

KEEPING JESUS BEFORE PEOPLE

Gavin Johnson
Kicking from the
Foot of the Cross

TESTIFY

MAGAZINE

AUGUST 2024

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TESTIFY MAGAZINE

AUGUST 2024 EDITION



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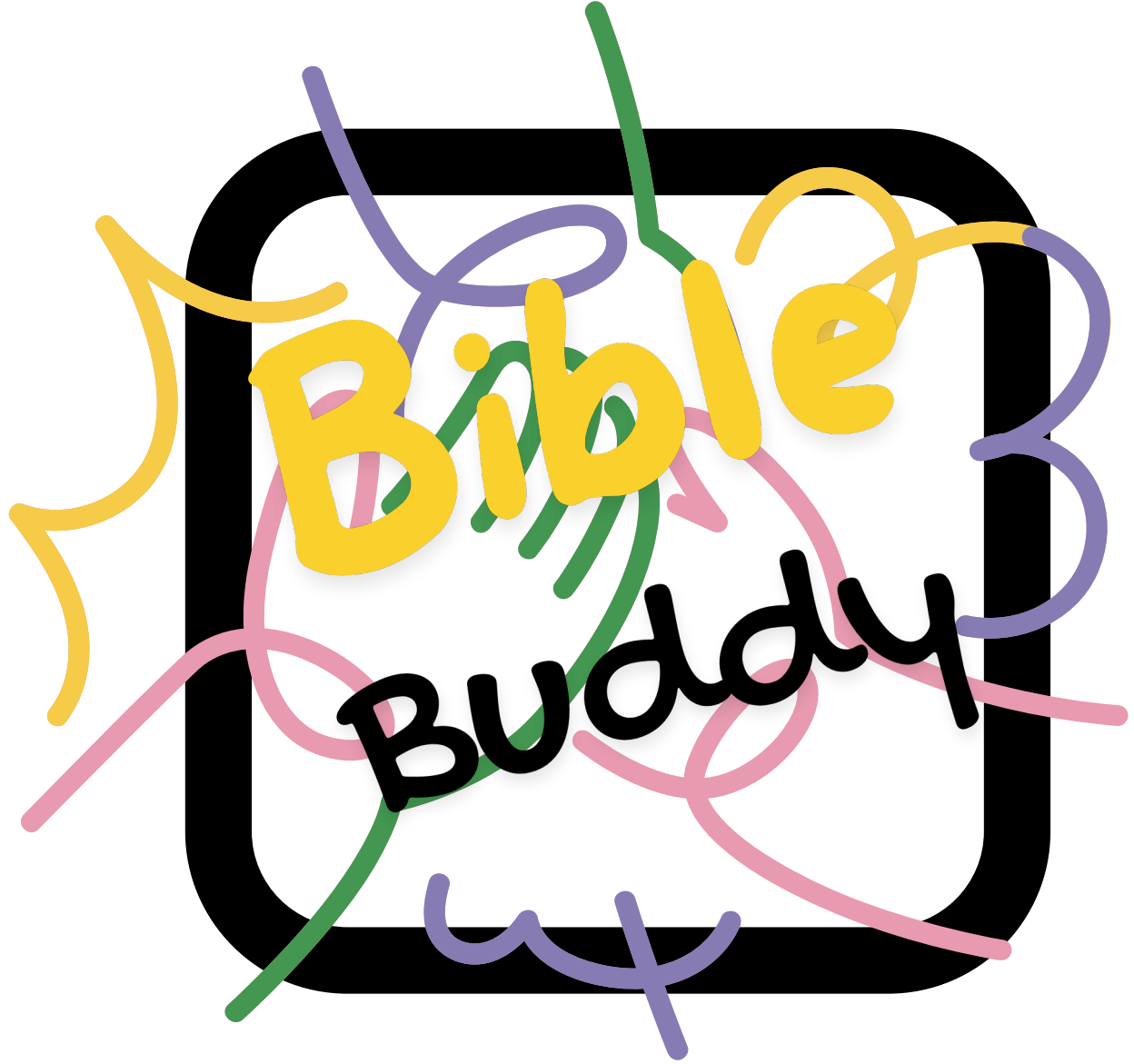
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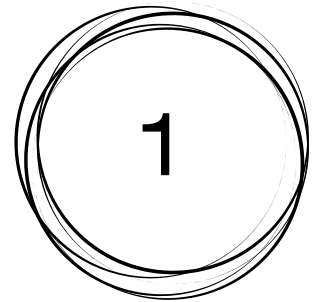


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BLESSED BY THE BEST



I have become known for my catchphrase of 'Trust you are blessed by the Best' and this has great meaning to me because of the fact that we are always blessed by the best, Jesus Christ.

No matter what our situation maybe we are always blessed by something or someone in our lives and to top it all, we are blessed by the very best person around, Jesus Christ.

Please remember that that our words are so strong and important and filled with either death or life! Please choose today to be a blessing and not a curse!

Please get onboard and assist us in whatever way you can, we cannot do this on our own.

1. Advertisers: We are seeking constant and regular advertisers for each and every edition of the magazine. Our goal is 8 advertisers per edition

Then our next challenge that we would like to overcome is:

2. Our Children's Section.

We are looking for somebody to take ownership of this section and write for us every month in order to better our magazine and bless our children readers.

If you can help in these regards please contact me asap!

Blessings

Mark



GAVIN JOHNSON

KICKING FROM THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

2



I'm at Mutemwa, sitting on the deck of Tent 7, overlooking the Zambezi River, in Barotseland, Zambia.

I'm about to start writing my testimony and I'm overcome with emotion as I start praying and reflecting on the goodness of God. I pray that my story will honour and glorify our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus and be a blessing to those who hear it. May it point you to Jesus! Jesus said in John 10:10, 'I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.'

I was born in the Elim Missionary Hospital near Louis Trichardt on the 17th October 1966. At the time of my birth, my father was a young farmer, and my mother was in matric at Capricorn High School in Pietersburg. My parents had both come from broken families and when they met, they found the love they both wanted and needed so desperately. We went to live on a farm near Vivo, about 70km west of Louis Trichardt. Two years later, my brother Mark was born, and we lived a very good life on Clearwater's Farm with my Dad farming for his Uncle Frank who owned the farm, and my mother helping him and taking care of the home and family. My parents truly loved us and I am very grateful for the wonderful childhood we had. I was just a few years old when a dear old lady shared the Good News about Jesus with my mother and she got radically born again. Her relationship with God would eventually have a massive impact on my life and my father and brothers.

Because we lived so far out of town, I was put into a small boarding house when I started Grade 1 at Soutpansberg Primary in Louis Trichardt. I spent 4 years at the little Krinon Hostel, and then my parents moved to town so that my father could be more central to manage Uncle Frank's farms around Louis Trichardt. I was very happy to be a day scholar for the rest of my primary school days. My mother had another two sons, Howard and Rodney, and now we were four boys. I loved all the sport at school and excelled in Athletics, Rugby and Cricket and also became Head Boy. It was a dual medium school, so although I am English speaking, I am also fluent in Afrikaans and also learned Sotho from our workers on the farm. Later in my life, the Sotho language turned out to be a great blessing as it enabled me to pick up the Lozi language in Zambia. Amazing how the Lord prepares us in advance to accomplish His plan and purpose for our lives. It was during these years that my mother became the Sunday School Teacher of our church. So many

families lived so far out of town, on farms and even in the Kruger National Park, that my mother started Friday Club, which was basically Sunday School on a Friday afternoon. Many young lives were greatly impacted by my mother who introduced us to Jesus and the Kingdom of God with the most amazing love and passion. The many fun, yet powerful songs she taught us, we still sing to this day and have even passed them onto our children. There are many wonderful testimonies of people following Jesus today because of June Johnson. I am eternally grateful for my Mum and I look forward to seeing her again when we go to be with our Lord Jesus. This was the time that I gave my heart to Jesus, when I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. Proverbs 22:6, 'Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it.'

For high school, I attended Capricorn High in Pietersburg and then after school did two years of military service in the Air force. It was whilst I was based in Hoedspruit, during my 2nd year of National Service, that very unexpectedly my rugby career began. It happened by chance that one day someone came to the base to ask if anyone could help out – the town's rugby club was short of players, and they needed to fill the 2nd team to play that weekend. I was free and available, so I volunteered.

"Engelsman, watse posisie speel jy?"

"Losskakel Meneer."

That weekend I played flyhalf for the Hoedspruit 2nd team and surprised myself and everybody else. I had grown stronger and faster, since leaving school and the opposition were struggling to contain me.

"Bliksem Engelsman!! Van waar kom jy?"

That was it, I was put straight into the Bosveld 1st Team and suddenly rugby became an important part of my life. The games we played in the regional competition were taken very seriously and so I started building experience, playing rugby against some very rough and tough opposition. Later in that year the Hoedspruit Airforce Team played in the National Air force Rugby Week at Dunnotar and I was then selected for the SA Air force under 20 National Team. We toured the country to play against the Navy and Infantry. Interestingly, that's where I met Joel Stransky for the first time. Joel was our flyhalf and I played full back. Little did we know that later on we would play

together for South Africa.

After my 2 years in the military, my plan was to go farming with my Dad, so I enrolled at The Pretoria Technikon to study Agriculture and I also joined the Harlequins Rugby Club. I rocked up at Harlequins, completely unknown and was put into the 4th team. The following week I was moved up to the 3rd team and unbeknown to me, Kitch Christie – who later coached the Springboks – was watching the game and had me moved straight into the 1st team. I soon got selected for the Northern Transvaal B Team and it wasn't long before the Technikon found out about me and wanted me to play for them, but they were in the B division. My Dad felt so strongly about my rugby talent that he encouraged me to pursue playing rugby seriously, so I left Technikon and started working for a Harlequins businessman, who owned a successful construction company. I played for Harlequins for 5 years. In 1992, I started working for an uncle who owned a paint manufacturing business in Jhb and so I moved to Jhb and joined the Pirates Rugby Club in Greenside. I was soon selected for the Transvaal B Team.

