

## **"An Astronaut Admires Design" – Astronaut Charlie Duke Interview – Part 2 of 2**

DUKE: As a fighter pilot and an astronaut, I can't tell you how many spacecraft and how many different airplanes I've flown, and every one of them had a manual. And if you read the manual, you would be okay.

VOICE: And what does an astronaut mean when he says, "the Lord is my guidance system"?

THEME: MUSIC IN AND UNDER ANNCR.

ANNCR: Only 12 men in history have ever walked on the moon. The youngest of them was astronaut Charlie Duke. Today we conclude an exclusive interview producer David Fisher recorded with Duke in 2009 at Baylor University. Welcome to **Truth in the Test Tube!**

THEME: MUSIC OUT

DUKE: I'm a pilot. Aerodynamics work. Rockets lift you off because the physics and the chemistry of it work. I look at the complexity of the human body; it cannot be an accident. The universe in which we live *shouts*, in its complexity, "There has to be a designer!"

VOICE: You look at any one organ, and it's complex enough. But when you see the way they synchronize together...

DUKE: Well, all of my training was from an evolutionary standpoint. So when I became a believer, I had this insatiable desire to read the Scriptures. I try to read 10 chapters a day – Old Testament, New Testament, Gospels, Proverbs, Psalms. And the more I read, the more I was challenged: Are you going to believe the worldview of man, or are you going to believe this? And I said, "Lord, I see you in the universe, and I'm going to believe this."

As a practical example of the design of the human body, I was lying in the NASA physical [medical exam room], waiting for this procedure, and up on the wall there was an anatomy chart. It had a cut-away – you know, everybody's seen those – and there were the lungs and the heart and the blood flow and all of that. The thought occurred to me, "That's all got to work the first time, or you're dead!" There is no experimentation, if you will.

Evolution says, "Well, let's just try. We'll try this, and if that doesn't work..." But even in evolution, somebody's got to say, "Well, I need feet. I think I need a heart. And I think I need eyes." Where did all that knowledge come from?

VOICE: And the blood has to be the right viscosity to flow through the heart.

DUKE: Exactly! I see God daily display his presence.

You look back over the history of the evolution of scientific knowledge, and many of those discoveries were done by Christian men who believed that God's wisdom is available to us. In Christ is all the knowledge and wisdom of the universe.<sup>1</sup> And as we pray and seek his direction, I think he gives insight and wisdom into these problems that we face.

VOICE: Astronaut Jack Lousma updated one of the Psalms by saying, “The Lord is my guidance system.”

DUKE: That's a very succinct description, and it's true! Jesus is our leader – he's the head! He guides and he directs. As long as we yield our will to him, he's going to lead and direct. Jack is really right on with that: Jesus is my guidance system.

VOICE: You made a video entitled, “Walk on the Moon, Walk with the Son,” spelling it S-O-N, meaning the son of God.

DUKE: Right. Uh hum.

VOICE: How would you summarize the main points?

DUKE: Well, the first half hour of this hour-long video and now DVD is my space experience. In 30 minutes I capture how I became an astronaut, the training we went through, described the space suit, the liftoff – the whole of Apollo 16.

Then the second half is this testimony – basically what we've been talking about today, how I became a believer. Two and a half years after my wife became a believer, gave her life to Jesus and she was changed, I was invited to a Bible study at T-Bar-M Tennis Ranch, in New Braunfels, Texas, where we live. It was it was Friday night, Saturday and Sunday morning. This was sort of a look at the Scriptures and a look at Jesus as he is revealed throughout the Old Testament and New Testament.

And so I sat there, and the thought occurred to me, as I began to recall some of these Scriptures, I had been in Sunday school since I was four or five. And so, John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only son.” If you believe in him, you'll not perish but have everlasting life.

The thought occurred to me: This is either true or a big lie. It's either the truth, or it's not! And we get to decide, because we have a free will. We can either say, “Yes, Lord, it's true. I give you my life; I want to follow you.” Or you can turn away and walk away from God. Throughout that weekend I just getting this thought: This is either true or it isn't. Jesus is the son of God who gave his life for me, for my sins, and I can accept that and believe it and receive it, or I can walk away from God.

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<sup>1</sup> Paraphrase of Colossians 2:3.

DUKE (CONT.): So after that weekend was over, I was sitting in my automobile with my wife. And I looked over at her and said, "Dottie, I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God," and I said, "Lord, I give you my life." Now, there weren't any bells and whistles and no angelic host and blinding lights or anything like that. But I knew that I knew that I knew it was the truth and I experienced such peace!

After that day, I had this insatiable desire to read the Scriptures. I had just sold my company and made a lot of money. So I was thinking of going into real estate, but it wasn't any real urge. So basically for the next three or four months, in all of my spare time, I just sat and read the Scriptures. I can't say I studied it, but I read it. It was like I was a sponge. Words were just jumping off the page.

When I came to Jesus, I can't say I repented of my sins at that point. I just said, "Lord, come into my life." Because I didn't realize...[how bad my actions were]. You know, I did things wrong, but everyone did those, you know. A little eye at a girl every once in a while, a little cheating on your income tax. To me, the real sinners were the murderers, rapists, bank robbers – you know, those kinds of guys. Everybody did what I did, you know.

