

Etoonin' Incorporated - All for the Lord

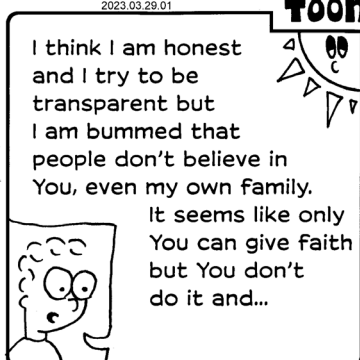
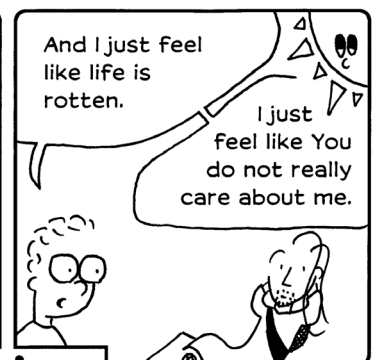
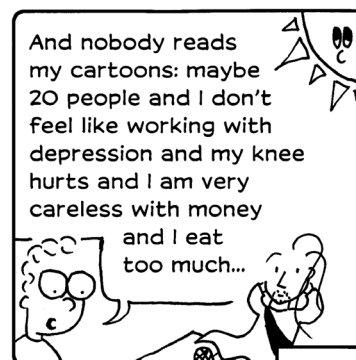
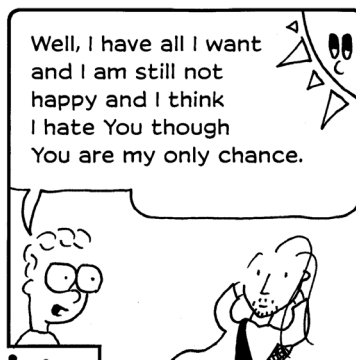
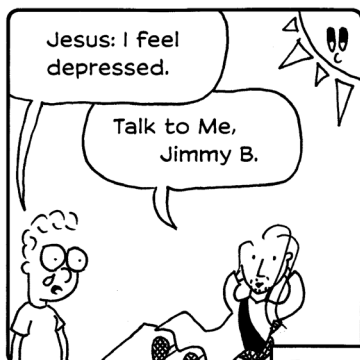
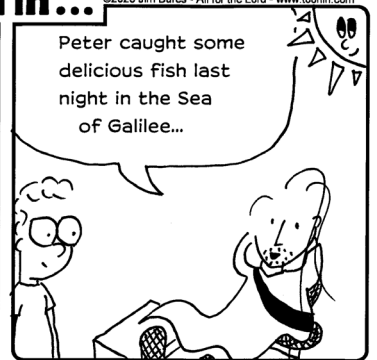
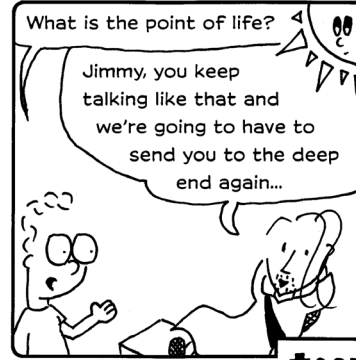
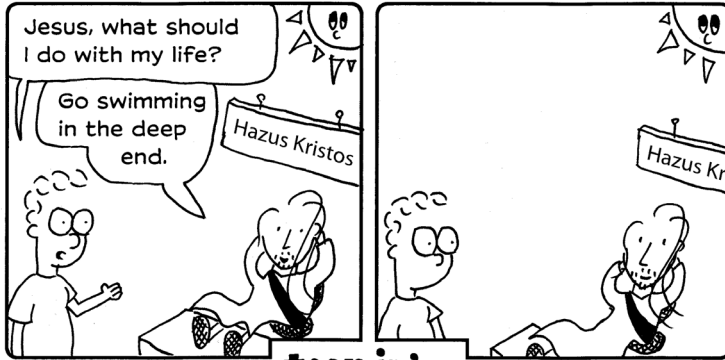
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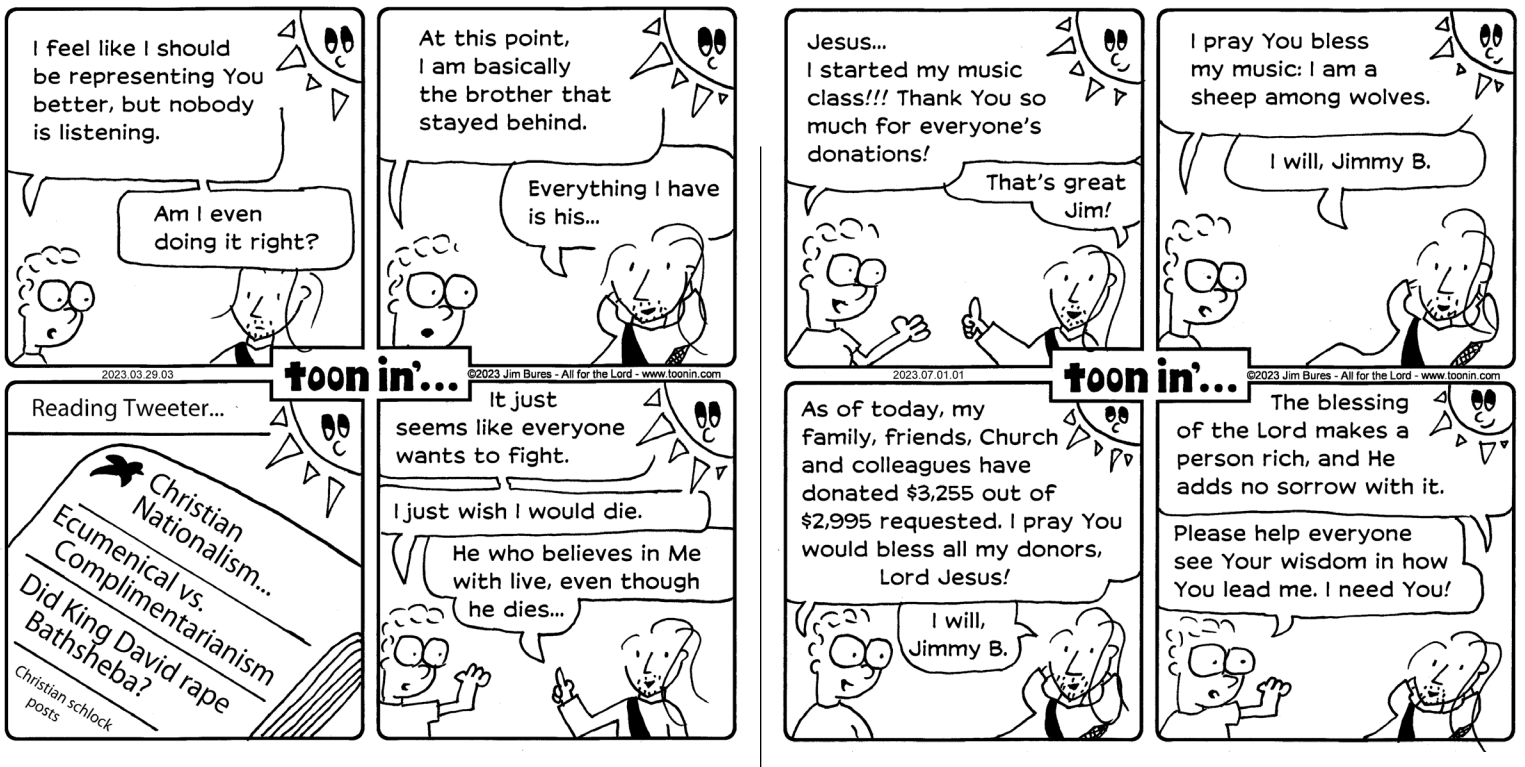
The Jim Bures Music Fund