Then came 1993 – a truly significant year in my life

1993 was a significant year in my life, because I received the answers to 2 very serious requests of God. Firstly, I met my precious wife, Penny. When I was young, the Lord gave me wisdom to ask Him for a woman who would truly love me. I knew in my heart that marriage would be very important to me and my commitment would be till death us do part. I saw so much heartache in marriages and relationships, and I knew it was extremely important to have the right person to spend the rest of my life with. How I praise and thank our Lord for my wonderful wife. Penny and I have been married for almost 28 years and our love is the greatest blessing on earth.

The second answer to prayer was to play rugby for the Springboks. It happened that I picked up a bad shoulder injury in a club game for Pirates and had to have surgery which caused me to consider stopping playing rugby. At that time, Louis Luyt had appointed Kitch Christie as the new Transvaal coach and Kitch rang me to invite me to pre-season training with the Transvaal squad at the beginning of the 1993 rugby season. "Coach, I have had a serious shoulder operation, and I am considering hanging up my boots."



“Just come along and let’s see how your shoulder recovers, we’ll go slowly,” said the coach.

“Ok coach.”

Well, my shoulder recovered and when the Boks in our team went off to play Australia that year, I was given a chance to play my first provincial game for Transvaal. The first Currie Cup game of the season against the Free State at Ellis Park, I was selected at Full Back. Then came a phone call on the Friday night before the game. It was our coach, Kitch Christie, “Gavin, there’s been a tragedy, Cameron Oliver and Steff Nel (our flyhalf and scrum-half), have just been killed in a terrible accident. We are moving you to flyhalf for tomorrow’s game.” I played well and became part of a very successful Transvaal Team that won all the trophies that year. At the end of the season, I was selected to play for the SA Barbarians Team to tour the UK and whilst in the UK, after 7 wins in a row, our team manager called me, “Gavin, you’ve been called to Argentina to join the Springboks.”
What a moment.

Without even realising, our Heavenly Father had just granted me the request I had prayed for a few years earlier. I was on my way to play for South Africa. After landing in Buenos Aires, I was put straight into the midweek game against Rosario and then into the test team for the 3rd test against Argentina. We won the game well and I scored my first try for the springboks and equalled the Springbok record of 22 points, held by Gerald Bosch.

The following year, the Transvaal Team continued to do very well, and we won the Currie Cup again and this success led to 13 of the team being selected for the 1995 Rugby World Cup. I was privileged to be selected and, in a build, up game to the World Cup, against Western Samoa, I scored a hat trick of tries and became the highest points scorer for the Boks with 28 points. I played 3 of the games in the World Cup in '95 and so ended with a total of 7 tests and about 20 tour games for South Africa. One of the highlights of my career was playing against the All Blacks at Eden Park and scoring a try. After my time of



playing for the Boks and Transvaal, I finished off my rugby career in England, playing 2 seasons for Saracens in London. In May 1999, I retired from professional rugby and moved to our safari lodge in Zambia, to live out the way of life I dreamed of living in the remoteness of Africa. This dream was born in 1993 when our Transvaal team made it into the Currie Cup final against Natal down in Durban. Natal were favourites to win the game that day as they had home ground advantage and were the current Currie Cup champions. Mike Rattray, the owner of Mala Mala in the Sabi Sands Game Reserve put out an invitation to the winning team of the day, to come to Mala Mala with all our partners and all the coaching staff. Mike was an avid Natal Rugby fan and obviously hoped to have the Natal rugby team come to his safari lodge. The Vaalies upset the plan and won the Currie Cup final and soon we were on our way to Mala Mala. It was magnificent and Penny and I thoroughly enjoyed our few days in the pristine African bush, in absolute luxury. I found out from Mike that the land was all originally cattle farms and how they decided to turn to wildlife and tourism. Eventually they became part of the Kruger National Park when the fences were brought down between the park and the Sabi Sands Reserve.

Something was triggered in my heart when I saw how wonderful this all was. From that time, I hoped to find a piece of land with the potential of being part of a Big 5 nature reserve. Penny and I started looking at game farms all over the place and one day, we heard of a place in Zambia on the banks of the Zambezi River. It was December 1995, after the World Cup, that we spent 3 weeks at Mutemwa, a piece of paradise in the heart of Africa. Two South Africans had started the venture two years earlier and couldn't carry on with it because of various circumstances. One night as Penny and I lay in a little tent overlooking the mighty Zambezi River, I said to her that I really liked this, and it had the potential to be like Mala Mala because it was within the Game Management Area of the Sioma Ngwezi National Park and there were no fences separating the wildlife from the Zambezi. It was Big 5 territory, and I believed we could develop the dream we were after. And so it was, that a meeting was set up with Senior Chief Imwiko of Barotseland and we bought the Zambian Company. We went through the traditional land process of the Lozi people and became the new owners of a truly beautiful piece of land with a spectacular setting on the banks of a great river with huge indigenous trees and abundant birdlife. We started building the lodge at the beginning of 1996 and by September, our first guests arrived at our very own Mutemwa Lodge.

We employed a couple to manage the lodge until my rugby days were over. In 1999, I retired from professional rugby and now at the age of 32 a new chapter of life began with my precious wife and little baby daughter, who was 10 months old. Due to some rugby fame, I was able to penetrate the corporate market in SA and soon we had groups of guests flying up to Zambia for fishing trips on the Great Zambezi. It was all very exciting and great fun. I would be waiting at our airstrip with our 2 Landcuisers with game drive seats and a very well packed coolbox with lots of beer and when the Caravan landed, the party began. The fishing was great but the drinking parties were also big. Penny and I had our 2 nd little girl and life was just great.

Trouble

A few years went by and one day Penny asked if I minded if she went down to SA to visit her parents for a while.

“Of course, Love.”

Off she went with Shan and Cayla who were about 6 and 4 years old. A few weeks later they were back and life – doing tourism – carried on. I did, however, notice a change in Penny. She started joining in on the drinking parties and the Jameson's started flowing more than usual and I noticed she was losing weight. One night after dinner with our guests, I was feeling tired and wanted to head off to bed for an early night. Penny wanted to stay up and have a few drinks with our guests. This was very strange and very unlike her. As I lay in bed, I could hear the party going on and I had no peace that my wife was out there having a party with a group of guests. Thinking about her, I started realising that she was behaving very differently. She had become somewhat aloof, not really caring any more and she had very little emotion. It worried me and eventually we sat down to talk. I then found out how desperately unhappy my wife had become over the past few years. So much so, that down in Jhb, she had gone to see a doctor about depression and now she was taking medication – Prozac – which took away all her feelings. She told me that she hadn't even wanted to come back to Zambia and didn't care about our marriage any more. I was absolutely shocked.

When Penny and I got married – for me – that was it – until death do us part. I was one of those men who enjoyed a good party with the boys, but I would not allow any unfaithfulness in any way with other woman. To hear that Penny would even consider ending our marriage, was a major wake up call in my life. She went on to explain how her dream of a happy marriage had faded because

of the way I was living life. I was entertaining groups of corporate clients and it had become one party after another. Group after group, day after day, month after month. There she was with our two precious girls, and I was living in my own world.

Often, hung over and tired after a group left, I would not be able to spend quality time with my family. I was truly sorry and apologised. I stopped drinking for many months. However, after some months, I was tempted to start having the odd beer – one became two and soon I was back to my old ways, fortunately only for a very short time. I remember the last all-night party I had and then my life changed completely, realising I was back to my old ways. I decided to turn back to God.

A New Beginning

As I have already shared, I gave my heart to Jesus as a young boy, and I am grateful that my mother showed me that our Lord wants to have a relationship with him and He is not interested in religious rituals. Throughout my school days, I would join the small group of believers at boarding school for Bible study and prayer. I enjoyed going on Christian camps and as a family we attended church and sometimes went to Christian conferences. In my Matric year, I started drifting away from the Lord, which continued for the next 20 years of my life. Though I believed in Jesus, I was completely back slidden, living in the world. It makes me think of Ephesians 2 vs 1 – 3:

‘And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.’

The Prodigal Son

Now, at the age of 38, I came back to my senses. Penny and I had often said that we knew in our hearts that we should draw close to God again and that one day we would. We were lost sheep, but praise God, our Good Shepherd came and found us in the wilderness of Western Zambia. It was the end of our tourism season in 2004. We would always head down to SA at the beginning of January to take a break and visit family. While we were with Penny’s parents in Jhb, we started going to church with my mother-in-law. Back in church for the first time in many years, I felt self-conscious, and it was awkward singing

again. When the pastor started sharing the Word, tears started rolling down my cheeks. As I remembered the love of the Lord and the relationship that I had once had with the Lord. I looked at the Cross again and saw Jesus dying for me because he loved me so much. I started reading my Bible, night and day, and couldn't wait for the next Sunday to hear the Word of God again. It wasn't long and I was free again to praise and worship the Lord with all my heart. I lost all interest in the world and all I wanted to do was go to church, read my bible, and tell everyone about Jesus. Back in Zambia, I got very involved in our local church in the community and I lost all interest in our business. This went on for about 2 years, which was a bit frustrating for Penny and our staff because all I wanted to do was share the Gospel, so every Lozi man and woman in Barotseland would be saved. I wrestled with the Lord to release me from our business, so I could join the church full time. One day, the Lord made it very clear to me in my heart that He had placed me exactly where He wanted me to be. I was to stay in the business and there would be much opportunity to point people to Jesus. I would impact our family, our staff and many guests who would come on holiday to our lodge. I then had peace and I was able to be wholehearted with our business again. I thank the Lord for the amazing calling on my life here at Mutemwa and the realisation that it is His will for me to develop a game reserve.

