONEY**, working very hard so he can buy new clothes, eat at nice restaurants, and get those things that he's always wanted. But still there's emptiness within. A multi-millionaire was once asked, "How much is enough?" He answered, "Just a little bit more!" Joe finds that he too can never get enough money to buy happiness.

**SO HE GOES TO THE BARS** and parties, and starts drinking. Soon he's telling jokes, but only he is laughing. For a while he forgets his loneliness and emptiness, but in the morning he has a huge headache. So it's back to the bar, or the bottle in his room, to get another drink. Then he sees some alcoholics and thinks, "I don't want to end up like them." In the USA, there are 12 million known alcoholics.

**SO HE LOOKS FOR SOMETHING WITH A LITTLE MORE POWER**, and soon he is into the world of drugs. But after every high, he comes crashing down again. Soon he sees that some of his companions taking drugs with him are no longer around. Some are in hospital, some have lost their minds, and some are dead from overdoses. He thinks, "This is not working. There must be another way to fill the void."

**SO JOE SAYS**, "Perhaps if I fall in love with the perfect girl, then the emptiness and loneliness will be gone." He knows he has a basic need to be loved, and to love. So he starts keeping company with a pretty girl, and soon everything is so wonderful. He's no longer alone. But then comes the first argument, and one day he sees her in another guy's arms. Suddenly it's all over. Joe is left with a broken heart, and all the deep loneliness has returned. One day a man was visiting a big city, and feeling lonely, he went into a bar. Soon he met a woman, and then spent the night with her in a hotel. In the morning she was gone, but she had left him a message written in lipstick on the mirror, which said, "Welcome to the wonderful world of Aids." Joe realizes that falling in love and being immoral can have a high price, so he searches for another way to fill the void within.

**NEXT HE TRIES ENTERTAINMENT**, watching all the late night shows on TV, going to hear the best bands, and dancing all night to loud music. But when he goes home each night, still the emptiness lies within his heart. The Rolling Stones, a

famous Rock band that started in 1965, which has performed to millions, is still singing the same song...."I Can't Find No Satisfaction." Joe thinks that if they can't find it, then the answer to satisfy his life must be somewhere else.

**OR MAYBE**, he thinks, there is no answer! Perhaps he should just end it all, and take his life. In the USA, every day an average of 85 people commit suicide, and over 1000 contemplate it, mostly because they are lonely. But then Joe thinks, "When I die, I know I'm not good enough for heaven, and I certainly don't want to go to the other place (hell)". His conscience tells him that he has broken God's Ten Commandments. He's made of god of money, alcohol, drugs and sex. He's taken God's Name in vain by promising God that if He will get him out of his problems, he would change, but then he forgets his promises. He's disobeyed his parents and caused them heartache. He's been angry, immoral, lied, stolen, cheated, and so on. So he continues on going down the same path of life, trying to fill the void, but each day getting more emptiness and guilt. The only thing he has to look forward to is death!

**BUT THERE IS AN ANSWER**...only one answer...that will work for Joe's life and also for ours. We have all gone our own way, and tried many things to make us happy. We have believed that money, parties, a boy or girl friend, and entertainment could satisfy our hearts. Some of you have also contemplated suicide. But there is another way. Notice how I drew the things Joe tried as squares, but his need (void) as a circle. The first are all physical, but the second is spiritual. It's our soul that cries out within us to be fed. We are more than just a body. Our soul is made in the image GOD. Only He "satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness" (Psalm 107:9). We were never meant to live this life without Him. Until will find Him, we will never fill the emptiness within.

**ONE DAY JOE HEARS** about another path of life. God's way. A narrow path, which God says few ever find, but it leads to eternal life. He has to make a choice. But how can this narrow way bring us to God who is perfect and holy, while we are sinful? It is the way of God's forgiveness. We have all broken His Ten Commandments, gone our own way, and done those things for which we are now ashamed. Even though he loves us, our sin still stands as a barrier between God and us. We try to break through this barrier by doing some good deeds, but the sins of our past still separate us from God. We try man made religions, philosophies, and theories, but none of these things this can bring us forgiveness. There is only one answer. God knew that we could never come to Him, so He came to us. Christ came from heaven and broke through the barrier of our sin when He died on the cross. The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ" (Romans 3:21). God's justice required that our sins be punished, but His love provided a substitute in Jesus Christ to die for our sins (John 3:16). There is no other way. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). No one loves you like Christ, who "suffered for (our) sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). Only His blood can cleanse us from all our sins (1 John 1:7). Three days after He died, He rose from the dead, and now calls everyone to come to Him. "Come to Me," He says, "all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest...rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29). He said, "I am come that they (you) may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

**LIKE JOE**, you have a choice. You can continue going on your way, along the broad path of life, trying to satisfy your soul with the things of this world, or you can turn from your way to God's way, and take the narrow path that leads to God. You can put all your trust in Christ, and allow Him to enter your life and take control (John 1:12). Then you will be born again spiritually, and become a child of God. His Spirit enters your life, and changes you. He promises, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5b). You will find eternal life that money can't buy, lasting peace that alcohol and drugs cannot give, true unfailing love that the human heart cannot produce, real satisfaction that all the entertainment cannot supply, and complete forgiveness that we don't deserve.

**CHRIST SAYS**, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul" (Mark 8:36). Today, you have a choice. The broad road that leads to destruction, where you will never finding any more out of life than you have right now, or to the narrow road that leads to life. Put your trust in Christ, and find the answer you have been looking for all your life.

Colors: GOD / yellow; DEATH / red; \$ / green background; Wine Glass/blue background; Heart/red back ground; Music / red & blue (purple) back ground; Suicide / black; JOE/black over a yellow background, a blue vacuum within Joe (Mountains / blue; Sunset / red (bottom), yellow (middle), blue (top), blended together; Cross / black; Ten Commandments / yellow; Shaded area / green.

**NOTE:** At the conclusion, paint the void yellow, and put a small cross in the center of it. If necessary, this message can be shortened.

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