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Most of these cartoons were drawn earlier in February or March. I want to share them. These cartoons express how I really feel about God and my place in His Kingdom. I realize that I am a broken man and that I am the one that needs to change, not God. I read a meme that said life gets a lot better once we realize that Jesus is the star, not us. I can relate to that. So often, I want to be in control and dictate how my life goes, but ultimately, it is

Jesus that needs to tell my story. It has been a hard story in many ways, but it has been a good story in other ways. I realize I am blessed though I often feel hurt. I realize I cannot end my life: I need to let Jesus tell my story how He wants, including the end. I still suffer from bipolar depression and fail to see beauty: the green trees, the sun shining through them, the beautiful flowers. I get caught up in anxious thoughts as I drive. I want to see.





www.zedek73.com

I love to express myself very personally. One thing I want to share is that I started a music class with ICON Collective: Online Music Production Intro Course. This is the first out of six classes that teach how to produce electronic music. I completed orientation and the class starts on Monday, July 3rd, 2023. I enjoy education and took many classes after college in Graphic Design, Music and Mechanical Engineering. When I look back, I see that I hardly remember the engineering courses: they don't even register. But when I think of Graphic Design, I remember that time fondly, and my matriculation from Mount Wachusett Community College. Depression plagued me at the Mount, but looking back, it was the best part of my life. I want to recreate that feeling by doing something I love: making music. I value education and do my best in an educational setting. At ICON, I meet weekly with a professional musician/mentor. There are also open office hours. The class is self-paced and combines three classes in one: Ableton I & Groove Theory, Arrangement, and Keyboard Techniques I. I know I'll suffer depression, but I can count on God to get me through: He always has. I hope to produce at least three songs. My desire is to create professional grade electronic music that glorifies God and also appeals to the unbeliever. The class is 11 weeks. The tuition for class is \$2,995 with a \$75 application fee.