Healing and restoration

As my new life in Christ went along, I started realising there were issues that needed to be dealt with from my past.

When I started school in Grade 1, I was put into a small hostel because we lived on a farm, far from town. Sadly, there was a teacher, from our school who lived on the same property, who was a paedophile. He would come into our dorms at night and fiddle with us. It was a nightmare and I felt so ashamed that I didn't tell anyone. Fortunately, he was found out and left the school – but – there was much damage done. The memories were terrible, and it caused me to have very bad thoughts. I started asking God to heal my mind and restore me. I had to forgive the man and slowly but surely, the Lord completely healed me and set me free. Later in life, at the age of 25, we had a family tragedy. My parents had separated and the proceedings for a divorce had begun. In a moment of madness, my father took my mother's life with a high calibre rifle. As time went on, I became very angry with him and vowed that I would not even go to his grave. I carried a heavy burden of unforgiveness in my heart. One day, some missionary friends of ours gave me a book – “Wild at Heart” by John Eldredge.

The book was an amazing tool from the Lord to help me forgive. It helped me understand that our earthly fathers have a huge impact on our lives as children. A father's love and assurance and protection is crucial for the self esteem of a child. The Lord revealed to me that in my father's case, he was abandoned by his father at the age of 1 and later his mother married a man who developed a drinking problem and there was much trouble in the home. Thus, my dad grew up without a father and it affected him greatly. It can cause all sorts of insecurities in our lives and causes much bad behaviour. Ultimately, the book points us to our Heavenly Father who will never disappoint us. He restores us and makes us whole again - to be the man he meant you to be – a godly man of love, with purpose and a calling to greatly impact the lives of many people. To be the husband, the father, the leader, the man God meant you to be. This revelation caused me to have great compassion on my dad, as I began to understand his behaviour. I went to see him and completely forgave him. Today, I have a wonderful relationship with my dad. The forgiveness has set me free and today I can be a blessing to others and testify of the goodness of God. Thank you, Lord!

Our Children

We praise God for our 3 daughters, Shan, Cayla and Tammy. Our godly influence on their lives has led each one of them to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. They witnessed a life of faith in God and saw many miracles and



the faithfulness of God. We explained to them from a young age that because God loves us so much, He teaches us His ways in the Bible. If we heed His ways, the results will be very good.

“Keep yourself pure for marriage and be equally yoked,” we would teach them. They heeded God’s Word, and the Lord has blessed them for their obedience. Shan and Cayla have married two young men who love God – Stephen and Jeremy passionately follow Jesus. Our decision to come back to the Lord, has greatly impacted the next generation. Shan and Stephen have had our first grandchild. Little June has been born into a godly family and so the next generation is greatly blessed. Praise God!

Rugby and No 7

People sometimes ask how I became a Springbok Rugby Player. The short answer is that I asked God to bless me to play for the Springboks when I was still playing for Harlequins and the Northern’s B Team. It was the Sunday after a club game, I would normally go for a run in the afternoon to loosen up and get rid of the aches and pains from the game, the day before. I was living with my Aunt and Uncle in Alberton and there was a road that went under the highway to a farm. I would run to the farm gate and do some stretching and a few exercises. I remember clearly, having a sincere moment with Father God and asking Him to bless me to play for the Boks. I completely forgot about this until I was back in relationship with the Lord. Our Lord revealed the answer to my prayer in a very interesting way using the number 7.

Let me explain:

When Penny and I started following Jesus, we went through 7 years of great difficulty with our business. We lost a lot of our regular clients, but our God was teaching us to completely depend on Him and trust Him alone. God was giving us the gift of faith, even though it was so tough at times. We then went into 7 years of blessing when our business did very well again. God was showing me something with the No 7. Another interesting incident happened with the No 7: We received a group of 5 couples who came on a fishing holiday to our lodge. On their very first night, after dinner, they all went to bed. Penny and I were still sitting at the camp-fire when one of our guests appeared.

“We’ve been robbed”, he said.

I went to see and truly they had been robbed of all their belongings. We were all shocked and then we found the footprints of the thieves. I apologised to our

guests and rushed off to all the villages in our area to inform the community. I went back to the lodge, and it wasn't long before I received a message that the thief's tracks had been found on the main road because it was a dirt road, in those days. I jumped into our D/Cab with 4 of our staff and as I was driving out of the lodge, I prayed:

“Father, deliver these thieves into my hands this night.”

We followed the tracks for about 20km and then they just disappeared. Not quite sure what to do, I finally made a decision to go on further and then take a road that went down to the river. I knew of a footpath that followed the Zambezi and I thought if we waited at this junction, we could ambush them. It was about 2am and we were now 30km away from the lodge, in pitch darkness. As we waited in silence, I thought of all the possibilities for these thieves not to come. They could have gone anywhere! Finally, I checked the time, it was 5 minutes to 5am and I decided to wait just 5 more minutes. I checked the time again and it was 1 minute past 5am and I stood up and was about to say,

“Come guys, let's go”, when I heard some voices in the dark.

I just froze and stayed standing. I saw the silhouette of 3 heads against the skyline and when they were between us, I switched on my headlight and they took off! Well, the Lord gave me my old rugby legs back and I quickly caught the guy running in front and gave him one of my best rugby tackles ever. We recovered all the stolen goods and returned them to our guests, who were most amazed. The Lord blessed their fishing, and the next year they came again. The thieves were locked up in prison and on the day of the court case, they were sentenced to 7 years. As the judge gave the verdict, I felt Father God say, “My son, that night, just as you asked Me, I delivered those thieves into your hands. Also, My son, do you remember your prayer to play for the Springboks, I gave you 7 Tests for the Springboks to prove the answer to your prayer.”

God has answered so many prayers in my life and has often used the number 7 as proof. How gracious is our wonderful God. So that's how I got to play for the Springboks, I asked Father God, and he confirmed my answer with exactly 7 test matches for SA. In the '95 World Cup, I played in 3 of the games and I was on the bench for 3 of the games – the opening game against Australia, the semi-final against France and the final against New Zealand. I did not go onto the field for even a minute in all 3 of the games. If I had, God could not have used the no 7 to prove the answer to my prayer. In the final, I was the only player on the bench not to go onto the field. Hallelujah! How amazing is that! Praise God! My rugby days were great and I thoroughly enjoyed my rugby, God was so good to me,

but praise God, there is more, so much more.

The Future

I believe God has an amazing plan and purpose for each and every one of us. There is a great calling on our lives and God has created us with unique characters and abilities. He also prepares us through all our unique circumstances in life to fulfil His plan for our lives. God has placed a unique calling on my life, and I believe it's to make a plan for the poor in Western Zambia. I believe it is by developing a game reserve to unlock the potential of wildlife and tourism, for a great blessing to the Lozi people of Barotseland. Penny and I have written down the vision and currently our proposal is on the table of the Litunga (King of Barotseland), the various chiefs, Indunas of the Barotse Royal Establishment, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife etc. I have shared the vision with most of the villages in the region. Most importantly, the church must come alongside the development, because when the blessings start coming, the people must be able to be faithful with the blessing. So that the very blessing from God does not end up destroying their lives. I believe God for great and small things, and I believe that He can do anything. I believe that He has already answered my prayer and it's just a matter of time before we see the manifestation of a wonderful game reserve – for a great blessing to many and to the Glory of our great and awesome God.



From school hustler to inspiration for family.

I am Vusi Nxumalo and I am a recovering addict. I grew up in Eldorado park - a place notorious for its drug abuse. I started using drugs at a young age. I was introduced on my 1st day at high school. I would say it was peer pressure. All of my new friends I had met that day already had been using. Everyone started small, with a cigarette here to a joint of weed there. To my surprise we were only getting started. My friends were not aware it was my 1st time so I just went along because I was already part of the "cool kids." During the days I used to sell cigarettes and weed at school, so I always had money to maintain my bad habits. I knew I couldn't steal from home like my friends because I didn't live with my parents so I had to hustle every cent.

By the time I was at college my grandmother couldn't work any more because she was retiring. I then

decided to drop out after my 2nd year because I had to find a job and assist at home. But I couldn't find a job, so I went back to my school to hustle selling weed. After a while I started selling drugs too. By the time I got a job I did both work and selling drugs. I was able to provide at home, maintain myself and my drug addiction. As I was selling drugs I was aware that I'm not making as much money as I was supposed to because I was getting high on my own supply but I couldn't stop. The high helped me escape my pain and reality as a kid growing up with no mother and father. I kept on asking myself questions I couldn't get answers to. I had no one to talk to. I bottled up everything that had hurt me so using drugs would

alter my mood so I could focus on getting money to provide for my grandmother and little brother.



I was not making as much money as I should have, because I was getting high on my own supply, but couldn't stop.



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Honestly I didn't grow up poor - my grandmother did a great job raising me and my little brother. She was hard working. She played the role of a mother and a father well. Our needs were well provided for. So when I had to step up as she couldn't play that role anymore I was ambitious to succeed in my hustle to make her proud and show how I appreciated everything she has done for me and my little brother. As time went, she started questioning my means of providing and I was unemployed so at some point I had to tell her and she didn't like the idea at all but I convinced her that I will be safe. We needed the hustle because if I stopped there wouldn't be food on the table.

I used drugs so that I would be able to sell my product 24/7. I had to multi-task my cash income by doing different hustles. At the time I was in active addiction, dressed well, afforded a luxury life style and people looked up to me so I didn't



As much as I went on this journey for myself, my little brother was my inspiration to do better for us.

see anything wrong with using because I thought I'll forever be "The Man!"

Then I lost my grandmother. That's where everything went wrong. I lost everything I worked hard for. The pain consumed me and I felt like I had no reason to live. Feeding my addiction was the only thing that mattered. I started doing crime. I was beaten by the community several times. I was a dead man walking. Sadly my younger brother followed in my foot steps.

