Dumb Things Smart Christians Believe

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

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

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

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

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Tentative Schedule
Week 1: Introduction
(1) Faith Can Fix Anything

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(5) Christians Shouldn’t Judge

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(7) Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide

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(9) A Valley Means a Wrong Turn
(10) Dead People Go to a Better Place

Dumb Thing #1: Faith Can Fix Anything

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

Why positive thinking can’t change anything
Positive thinking doesn’t ________ God to do anything

Jim Fleming   teachings.jim314.com
Bill Brandenburg: If you can replace, “In Jesus’ name I pray,” with, “Ready, set, go!” at the end of your prayers, you might have an idol problem.

The big problem with faith in faith
Faith must have an ___________

*Hebrews 11:1*

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

*Hebrews 11:6*

How the English language mucks up everything
Osborne: The kinds of faith the Bible advocates and God wants from us has far more to do with our ____________ than our feelings. (p. 12)

How faith sometimes makes things worse
*Hebrews 11:35b-40*

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

The one thing faith can always fix
Faith may cause more earthly problems, but faith in God will always ____________ us to God

*John 1:12-13*

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

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

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

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

**Homework**

Osborne: Read the story of Peter’s release from prison in *Acts 12:1-19*. Write down every element of surprise or doubt you can find in the story. . . . Now write down everything that shows faithful obedience despite any doubt. (pp. 179-180) Which list is longer?
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Dumb Thing #2: Forgive Means Forgetting

Four goofy ideas about forgiveness & The myth of a forgetful God
Does God forgive sin? ______

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

Two real realms of forgiveness
Osborne: Spiritual and eternal consequences are completely removed. Judicially, our record is ____________.

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

The strange math of score keeping—why it is nearly always inaccurate
Matthew 18:21-22 and Luke 17:3-4

Rebuke When Wronged, Forgive When Asked
Osborne: But what happens if the person who wrongs us doesn’t want to be forgiven? (p. 32)
What was Jesus’ response to those that were ignorant? Luke 23:34a

What did Jesus say to do when believers sin against believers? Luke 17:3

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

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

Dumb Thing #3: A Godly Home Guarantees Godly Kids

Where’d We Get That Idea?
Proverbs 22:6

What We Think It Says
Osborne: A child raised correctly will come ________ to the Lord eventually (p. 41)

What It Actually Says
Proverbs 22:6: Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.

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

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

Why This Is Such A Devastating Myth
It produces two different sides of the same error (misplaced ____________ and needless ____________)

What The Bible Actually Says
Rebellion happens even in the _______ of environments (Genesis 1-3)

Everyone is responsible for his or her _______ actions (Ezekiel 18:1-32)

We can have lots of influence—we do not have any ________ (Proverbs 21:30-31)

There are no ________________ (2 Chronicles 10-21)

1. Rehoboam (bad) 2. Abijah (bad) 3. Asa (good) 4. Jehoshaphat (good)
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Dumb Thing #4: God Has a Blueprint for My Life

Blueprints
Blueprints _______ be followed

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

Are You Sure You Want a Blueprint?
Osborne: God doesn’t care where we work so much as _____ we work, where we live so much as _____ we live, and even whom we marry . . . so much as _____ we do marriage. (pp. 59-60)

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

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

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Dumb Thing #5: Christians Shouldn’t Judge
Osborne: Jesus didn’t say, “Judge not,” followed by a period or an exclamation point. He said, “Do not judge,” followed by a clarification of what type of judgments to make, when to make them, and how to make them. (p. 72)

What about Tolerance?

The Truth About Spiritual Truth
The reality is that there is such a thing as spiritual __________.

Why We Need to Judge
If we live in a world with no judging, we would never evaluate ______________ against the truth of the scriptures.

Judge as We Want to Be Judged
Matthew 7:2

Deal with Our Own Stuff First
Matthew 7:3-5

One goal of our judgment should always ______________________

Don’t Judge If God Hasn’t Spoken Clearly
Closed hand vs open fist

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

Christians and Non-Christians
Is there a difference in how we engage in judging Christians vs. non-Christians? ______

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

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

What is the Goal?

Fellow Christians
One goal of our judgment should always ______________________

Non-Christians
________________ _______ _______

Homework: The Hurdles to Clear
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Dumb Thing #6: Everything Happens for a Reason

Where Did We Get This Idea Anyway?
Romans 8:28: And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

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

The reality is that some __________________apply

Don’t Blame God
Osborne: Those who assume that everything that happens has God’s fingerprints . . . fail to distinguish between . . . what God ___________ and what God ___________. (p. 93)

Self-Inflicted Wounds, Life in a Fallen World, and Foolish Decisions
Osborne: When it comes to the consequences of the fall, we aren’t offered immunity. We’re offered ____________. (pp. 94-95)

Osborne: Every trial or hardship calls for the same response: ________________
Dumb Thing #7: Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide

Where’d We Get That Idea?

When you get in trouble and you don’t know right from wrong
Give a little whistle! Give a little whistle!
When you meet temptation and the urge is very strong
Give a little whistle! Give a little whistle!

Not just a little squeak, pucker up and blow
And if your whistle’s weak, yell, “Jiminy Cricket!”
Take the straight and narrow path
And if you start to slide
Give a little whistle! Give a little whistle!
And always let your conscience be your guide.

Thermometers and Thermostats

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

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

What does the Bible say?

1 Corinthians 4:4

Sin Nature and Blind Spots

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

So What’s It Good For?

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

Homework

1. Osborne: Read Romans 12:2 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17. What are you currently doing to be sure your conscience is properly calibrated? Is there anything you should start or stop doing to better align your conscience with God’s heart and values? (p. 191)

2. More verses about the conscience: Acts 24:16 (Paul’s desire for his conscience); Romans 2:15 (the knowledge the conscience can bring); 1 Corinthians 8, 10 (toward being aware of others’ consciences); 1 Timothy 1:5, 3:9, 2 Timothy 1:3, Hebrews 13:18, and 1 Peter 3:16 (clean conscience); Titus 1:5 (defiled conscience); Hebrews 9:14 (God cleaning the conscience)
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Dumb Thing #8: God Brings Good Luck
The prosperity theology proponents promise health and ________________

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

Osborne: It’s Eddie ________________ Christianity. (p. 127)

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

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

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

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

Have you ever been in a valley?

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

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

So What Does a Valley Mean?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>______ am I here?</th>
<th>How should I respond?</th>
<th>What can I ________?</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<td>God sent me (p. 143)</td>
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<td>God has a plan</td>
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<td>Faith and obedience</td>
<td>God has a plan</td>
<td>Job, Judges 1:19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Homework


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

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

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

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

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

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

Homework

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