Because I suffer from mental illness, I have trouble earning money for my passions. So, on Sunday, May 28, 2023, I set up the Jim Bures Music Fund on Go Fund Me. Satan attacked me and I felt very anxious, but the set up was easy. My first donation

came from Twitter: prof3ssor blue. I got an initial donation from LinkedIn. Three days later, I had \$640. But a second mass email generated no donations. I got discouraged. Knowing I had to deposit \$500 by June 12th, I almost gave up. But a friend, Leo, donated \$100 though I told him not to. This encouraged me. I learned ICON would give a full refund by July 9th, so I continued the fundraiser. It was up and down. Donations kept rolling in, but I feared they would dry up. I got one (through Etoonin') from a friend I hadn't seen since 2012! People donated large amounts: \$50 or \$100, way more than I expected. Professional musicians donated. A Facebook share generated a donation. On July 14th, I mailed a physical pledge letter while stalled at \$1,165. This yielded a \$200 donation right away! I couldn't believe it. I touched on other musicians from Church. As the campaign reached \$2,130, lunch with a friend yielded the largest donation yet: \$250! I posted this on BT's Discord, and BT's wife donated \$200! I ignored my phone at dinner out, and it shocked me afterward: a complete stranger donated \$500 bucks!!! I couldn't believe it: I made my goal! I learned BT reposted my fundraiser on Twitter and his fan, André Elijah, put me over the edge. That one day generated \$965! I felt so loved. Five more donations rolled in later, putting the total at \$3,255 out of \$2,995 requested. This paid for the tuition, application fee, and all Go Fund Me fees (\$65.85). 41 donations averaged almost \$80 each, earning over \$95 a day for 34 days. Additionally, a very generous friend, Ken, gave me \$1,400 on March 29th for a new laptop, software (Ableton Live 11 upgrade), a keyboard and headphones. There is \$128.99 leftover from all this for next quarter! Praise God!



Summer Solstice Sunrise



Summer Solstice Sunset

As I ponder all this, I realize I am blessed. Only once during the fundraiser did I mention my mental illness to prompt people to donate. The rest of the donations all came through the generosity of people that saw the fundraiser for what it was: a man pursuing his dream. Of course, most people know that I am perennially broke, but it seems like people gave out of their own inclination, not compulsion or obligation. At least, that is my hope anyway.

I think it is very important, if you want to make good art or good music, to study with the world. The world, though fallen, makes the best art and music. I remember that about my Graphic Design degree: I learned the most about good art by studying with nonbelievers. It made my art better than going to a Christian school. It is painful to expose my faith to nonbelievers, but it makes the art and music better in the long run. I also realize it is possible to bless unbelievers with things of faith, even if those things don't take. This is where love works. People respond to love. Listening to and complementing other students music makes an impression. Everyone loves encouragement too.

At Mount Wachusett, I was kind of afraid of exposing my faith. I created most of my art about God in some way, but felt standoffish with the other students. I feared their thoughts on my faith. I hope I can do better at ICON Collective. My faith in Christ generally puts me at odds with most of the world, but my need for affirmation and acceptance is still there. I want to be accepted and loved as I am. I don't want to be ostracized. At orientation, I heard other students talk about their start with choirs, so maybe I can find fellowship there. I am a stronger man now. As Jesus commanded: be a sheep among wolves; be as shrewd as snakes, but as innocent as doves. I want to honor God with good music, so I am prepared for whatever I face.

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When I consider my life, it pains me to realize that any desire I have to honor God is tainted by my own sin. In fact, I actually think I hate God deep in my heart. I know this sounds alarming, but because of the fall, I think it is true. I curse God for every stupid little mishap, instead of turning to Him for help. I long for

death because there's no cure for my sinful heart. Only Heaven will fix me. I wonder why God puts us through this hard life without affirmatively revealing Himself to us. God seems harsh: only He can give a person faith, but in most cases He doesn't. My efforts to lure people to Christ have failed: nobody heeds my warnings. And what would attract someone to my level of suffering anyway? I know hell is worse, but how could I convince others of this fact? Precious few people seem interested in Jesus.