I realised that my actions were going to get me killed or arrested and that would destroy my little brother. We sat down and agreed to change our lives for the better. As much as I

went on the journey to recovery for myself, my little brother was my inspiration to do better for us. The road to recovery hasn't been easy but it is worth it. I found God and myself on this journey, I found hope and am able to dream again.

I thank God and Freedom Recovery Centre for giving me another chance at life.



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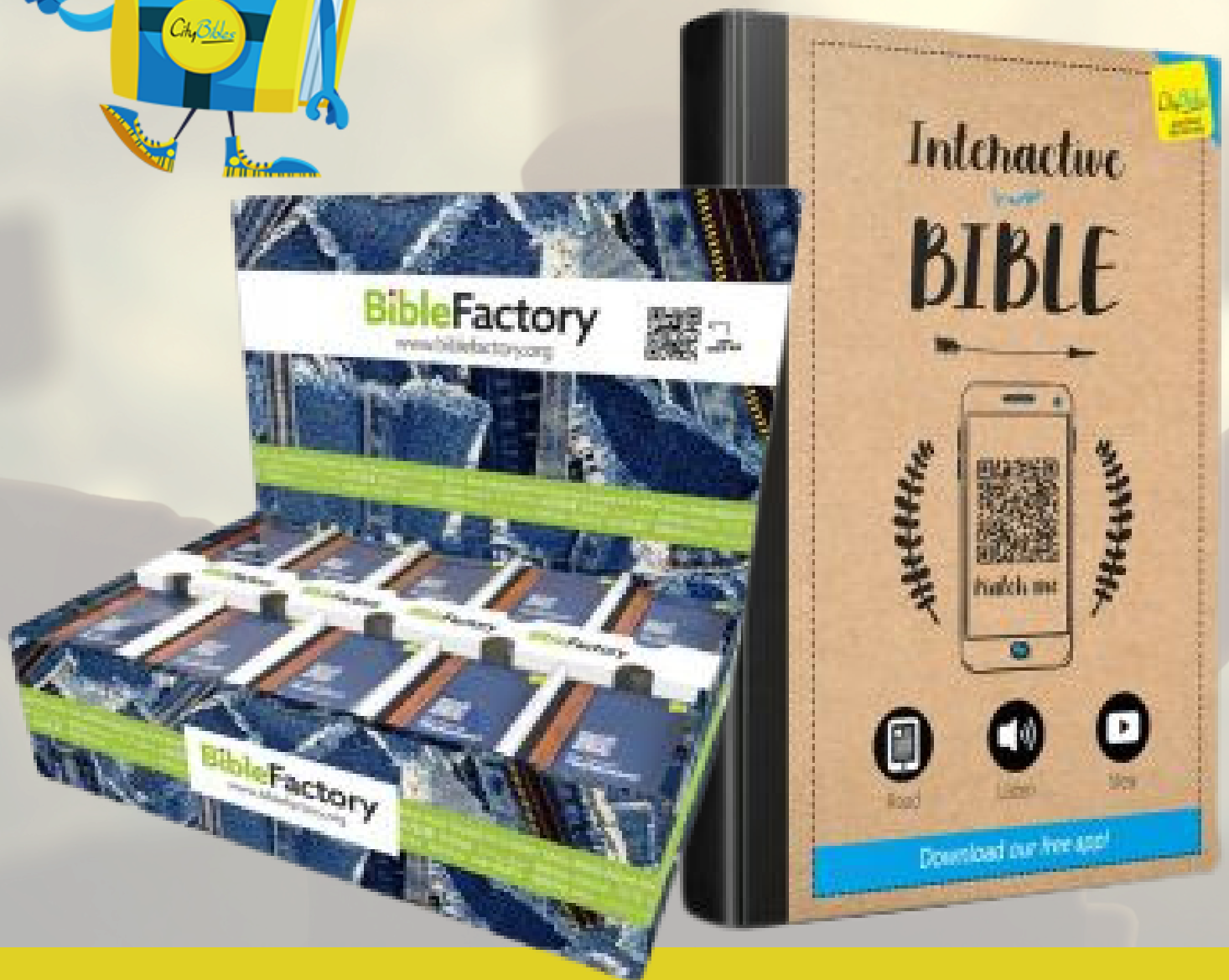
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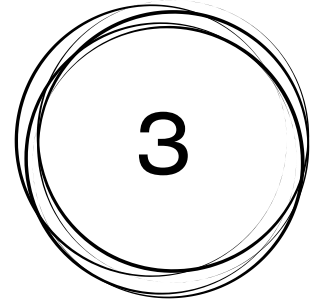


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TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

BY PASTOR MIKE GOBEL

THE DISCIPLINE OF *DISCIPLESHIP*



How to achieve Spiritual Victory in life.

Introduction

Most of us are very comfortable living in our hometown, city or village – among our own people, friends and family. But what happens when we’re placed in a foreign country with a language and culture unfamiliar to us? Many people become confused, anxious and even depressed. The name for this condition is Culture Shock. Culture Shock occurs when we find ourselves in surroundings completely new to us. Familiar customs no longer apply, and many things must be relearned. Becoming a Christian can be a Culture Shock as we find ourselves having to change the way we think, behave, and even communicate. We find ourselves having to adapt and learn new way of having to live by the Spirit. After living so much of our lives in the Physical world, we must now learn to live in the Spiritual. For some this transition or transformation if you will – from living by the ‘flesh’ (old sinful nature) to



living in the Spirit (new Godly nature) is harder than we would like to admit. I have spent the best part of the past 8 years studying, researching and analysing the Christian faith to understand why the vast majority of Christians still live in bondage, fear and sin even though they have given their hearts to Christ and have all the necessary tools to achieve spiritual growth and victory through Christ our Lord. To understand the reasons for this lack of spiritual breakthroughs in Believer's lives and the void between living in victory and experiencing the fruit of the Spirit, as against to living in constant turmoil, doubt, fear, and attacks from the devil, I need to highlight a few important principles of the Spiritual Nature of a true child of God. The Bible describes Man as a living Soul, existing in a Body, and having a spirit. Our bodies connect us to the Physical World, while our spirit is our link to God and the Spiritual World. Our soul, which includes our mind, emotions and will, is influenced both by our body and our spirit. All of mankind are born with a Sin Nature after the Fall of Man, but Christians are Born Again by God with a New Nature and possess the Holy Spirit! Read: 1 Thessalonians 5:23

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Spiritual Nature of People

The Bible describes 'Three Kinds of People' in 1 Corinthians 2:14 "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." It goes on to say in 1 Corinthians 3:3 "...for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and [a]behaving like mere men?"

The Non-Christian

- ❖ Does Not Have Christ or Eternal Life.
- ❖ Life Dominated by Sin Nature.
- ❖ Life Influenced by Satan and the World.
- ❖ Has no Fellowship with God.
- ❖ Is an Enemy of God.
- ❖ Is Unable to Live a Life Pleasing to God.

The Non-Christian does not have Christ in his life and is spiritually separated from God. His essential nature is sinful, and because of this, he is strongly influenced by the World and Satan. He is an enemy of God that cannot please God.

"Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully,

but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.” - 2 Corinthians 4:1-4

The Spiritual Christian

- ❖ Has Christ and Eternal Life.
- ❖ Life Dominated by Christ.
- ❖ Life Influenced by God and His Word
- ❖ Is a Child of God.
- ❖ Has Fellowship with God.
- ❖ Is Living a Life Pleasing to God.

The Spiritual Christian has Christ in his life and is spiritually alive to God. His essential nature is holy, and he is strongly influenced by God and His Word. He is a child of God and pleases God with his life.

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know [b]us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” – 1 John 3:1-3

The Worldly Christian

- ❖ Has Christ and Eternal Life.
- ❖ Life Dominated by Sin Nature.
- ❖ Life Influenced by Satan and the World .
- ❖ Is a Child of God.
- ❖ Has No Fellowship with God.
- ❖ Is Not Living a Life Pleasing to God.

The Worldly Christian has Christ in his life and is spiritually alive to God. His essential nature is holy and pure, but lives according to the Sin Nature, opening himself to the influence of the World and Satan. He is a child of God but does not please God with his life. The passage you about to read is probably one of the hardest for any child of God to accept and understand but it is imperative that we read it in the context of God's love, mercy and grace:

“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.”

“Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness

is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.”

“In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous.” - 1 John 3:4-12

As a truly committed child of God we need to come to that place of understanding to know that we cannot continue living a life of sin and ungodliness and expect to receive the spiritual victory through Christ in our lives. Yes, Jesus Christ sacrificed His life for the sins of this world but at the same time we need to also acknowledge and understand that He did not die for us to continue living a sinful life and expecting His mercy and grace to carry us through all our

trials and tribulations, if we are not willing to turn from our wicked ways and follow Him in mind, body and spirit!

Application:

Considering these three persons as described above, which of these would you say best represents your life?

❖ If you are the Non-Christian, may I recommend that you go on your knees right now and ask God to forgive you of your sins and if you would, consider opening your heart to accept Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour. If you are still wanting or needing some form of help and guidance in terms of your salvation, may I recommend that you visit your local church or go and speak to someone about God. It is important, if not imperative that you have a clear understanding of who God is and what it means to surrendering your life to Christ. Don’t just make that decision for the sake of others, or to purely receive the gift of eternal life but you are not willing to have a relationship with Christ. This is not what becoming a Christian or child of God is all about. It is for this reason why many ‘worldly Christians’ today do not have any form of spiritual growth or manifest any element of the ‘fruit of the spirit’ in their lives.

❖ If you are the Worldly Christian, allow Christ to fill your life. Begin by becoming serious about your faith and start by applying the biblical principles as described in the Book of

Acts (Acts 2:42) in your walk with God. You cannot expect growth and victory in your natural life if your spiritual life is not in alignment to the will of God. Begin by asking God to help you remove the blindfold from your eyes in order that you might see the areas of worldly sin in your life.