But the Lord through the Scriptures began to convict me: "husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church..."<sup>2</sup> God spoke to my heart saying, "You don't love your wife that way. And the problem with your marriage is you." And so I repented and asked God to help me and we began to build our marriage relationship. And now 32 years have gone by and we're walking with the Lord through trials and troubles of life – lovers, best friends, brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Lord convicted me about my anger and my temper. He convicted me about my relationship with my children and many, many other things – the love of money. And so all of that was repented, as God began to peel the onion, if you will, and take away that old sinful nature.

VOICE: What else would you like to share with people? What would you say to the person who's listening who's never thought seriously about even God's existence, or the possibility of getting acquainted with God personally?

DUKE: If you've never thought that God really existed, you just need to look around. The Scripture says that "God's divine presence and eternal power is clearly seen out of what has been made."<sup>3</sup> So the world is not an accident. There is a Creator of the world and of all that is in the world. So I challenge you to look at all of this and say, "God, are you the creator? Jesus, was it through you that all of this was made?" Just ask God to show you the truth. He can accept that challenge, if you'll just be honest and open; "God, show me your reality." And I think God will!

"God so loved the world..."<sup>4</sup> He doesn't want anyone to perish, anyone not to know him. So he's given us his witness in the universe.

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2 Ephesians 5:25.

3 Romans 1:20.

4 John 3:16a.

DUKE (CONT.): Secondly, if you really seek him, say, “Lord, I want to know if you're the only way. So Lord, I just open my life to you.” And if God reveals himself to you, then to receive him into your heart, just do what I did: “Lord, I believe that you are God. Jesus, I believe that you are the son of God. And so I open my life to you and I take you into my life. I surrender the throne and I give you the throne of my life and I walk with you.”

In John's Gospel, it says if you're really seeking God, God the Holy Spirit will point you to Jesus. And that's the truth.

We have other religions that we are praying for. My prayer is, for those who aren't Christians, “Lord, reveal yourself to them in dreams and visions, through the Internet, through newspapers, through personal contact. Just reveal your love to them.”

VOICE: Some may have the impression that to make contact with God, you have to go to a special building. What's your suggestion on that?

DUKE: No, you don't. I think that fellowship with other Christians is important, as we join the body of Christ, if you will, as we accept Jesus into our lives. I think we need to pray and say, “Lord, where will you lead me to go, to have fellowship and to grow in my faith?”

But it's not necessary to go to church to find Jesus. I met him in the front seat of my car. [Sometimes] he comes to [people] in dreams. But once he does, you want to know [more about God]. As I did, I just began to read God's word.

As a fighter pilot and an astronaut, I can't tell you how many spacecraft and how many different airplanes have flown in. Every one of them had a manual, and if you read the manual, you were going to be okay, because it led you through the procedures of this machine.

VOICE: So you're saying the Bible is the manual.

DUKE: God has given us a manual for life, and it's the Bible. As we get our life more in line with God's word of what he says, it will bring love and joy and peace and happiness into our lives. Then we see the effect of God's word is true, and it brings love and joy and peace – the fruit of the Holy Spirit, if you will.

VOICE: Say someone's listening now, who's never read the Bible at all. Where would you suggest he start?

DUKE: Well, I think a good recommendation, to understand the person of Jesus, is John – the *Gospel* of John. That succinctly shows Jesus is the son of God, in his claims to be God. Then I would continue on, just reading the New Testament – the Acts, about how the early people that believed in Jesus and accepted him, how they were empowered by the Spirit of God, and how they went on to spread this gospel all over the world, the good news of Jesus.

DUKE (CONT.): I've got a lot of different translations now, but I primarily read the New International Version because I can understand it, it's one that speaks to me. I compare different translations; I use primarily the N I V.

So anyway, read the Scriptures, and start with John.

VOICE: I found on the Internet a statement you made in 1996. It started out, "I used to say I could live 10,000 years and never have an experience as thrilling as walking on the moon." Do you remember the rest of that statement?

DUKE: Yes, I do. It's "I could never have an experience like walking on the moon. Yet after I found Jesus, I found that walking with Jesus is a lot more satisfying and a lot more rewarding. And it doesn't last three days – it lasts forever."

VOICE: Okay, that's a very good thought to close on.

DUKE: Thank you.

VOICE: Thank you very much!

THEME: MUSIC IN AND UNDER

ANNCR: Thanks to lunar astronaut Charlie Duke, for the insights he has shared during these two episodes. If you want to hear more from him, he has videos at several websites, including [charlieduke.net](http://charlieduke.net) and [astronautcharlieduke.com](http://astronautcharlieduke.com). Those URLs once again are [charlieduke.net](http://charlieduke.net) and [astronautcharlieduke.com](http://astronautcharlieduke.com).

If you enjoyed today's program, you may also find the [TWR360.org](http://TWR360.org) website interesting. There you'll find topics like "Science and Miracles," "What Nobel Scientists Think about God," and "How Did Your Brain Get So Smart?" Explore them in the "Truth in the Test Tube" section of [TWR360.org](http://TWR360.org).

On behalf of Charlie Duke and producer Dave Fisher, I'm Denny Milgate, thanking you for listening to **Truth in the Test Tube!**

THEME: MUSIC OUT

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