Maybe my case is different than yours because I suffer from depression; I have ever since God saved my life in 1997. I am deeply dissatisfied with life, even with all its blessings. I see the Bible is true because I see how most people are oblivious to God and subtly against Him. The Bible tells us that broad is the way that leads to destruction. The fool says in his heart that there is no God. I know I was the fool, and did my own thing prior to 1997. I suffer such regret from my foolishness and I wasted my youth mistreating women I should have loved. I am old now and alone. I realize I still can't treat a woman right. I give up on marriage. I see how difficult it is. I am so lonely, but don't think a wife would help. I see how husband and wife quarrel, even in a good marriage. Familiarity breeds contempt. The curse places husband and wife at odds: each trying to control the other. Satan attacks. The threat of divorce looms. I find some friend's wives seem more genuinely interested in me than they might be in their own husbands. I guess that is the dynamic of marriage. You know your spouse so intimately: you no longer admire them or remain fascinated with them. I'm better off single, but find it so lonely. Most people don't have time for me: they are married and have families. I spend my days in solitaire at Panera or Starbucks. Fifty more years at most and then I'll enter Heaven! I can't wait.

Sorry: major tangent.

Anyway, I am the real problem: my stubborn heart knows that. God is not at fault, as much as I want Him to be. It is user operator error. Every. Single. Time. But He loves to show me mercy anyway! He blesses a heart that hates Him! Time after time, God blesses me. I keep forgetting I can trust Him. The Lord Himself fights for me. All I need to do is be still.

TEICON

C O L L E C T I V E

I believe that God loves to show me mercy, even though my heart is often against Him. Of course, I am not this horrible human being. I am one of God's children. I appreciate things He made, like sunsets, flowers, friends, birds, green trees, cats, water, mountains, rocks, trails, grass, weather, snow, clouds, sky, etc. I like that I can rely on God. I believe He means it when He says in Scripture: do not worry. I believe He means it even through all the stupid things I continue to do: living beyond my means, eating unhealthy food over and over, staying up too late too often, to name a few. I have learned that God will help me through tomorrow even though I often don't know what I'm going to do. I can sleep and wake up when my eyes open. I feel that God is found in the present, not in future worries or past regrets. The adage by Mark Twain rings true: "If you tell the truth, you don't need to remember anything." If you live in the moment, you don't need to fear the future or remember the past. Each day just happens. God feeds the sparrows, who neither reap nor sow. He is going to feed us too. He is going to take care of us. I am finding that I am safe because of God. I enjoy so little interpersonal conflict. People forgive me. Love works. Even though I feel lonely, I have a good family and so many friends: more than most. I have the body of believers: the Church, a community that thrives on love. I am very friendly and I genuinely care about most people. I can turn daily little interactions into more meaningful relationships over time. I have been blessed my numerous convenient store clerks, coffeeshop baristas and retail cashiers. People love me.

I am very much a communicative person: I love attention. I realize my addiction to social media stems from addiction to communication. I love my iPhone! I scroll through looking for human connection. I enjoy the rush of communication, and its love, only to feel so despondent after the moment is over. Then I crave the next moment: the cycle repeats. I love connection so. I sincerely desire to find God in every moment so I won't be so dependent on personal interaction with others. When I am alone, satan tempts me to think people don't really care about me. I'm tempted to lash out: to write poison pen letters. That feeling stems from loneliness: the desire for connection. I want to learn how to be comfortable alone. I am the only person with myself 100% of the time. I am the only person who really knows me. I love forgiveness because it enables me to be safe as I am, not as I should be. I love that God forgives me and I love that

people forgive me. I love that God has made me safe. Even when I am not around people, I am safe. Even when people aren't thinking about me, I am safe. I am trying to find mercy towards others instead of expectations. God is with me so I don't need to force myself on others. This quenches the temptation to lash out. I have tried to force relationships to go how I want, only to find that forgiveness instead of coercion gives better results. I am thankful: most people are happy to see me. Most people think of me as a good person, though I know the bitter truth. Each heart knows its own bitterness, and no one else can share its joy.

I am a student of me. I think I am the most interesting person and I want other people to think so too. I want others to be intimately interested in all my inner workings and emotions. But I read a meme somewhere that read, "Life goes better when we realize we are not the star, Jesus is." I have learned a lot about how to love. If I give what I want, I often get what I want.

I started to wonder if God has to display His anger to get us to realize His love. Otherwise we may just think the universe is giving us stuff.

Thank you to all who donated to my Jim Bures Music Fund! I really appreciate you and your donation. You made my dreams come true. I am touched and honored by your generosity. I will make great music for you! May God bless all of you quite richly.



The Jim Bures Music Fund

\$3,255 raised of \$2,995

Thanks, Love, Jim Bures