Then make sure that you devote a certain time of each day to reading God's Word and praying. You must create an environment that is conducive or favourable for your mind, body and spirit to flow in the Spirit and to become connected to the things of God instead of being focused on the things of this world.

If you aren't already, may I recommend that you get back into the routine of going to church and connecting to the rest of the body of Christ. Participate in Holy Communion and in Worship and Praying. Pray daily, preferably several times a day. Read: 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3.

The Non-Christian is described in Scripture as being "dead" in sin. He is without God's Life, and because of this, will spend eternity apart from God should he die without Christ and the forgiveness and life He brings. Read: 1 Corinthians 2:15; Galatians 2:20.

The Spiritual Christian is alive to God

with Christ in his life. He has learned to live by faith and yields his life to God. He is filled with the Spirit of Christ and empowered by Him to resist the influences of the World, Satan and the weakness of the Sin Nature.

Read: 1 Corinthians 3: 1-3; Acts 5: 1-5

The Worldly Christian is often a new or young Christian who is not living by faith or yielding his life to God. He may also be an older Christian who has chosen to live according to the lusts of the Sin Nature opening himself up to the influences of the World and Satan.

Warning!

A Christian who continually lives in sin may not be a true Christian at all.

Read: 1 John 2:3-6.

How to Achieve Spiritual Growth

Spiritual Growth occurs as we yield more of our lives to Christ until He fills every part: Will, Mind, Emotions and Body. As we grow spiritually, we move from being predominantly Worldly in our lifestyle to being Spiritual.

In order to achieve Spiritual Growth and Victory we need to fill our minds with the things of God. The passage of Scripture that leads and guides us to this basic truth comes from Romans 12:2 in which it says, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the 'renewing of your mind,' that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Therefore, I started this new series of teachings last month on the "renewing of the mind." Nothing godly or spiritually significant can happen to us if we are not willing to transform our minds to conform to the will of God. It must start there! The word "conform" means to be "squeezed in a mould." We must resist to be squeezed into the mould of the world's values and patterns. Instead, we are to be 'transformed' or changed from the inside through the renewing of the mind.

Our Wills Filled with Christ

Read: Luke 22:41-42

"And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done." Also Read: John 4:34; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Hebrews 12:2 In Luke 22:42, Jesus prays that if His Father were willing, He be somehow spared the suffering awaiting Him on the Cross. But He yields His Will to His Father's. Why? Because He is convinced that God is all wise, all knowing, and all loving, and that God's Will is "good, pleasing and perfect"!

Question: How convinced are you that God is all "wise, all knowing and all loving" and that His Will is "good, pleasing and perfect"? How can we grow in our conviction that

God's will is "good, pleasing and perfect"?

Our Emotions Filled with Christ

Colossians 3:12 says, ***"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."***

Our Emotions can be one of the most difficult areas of our lives to control. Feelings are so often dependent on circumstances which can change unexpectedly. But we can experience God's emotion as we yield our lives to Him and live moment by moment in the Spirit.

Read: Matthew 9:36

Christians & Anger

John 2:13-17 says, "Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" Questions: What does this passage teach you about Jesus and anger? Can you think of times when it is right to be angry? When

would those be?

Our Bodies Filled with Christ

Romans 12:1 reads, ***“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship.”***

In Romans chapters 1-11 Paul describes God's incredible Plan of Salvation by which He imparts His Righteousness upon all who believe in His Son. Part of His Plan includes the impartation of His Spirit in us to enable us to know and fulfill His will. In Romans 12:1, Paul draws the logical conclusion to this truth. Read: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
Questions: What does it mean to offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God?

How is offering our bodies to God a 'spiritual act of worship'?

Faith: The Only Way

2 Corinthians 5:7 reads, ***"We live by faith, not by sight."***

In the Physical World, we live by our Physical Senses: Sight, Touch, Hearing, Taste and Smell. But how do we live in the Spiritual realm while still in this physical body? 2 Corinthians 5:7 provides the concise answer: by Faith!

Living by Faith in God and His Word is like flying a plane by instruments. Though you may feel like you're flying right side up, your instruments may indicate the plane is really upside down! The pilot must discipline himself to trust the instruments and not his own feelings! In the same way, Christians must discipline themselves to trust God's Word, and not their feelings!

Feelings versus the Truth of God's Word.

1. I don't feel God's presence. versus (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5)
2. I don't feel forgiven. versus (1 John 1:9)
3. I am afraid of dying. versus (John 14:1-3; Psalm 16:11)
4. I am anxious. versus (Philippians 4:6 & 19)

Hebrews 11:6 reads, ***"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."***

These are important words when it comes to unbelievers and new converts coming to Christ and staying in Christ. Faith is the very foundation of our belief and trust in God. We cannot expect miracles and change to take place in our lives if our faith is not 100% behind our spiritual walk with God.

GOD MUST BECOME THE CENTER OF OUR LIVES

Read: 2 Corinthians 4:18; Galatians 2:20

Faith

As believers we all live by faith everyday! We must trust people around us and a multitude of things to get through each day. Christians must learn to trust God and depend on Him as the Source of all their daily needs. Its easy to say I'm a Christian or a child of God but are you fully depending on God for your daily needs. Are you placing your full trust in God when it comes to getting a new job maybe, or in helping you overcome your financial obligations, or to assist you to focus on your studies or to overcome worldly obsessions or addictions? This is where our faith is tested. The Bible teaches us in Hebrews 11:1-10 ***"Now faith is the [a]substance of things hoped for, the [b]evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. 3 By faith we understand that the [c]worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. 4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it***

he being dead still speaks. 5 By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. 7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Application

- ❖ Examine your life and evaluate your own Faith? What grade would you give yourself?
- ❖ How do you plan to grow in your Faith in God?

Affirmation to the degree of Faith we have in Christ

Begin by asking yourself these questions:

1. Have I accepted Christ into my life and if the answer is YES, then how much of my life is He in control of and how much am I still in control of my life?
2. Does my life belong 100% to God or am I living with one foot in the world and one foot in Christ?
3. Am I empowered by Christ to follow the will of God for my life or am I still following my own heart when it comes to the desires of the flesh?
4. Do I trust Christ with my whole life, and can the world see the image of Christ through me?

A Prayer for each Day

In closing, may I recommend that you pray this prayer with me right now if you wish to experience a significant breakthrough in your spiritual life and to grow in victory through Christ:

“Dear Lord, You have given me Life through Your Spirit in me. Fill me completely with Your Spirit. I yield my mind, emotions, will and body to You that Your Life may penetrate every area of mine. Give me the knowledge, wisdom and understanding of your Word to stay focused on the things of God and help me Lord to achieve spiritual growth and victory in the Name of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

If you wish to support my ministry or the efforts of Planting Hope Foundation to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost and to help the widows, orphans and most vulnerable people in our region, feel free to contact me on the details below.

In God's love,

**Pastor Mike & Jada Gobel
Contact No.: 071 018 0768
Email: michaelgobel14@gmail.com**



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IMPACT YOUTH

BY ADEN LOTTERING

YOUNG PEOPLE AND *CHURCH*



My name is Aden Lottering I am 16 years old, and I live in Alra Park, Nigel I am a member of Rivers of hope Ministries and I am under the leadership of Bishop Oral and Apostle Krystal Whittaker I am an active member of Impact Youth and in my free time i enjoy gaming, playing rugby and going to the gym. In rugby, I play nearly every position in the "Fowards". The team and I won the league finals two weeks ago and I could never be more happier.

Why Teens Think Church is Boring

Aden Lottering

Getting teenagers interested in anything can be tough, and church is no different. Many teens think church is boring, and there are several reasons why.

Understanding these reasons can help make church more interesting and engaging for teens. Here are some reasons why teens might find church boring:

1. *Not Relatable*

Teens are figuring out who they are and where they fit in the world. They want things that relate to their everyday lives and problems. Traditional church services, with their rituals and old-

fashioned language, can seem out of touch. If sermons and activities don't talk about things like mental health, relationships, and social justice—things that matter to teens—they might lose interest.

2. *Repetitive Services*

The same old routine in church can be boring. The predictable order of worship, hymns, and sermons might not be exciting. Unlike other parts of their lives filled with different and interactive content, a church service might feel boring and hard to stay interested in.

3. *No Active Participation*

Teens today are used to interactive experiences, especially with social media and technology. Just sitting and listening doesn't capture their attention like being actively involved does. Many church services don't give teens enough chances to participate, ask questions, or join discussions, making them feel detached and bored.

4. *Cultural Disconnect*

Sometimes churches can't connect culturally with teens. The music, language, and overall style of worship might not match what

teens like. If the cultural references and artistic expressions in church don't resonate with their everyday experiences, teens might feel alienated and uninterested.

5. *Seen as Irrelevant*

If church doesn't address real-world issues, teens might not see the point. In a fast-changing world with constant updates on social media, a church that seems out of touch might seem outdated and irrelevant to teens.

6. *Bad Experiences and Peer Influence*

Bad past experiences, like feeling judged or unwelcome, can make teens not want to go to church. Peer influence is also a big deal. If their friends think church is boring or pointless, teens might feel the same way, leading to a collective disengagement.

7. *Need for Authenticity*

Teens value authenticity and can quickly sense when something isn't genuine. If they think the church community or its leaders are hypocritical or insincere, they might get disillusioned. Real relationships and genuine efforts to connect can make a big difference

in how teens see church.

How to Make Church More Engaging for Teens

1. *Relevance:* Talk about issues that matter to teens. Include topics like social justice, mental health, and technology in sermons and discussions.

2. *Interactivity:* Give teens chances to participate actively. This can include interactive sermons, discussion groups, and activities where teens can share their thoughts and questions.

3. *Cultural Sensitivity:* Use music, art, and language that teens relate to. This might involve contemporary worship music, multimedia presentations, and relevant cultural references.

4. *Community Building:* Create a welcoming and inclusive environment where teens feel valued and understood. Encourage real relationships and mentorship within the church community.

5. Service Opportunities: Involve teens in community service and social action projects. These activities provide a sense of purpose and show that the church is relevant to real-world issues.

Understanding why teens find church boring is the first step toward making church more exciting!



My name is Braydon Rose





My name is Braydon Rose and I'm 15 yrs old. I reside in Alra Park and fellowship at Rivers of Hope under the leadership of Bishop Oral and Apostle Krystle Whittaker. I am currently a teacher in training at our Children's Church ministry and an active member of Impact youth. In the world full of challenges, I keep myself busy with athletics, hockey and my favourite sport soccer. I have been playing soccer from the age of 9 years and played different positions such as defensive midfielder, attacking midfielder, centre back, left and right back. I was part of the Easters local football association under 15 and was also elected for Ekurhuleni East under 15 in 2023.

I am currently playing for seven Academy in the Gauteng development league.

Why young people stop coming to church?

Young people stop attending church for various reasons:

1. Hypocrisy and Judgement: Many youths perceive churches as hypocritical or judgmental
2. Lack of Connection: Feeling disconnected from others in the church can lead to disengagement
3. Young people practice their faith in other ways
4. They never attended church to begin with
5. Relevance: Sometimes, churches try to be “cool” by mimicking popular culture, but this can backfire. Young people want authenticity, not a cheap imitation of the world.

Remember, patience and consistency are key. Building relationships takes time, but it's essential for sharing Faith with the next generation.

Ways to attract the youth to church.

1. **Authenticity Matters:** Young people value authenticity. Be genuine, build meaningful relationships, and avoid flashy shows
2. **Build Relationships:** Take time to connect. Say hello, listen, and show interest in their lives
3. **Involve Them:** Invite young people to participate actively:
Sunday Service: Include them in the main service.
Small Groups: Engage them in small group discussions.
Prayer Meetings: Encourage their presence.
4. **Show Unconditional Love:** Even when they make mistakes, demonstrate love and acceptance.

How to make church fun!

1. **Christian Music Concert:** Arrange an outdoor concert featuring uplifting Christian music.
2. **Dinner Theatre:** Produce a Christian-themed dinner theatre performance.
3. **Outdoor Tournaments:** Invite the community for volleyball, soccer, or basketball tournaments.



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THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

SHARE IT WITH ALL PLEASE

HAVE YOU ACCEPTED JESUS
CHRIST?

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

Romans 3:23 ESV

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

The abovementioned verse is an extremely well used verse and many people know it and can even quote it off by heart, but the significance of it is the reality that every single person needs to contemplate.

If you have not accepted Jesus as your Personal Saviour yet or are thin king about it, you have to start here. The reality of your sin problem cancels and disqualifies you from the very presence of God and this bars you from eternal Life. Your choices are simple here, either an eternity with God or an Eternity without God. I would think that the logical answer would be an Eternity with God. Why? Well let's look at this:

2 Thessalonians 1:9

"They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might"

NASB

This is the reality of a choice that omits Jesus as your Personal Saviour -

= Everlasting Punishment

= Destruction

= Shut Out

= No Godly Presence

= And no Glory at all

This is not something to take lightly and by the way this is not scaring you into making a false decision, God is love, thus we as His followers are love, this means if I say I have the love of God, it is my duty to tell you the truth and point you into the right direction.

So in looking at the sin problem and the reality of this, what is the answer then? Let's look at this:

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

NASB

What a wonderful solution to an immense problem, Go gas made a way and in making the way He has also made it very clear that this is the only answer to the problem. You have to accept Jesus His Son in order to obtain Eternal Life and ward off all the destruction and other bad things spoken about in the previous Bible verse.

It also makes it very clear that this can only be done through JESUS CHRIST His Son, there is no other way to salvation or Eternal life other than through Jesus, NONE!

Let's look at this too:

John 1:12-13

"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

NASB

Wow! Just look at this, not only do we get Eternal Life but we become Children of God. The impact of this is massive as it speaks to the fact that we now belong to the family of God and receive the benefits of being part of a family, and not just any family but a royal family (1 Peter 2 vs 9).

So in looking and understanding all of this, How do you accept Jesus as your Personal Saviour?

Romans 10 vs 9-10

"that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

NASB

Let me just make one point very clear before we look at the above verses, your salvation cannot be obtained by good works, you cannot go to Heaven or be part of God's family because you are a good person, or you do good deeds, No! The Bible makes it clear, if you want to accept Jesus as your Personal Saviour then it gets done on the basis of two things. These two things are critical because it will also help you on your work with the Lord and attain righteousness and a life pleasing to God.



Firstly, you have to confess with your mouth that Jesus is your Lord, this is very important because by your confession God will know and people in the world will know. This is significant because one does not hide a light under a bowl. Everyone must see and hear that you are a child of God.



And secondly you must believe in your heart, with your whole being and understanding that Jesus was raised from the dead and is alive and is your only Saviour.

So if you have read all of this and the Holy Spirit is directing you to accept Jesus as your Personal Saviour please pray the prayer on the next page, God loves you so much.



ACCEPTING JESUS IS EVERYTHING!

PRAYER FOR SALVATION

Dear Lord Jesus,

I understand that I am a sinner and in need of desperate saving, The Bible tells me clearly that the only answer is for me to confess with my mouth and believe in my heart. I am now confessing with my mouth that I am accepting You as my Personal Saviour and believing in my heart that you are alive and well and dwelling within me. Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit and the fellowship of other Believers and allow me please to follow in your footsteps. Amen!

Wow! Congratulations if you have just prayed this prayer, and know that you are now part of the family of the Kingdom of God. Please tell someone about your decision, pray all the time and read and study your Bible. Find a Holy Ghost, Bible preaching church and join.

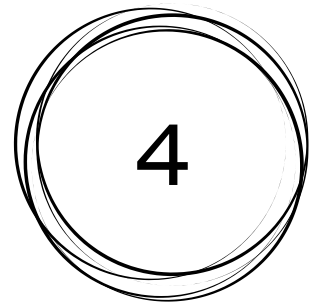
Please let us know if you have made this decision and allow us to point you in the right direction.

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THE HEART OF JESUS

Calling All Saints
Calling All Sinners!



BY PASTOR NOMSA

FASTING FOR SPIRITUAL *BREAKTHROUGHS*

Part 3

“FASTING for SPIRITUAL
BREAKTHROUGHS”!

Prayer:

Wonderful Father of mercy and grace, we thank you for the Holy Spirit, who is our constant companion. Lord, we thank you for Your Teachings in the Word with regards to Fasting; and we are blessed to know that you are teaching us about Fasting, in order for us to come closer to You; so we may receive a deeper understanding of Who You are; and to build on having an intimate relationship with You in Your Kingdom. Bless Your Holy Name! Be glorified as we Fast; and



Prophetic Teacher Nomsa
Email: RestorationTRT@gmail.com

keep our bodies in line with God's Word as we continue to honour You in our physical beings, in Jesus Name.

Beloved in Christ,

As mentioned in last month's column, the Teaching on Fasting will be three parts, so, herewith Part3 which is the last Part in this series. Next month, by grace, we will continue with a new Topic. In this month's Teaching we look at different other Fast's and also what other religions practise and believe with regards to Fasting.

I trust you will be blessed with this month's Teaching.

I am praying for all of you to come close to God through Fasting.

God bless you, shalom.

Ps. Nomsa

11) BIGGEST REASONS AND BENEFITS OF FASTING

To receive answers from God.

To prepare you for spiritual warfare.

To receive guidance concerning your future in your work, marriage, finances, etc.

To receive guidance from the Holy Spirit in certain problem situations.

To seek God's face.

To get your spirit in line with God's Word.

To maintain a healthy body.

To humble yourselves before God.

To refresh your soul.

To solve problems.

To achieve rest for your spirit, soul, and body.

Obtaining forgiveness for sins.

Addictions can be permanently broken.

Bad food habits can be broken.

Fasting can be one day, three days, seven days (one week); 12 days, 14 days (two weeks), 21 days, 30 days, or 40 days.

12) QUESTIONS YOU CAN ANSWER WHILE FASTING OR AFTER YOU HAVE FASTED

What did God make known to you about Himself while you fasted?

What did God make known to you about His purpose for your life?

What did God reveal to you about his method of operation?

How did God appear to you while you were fasting?

How did you experience God's presence while you fasted?

Did God give you a scripture out of His Word during your fast?

Did God show a person or persons to pray for while you have been fasting?

What other things did God present to you for which you should intercede?

What did God point out to you about his time in connection with certain situations for which you have prayed?

What changes did God expect you to do in your life?

Which acts of obedience did you maintain in this time?

What other things do you know that God wants you to obey in your life after you have fasted?

13) TO END YOU'RE FAST

Your fast should always end with **Praise, Worship and Thanksgiving; and can be followed with a holy sweet communion.**

14) KEEP A JOURNAL OF THE FAST

Keep a journal of your fast period in which you daily or weekly record what happened while you fasted. Write down the scriptures that were laid upon your heart in this time. Make drawings and give explanations of what you saw in visions or dreams during your fast period. It is good to see the progress you have made since the start of the fast and to remind you of what you had written down. It is possible that you will

see a pattern of how God has spoken to you during this fasting period.

15) OTHER WELL-KNOWN FASTS ESTABLISHED BY PEOPLE

A 24-hour fasting once a month is recommended to give rest to your body.

The "Fast of Geneva" Jeune Genevois is a public holiday and a day of fasting in the canton of Geneva, Switzerland, and is held on the first Thursday after the first Sunday in September.

Individual fast (nobody knows that you are busy fasting).

Isolation fasting - total isolation for a certain number of days or weeks.

John Wesley fasting - a certain number of days on bread and water only.

Health fast - to reduce cholesterol - for health reasons, and to avoid the risk of diseases.

Liquid fast - to stay away from food, only drinking liquids.

Media fast - stay away from the media - especially television, newspapers, magazines, books. To break the habit of TV.

Ministry fast - in private or a whole church together - for breakthroughs in a ministry.

National fast - the whole Government of a nation called out to fast.

Fast of the first fruits sheaf - a fast

that you do not eat products that include wheat, barley, bread etc...

The Nazarene fast - a fast in which you set yourself aside for God and do not drink fruit juice and or grape juice or any juices that contain grapes.

Withholding fast - a fast that you do not eat meat for a period - **read Rom 14:20-21; 1 Cor 8:13.**

16) "POLITICAL FASTING"

For years there were many political reasons to fast. One of the most famous fasts is probably that of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who fasted for longer than 60 days only on a little water. His fast had a great impact upon the British "Raj" and the Indian population. After about 66 days he wanted to stop fasting and they started to feed him teaspoons of watery soup, but it was already too late. The fasting had taken its toll on his body, and he died because of dehydration. The political reason for fasting is to convince the nation of something; fast to deal with something important, to take a political stand, to show the other political parties that they are serious with what they believe and who they are, this type of fast is a type of "starvation non-violence resistance".

There are annual fasts undertaken by people all over the world, such as the "Hunger Fast" or "Famine fast" of 40 hours, held each year to bring to the attention of the world that worldly

poverty and hunger is real.

Politicians around the world also used fasts to make a point such as "Bobby Sands", a politician from Northern Ireland who in 1981 participated in the "Irish Hunger Strike" to fight for better food in prisons for prisoners. He had just been elected as Prime Minister when he began the fast and died after 66 days without food or water. His funeral was attended by 100,000 people and the "strike" was halted after nine other people also died because of their refusal to eat, for the same reason.

Altogether, these ten men gave their lives for "better food" in the prisons of Ireland. Some of them have lived without food or water for as long as 46 days or longer. The longest fast without food or water during this fast was 73 days.

Activists fast for several reasons: the Canadian physician and politician "David Swan" had called a fast for seven days in December 2007 to focus attention on the world's inaction on the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. On 27 April 2009, actress "Mia Farrow" started this fast to follow Dr. Swan and 12 days after doctors warned her to stop the fast for health reasons. "Richard Branson" took her place and continued fasting until 11 May, after which

Congressman," Donald M. Payne "took over. Recording Artist "Jon Foreman" had taken part in the same fast.

César Chávez had undertaken several spiritual fasts, which includes a 25 day fast in 1968 to promote the idea or lifestyle of non-violence, and a fast of “thanksgiving and hope” to prepare for pre-arranged civil disobedience by farm workers. Chávez said a spiritual fast is a personal spiritual transformation. Other progressive campaigns have adopted the tactic.

In 2011, Anna Hazare who is a prominent leader of the 2011 Indian anti-corruption movement undertook a 12-day fast to support the Jan Lokpal Bill. The Palestinian activist Khader Adnan started a 66-day hunger strike during December 2011 to protest, among other things, his own placement under administrative detention without trial or a formal charge; he was eventually allowed to agree to cease his strike in exchange for a planned release in April.

17) “DELIBERATE FASTING”

If you plan to have a blood test for medical reasons it is important that you fast several hours before the test. Especially with a test for cholesterol it is important to fast at least twelve hours before the test. If you do not follow this advice, the test

will give the wrong results, which is especially important for correct results. People have been diagnosed as "diabetes" because incorrect results were given because people did not fast before testing was done. As a result, incorrect medication was prescribed, and it had adverse effects on people's bodies. Even when people go in for surgery the doctors prefer them to fast for about 12 hours before surgery is undertaken, especially when people are given general anesthetic to let them sleep. If someone gets general anesthetic for an operation and their stomach is full of food, it can cause a vomiting reaction, that will cause them to choke because of food that will get stuck in the throat and will block the oxygen pipes that provides air to the lungs and can result in a serious situation, and the operation cannot continue because of sanitary conditions. In medical circles, there are many reasons for which elderly people at an advanced age will decide not to eat. This is called a "willful or deliberate" fast. Most of these old people have already lost their partners and do not have the will to live any longer and so stop eating. It can cause an immediate health problem.

18) PREPARATION FOR YOUR FAST

PREPARATION - fast (type of fast) NAME
PURPOSE OF FASTING: (In this section state your reason for fasting and your desired result)
CONFIRMATION: (Confirm here there is no worldly power that can dominate you because you are a child of God - 1 Cor 10:13) You further acknowledge that you believe in the power of the blood (Acts 3:16, 16:18) Confirm that you fast because you expected that the blood of Jesus will set you free (John 8:36).
PLEDGE / PROMISE: (State here the pledge before God that you do in your fasting period, e.g. To commit yourself to the fast which you present).
FAST FROM: (List the foods which you will not eat).
BEGINING DATE: (State here the date and time that you start).
END-DATE: (State here the end date and time that you will stop).
SCRIPTURES: (State here the scriptures related to the fast that you do, e.g., Daniel-fast - Dan. 9:3, 10:2-3).
WITNESSES: (If you want, you can call a witness who can monitor and encourage you through your fasting period (only when you feel you do not have enough power to do it alone). It could be someone who will fast with you for the same reasons.
SIGN: (Name en Signature) Here you sign your name. Then you take this document and lay it down before God and make yourself ready to start fasting through washing your face, anoint your head and then start to quote the scriptures from God's Word which will give you the strength in this time of fasting.

Below is a list of scriptures that refers to fasting:

Jdg 20:26 Isa 58:3, 4, 5, 6 Luk 18:12
Acts 13:2, 3
1 Sam 7:6 Jer 14:12 Mark 2:18, 19,
20 Luk 5:33, 34, 35
1 Sam 31:13 Jer 36:9 Mat 6:16, 18
Mat 9:14, 15
2 Sam 1:12 Neh 1:4 Zech 8:19 Mat
4:2; 6:16
2 Sam 12:16, 21, 23 Est 4:16 Jonah
3:5 Zag 7:5
1 Kin21: 9, 12, 27 Joel 2:15 2 Cron
20:3
1 Cron 10:12 Joel 1:14
Ezra 8: 21, 23

19) OTHER RELIGIONS REGARDING FASTING

Anglican Church

The Anglican Church has a book called the "Book of Common Prayer" which shows days of fasting, but since the separation of the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church this regulation was not followed. It was not until the 19th century that the "Oxford Movement" had decided to bring back these specific fasting days.

According to the "Book of Common Prayer" the following days are suggested to be a fast day:



The Nativity of our Lord; The Purification of the blessed Virgin Mary; the Annunciation of the blessed virgin; Easter Day; Ascension Day; Pentecost; St. Matthias; St. John the Baptist, St. Peter's Day; St. James; St. Bartholomew; St. Matthew; St. Simon; St. Jude; St. Andrew; St. Thomas; All saints day. If any of these days is on a Monday it will be held the preceding Saturday and not the Sunday. The fixed fasting day is the forty days fast of the days of "Lent" the beginning of the four seasons, the three "Ragation" days, and all the Fridays in the year except Christmas Day. Nowadays Anglican members are allowed to decide which fast-days they want to follow.

Bahá'í Faith

The Bahá'í faith is firmly adhered to from sunrise to sunset during the month of 'Ala' (March 2-March 20). The fast "rules" imposed by "Bahá'u'lláh" in their "Kitab-i-Aqdas". This is a complete fast from food and liquids as well as "smoke" during daylight hours. However, if someone should take any medication for a physical condition, they may at this time. Fasting is compulsory from the age of 15 to 70 years of age. Any women who are pregnant, people who are seriously ill, menstruating women in this age and mother that breastfeed babies are exempt from fasting. People that do hard manual labor may take in private small quantities of food daily. The fast

goes with continuous prayer and is one of the biggest commitments of faith. The protector ("Godfather / Guardian") of the Bahá'í faith, Shoghi Effendi has written the following on their fasting days: "It is essentially a period of meditation and prayer, of spiritual recuperation, during which the believer must strive to make the necessary readjustments in his inner life, and to refresh and reinvigorate the spiritual forces latent in his soul. Its significance and purpose are, therefore, fundamentally spiritual in character. Fasting is symbolic, and a reminder of abstinence from selfish and carnal desires..."

Buddhists

The Buddhist monks and nuns do not eat after they have eaten 12 o'clock (every day). This is called the "Vinaya". This is not really seen as a fast, but rather a period of meditation and good health. The "Lay" Buddhists do not fast as they are seen as a deviation from the "Middle Way" ("Middle Path). Although once a week they will abstain from their food from 12 o'clock until noon the next day. Apparently, Prince Siddhartha followed a period of six years in which he ate little. See paragraph below.

“Once when the Buddha was touring in the region of Kasi together with a large sangha of monks, he addressed them saying: 'I, monks, do not eat a meal in the evening. Not eating a meal in the evening, I, monks, am aware of good health and of being without illness and of buoyancy and strength and living in comfort. Come, do you too, monks, not eat a meal in the evening. Not eating a meal in the evening, you too, monks, will be aware of good health and..... and living in comfort.’”



TRT Kingdom Bible College recognizes ten defined fasts as it appears in the Word of God (according to this Teaching); and individuals are free to fast at any time as soon as they feel they have sufficient knowledge of what happens during a period of fasting.

Charismatic Churches

In Charismatic ministries fasting is proposed by the Holy Spirit and it is a personal spiritual experience between each person and God. Fasting is usually done when someone has a desire to reach a deeper spiritual level or to come closer to God. People like John Wesley, John G. Lake, Charles Finney, George Whitfield, and others have often fasted before a great outreach to

pray for the presence of the Holy Spirit. It can also serve as an act of prayer and fasting to get rid of a sin, such as "sleep around" and when someone want to lay a matter down before God to be set free from it, such as an "addiction" (smoking, drinking, etc). Some people do a fasting one day a week usually on the same day, like a Wednesday, but nobody is forced to join it. It is a personal choice.

Ethiopian Orthodox Churches

These churches have a dreadfully strict fasting calendar that must be always followed. Each Wednesday and Friday is a fasting day because Wednesday was the day that Jesus was condemned, and Friday was the day he died. Fasting in this church is abstinence from all food or liquid beverages. No animal products, dairy products including eggs, or meat may be taken. Any person who has touched such food must cleanse themselves before they can start fasting.

Fixed fasting calendar used in this church is:

"Lent" which includes the Holy Week and the 10-week fast, which was established by the Byzantine Emperor Hereaclus and is called "Tsom" or "Tsome Eyesus".

The fast of the Apostles 10-40 days, a reminder of the Holy Spirit that was poured out. It started after Pentecost (and is called "Tsome Hwariat").

The fast of the "Holy Virgin" 16 days in August called "Tsome Filseta".

Christmas Eve ("Gahad ze Lidet") and fasting on the eve of Epiphany ("Gahad ze Timket").

Advent (koms / Adventstyd) - 40-day fast that ends on Christmas Eve, known as "Tsome Gena" and starts in the month "Sibket, 15".

The fast of Nineveh that

commemorates Jonah is held on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the third week of "Lent".

Then they have a fast of "Repentance" determined by the priest, and it could be anything from 7 days, 40 days or one year depending on your sin.

The bishop also holds a fast when he is ordained.

There are other fasts such as the "Kweskwam Tsom" that commemorates the exodus from Egypt

Children must participate with fasting from the age of 7 years - this is mandatory. It was determined that each person fasts a total of 250 days per year, meaning they eat about 115 days per year. Now you wonder why the people of Ethiopia are so thin – is it really because they do not have enough food, or is it because they are fast too much?

Hinduism

To fast is an important part of the Hindu faith. There are certain individuals who follow the "Shiva" faith, and others again favored the "Vishnu" faith in Hinduism. Each has separate fasting-days that they practice.

Individuals can honor different types of fasts that coincide with their traditions. Some Hindus fast on certain days of the month such as Ekadasi, Pradosha, or Purnima. To fast each Tuesday is a common tradition in South and North India.

In the South, every Tuesday is set aside

for the goddess 'Mariamman', a form of their goddess "Shakti". They eat something before the sun rises, and then they drink only liquids during sunrise and sunset. In the north Tuesdays are set aside for the worship of their "Lord Hanuman" and those who follow this fast, only drink milk and eat fruit from sunrise to sunset. The Hindu's fast in the north on Thursday. They listen to a story before they begin fasting and worship their god named "Vrihaspati Mahadeva". On this day they all wear yellow clothes and there is food prepared with yellow coloring (yellow-colored ghee). The women worship the "banana tree" and give it water (every Thursday). Thursdays are also set aside for the "Guru" and many Hindus who follow the "Guru's" will fast on this day as evidence of their worship to him.

Fast during the holy feast days are also popular, especially the "Maha Shivaratri" which some people do not even take a drop of water. This type of fast lasts for nine days continuously and twice a year in the months of April and October/November during the celebration of "Vijayadashami". According to the Hindu calendar, this fast is held just before "Diwali". A different type of fast is 'Karwa Chauth' a kind of fast in certain parts of India where women are fasting for the health, wealth,

dynamism, and successes of their husbands. The fast is broken when the woman sees a full moon through a sieve. In the city of Andhra Pradesh, they often fast, especially the women. The most popular fast during this month includes the fast for "lord Shiva", the full moon of 'Karthika' and the occurrence of "Naagula Chaviti".

The methods of fasting also vary considerably in the Hindu faith and it covers a wide spectrum. During Hindus in Maharashtra during fasting times, items such as nuts, milk, potatoes, and sago are allowed. If a strict fast is followed, the person will only take water or food 48 minutes after the next day's sunrise. Some take part in a partial fast where they eat certain types of foods or enjoy a light meal. Those who worship "Sri Vidya" are forbidden to fast because they believe that their god "Devi" lives within them, and if they fast their god will die of hunger. The only day of fast of the "Sri Vidya" faith is the anniversary of the death of their parents after the first year.

Mahatma Gandhi firmly used to fast as a tool in "Satyagraha." He set strong rules for fasting and it was seen as an expression of deep suffering love. There were four reasons why Gandhi fasted. It was an expression by him of his deepest pain that was caused by others.

As their leader, it was his way to intercede for his people for their sins / mistakes / failures.

It was a way for him to awaken deep spiritual feelings in others and to make them aware of their moral values.

It was an attempt to bringing together various parties that were involved in an exchange of words (arguments),

Islam (Muslim Faith)

The Islamic religion has five pillars, of which one is fasting, and it is usually done in the month of "Ramadan" (the ninth month of Islamic calendar) and is obligatory for every Muslim. It is one of the most important actions that Muslims must observe. During this time, they refrain themselves from food, fluids, and any sexual intercourse. It is also expected during this time that they pay attention to their temperament (mood); addictions like smoking, alcohol, "drugs", negative feelings, thoughts, actions, and any other "evil" things. They believe that during a fast, they must separate or ignore their bodily "pleasures. The Arabic word for "fasting" is "sawm" which literally means ("to refrain"). During this time, each part of their bodies also "fast" with them.

They should not touch anything unclean.

They should walk into a place that is

obscure.

They should not listen to things that are bad.

The tongue must not say anything that is bad.

In this way the different parts of the body take part in the fast.

The "Koran" (Muslim Bible) teaches the Muslims that they move closer to their god "Allah" during a fasting period, it is called 'Taqwa' (God consciousness or God wariness). They also believe that fasting helps them to become pure, and helps with prevention of sins, and humility. They believe that fasting helps to protect them and to keep them out of hell ("jahannam"). Muslims believe that most fasts are just to stay away from food and liquids. It also entails that they stay away from their negative actions and what their mouth speaks. They do not curse during this time and are careful not to hurt someone with words in an argument and they desire good thoughts. They therefore believe that fasting helps to promote good behavior in that their soul, body and spirit are nourished, and, in the end, it promotes their "Taqwa" (good Deeds and God-consciousness). By fasting it also helps them to achieve a healthier lifestyle.

Muslims believe that they should give their best in their work and cannot fail to do something good, in this sense they are very committed. They strive to show compassion, generosity in giving to the less fortunate, and they practice

patience. Through fasting Muslims feel that they are in touch with the less fortunate who are truly hungry, and they can "feel" how the poor live every day. It gives them a sense of unity with the poor, and thereby proves their humility. "Ramadan" is a month of "Charity", and the more they give, the better. Fasting also teaches Muslim's patience, self-control, and to remind them constantly of hungry people from other parts of the world.

Furthermore, Muslims believe that fasting is a "debt" to God that they should settle. By fasting in faithfulness and patience, they believe them to be discharged from debt, misdeeds, and personal mistakes that they began in the previous season. Fasting is seen as a time for self-remorse, meditation and to strengthen their faith.

Except for the month of "Ramadan", Muslims fast on every 13th and 14th day of every lunar month. Every Monday and Thursday is a compulsory fast. Then they also fast 6 days in the month "Shawwal" (the month of "Ramadan"). They also believe in a "Prophet David" fast - meaning that they fast every other day for a period. Another fast is the 10th day of the month "Muharram" ("Day of Ashura").

However, fasting is prohibited on the following days:

The 1st day of 'Shawwal' (Eid Fitr) and the 10th day of "Dhulhijjah" (Adha Eid). The 11-13th of the month Dhulhijjah " (Tashriq) in accordance with "Sunni Islam ".

The 10th of Dhu al-Hijjah (Islamic calendar) that is called "Eid Al Adha"). Not all Islamic schools follow this institution.

See imposition of Muslims: "When we fast, we are to make peace with those who have wronged us, strengthen ties with family and friends; do away with bad habits; essentially clean up our lives, thoughts, and our feelings"

Jainism

There are many ways of fasting in Jainism, but it is generally known that they do not partake in a full fast but reduce their intake of food a lot. One type of fast is called "Chauvihar Upwas" and they eat or drink nothing until sunrise the next day. "Another fast is called" Tivihar Upwas "- they eat nothing but are allowed to drink boiled water. The biggest reason for any fast in the Jainism faith is to separate himself or herself entirely from aggression, fighting, arguments and attitudes of violence. It is called "Ahimsa" and the fasts are usually undertaken during "Paryushana". If someone fasts for eight days it is called "Atthai", and if for one month, it is known as "Maskhamana". If he/she fasts only one meal a day it is called "Ekassana", and two meals a day

is called "Beasana". The purpose of their fast is to empower them to overcome their carnal desires like over-eating and to achieve a deeper spiritual level. If a person only eats lentils and food without salt or pepper, he/she are referred to as "Ayambil". According to the Jainistic faith and tradition someone can starve themselves thus to improve their "karma", and this fast can be used as a ritual that can lead to voluntary death - it is called "Santhara". According to them this fast is not a suicide, they say that suicide is when someone dies suddenly at their own hands and when it is a spur of the moment thing - an emotional decision that was not thought through. They say if someone decided to do this fast it was a calculated decision made with calm rational mind. This decision was made with the full knowledge of the implications that even the family respected their decision and understood that they did not want to live any longer.

Judaism

The Jews believe not to partake of any food and liquids (even water) when they fast. Traditional Jews fast only six days per year. In their faith they are prohibited to fast on the Sabbath-day (except on "Yom Kippur") because of the Commandment that they must keep the Sabbath day holy, they use the Law of Moses, and this scripture

carries more power than the fasting days that were set by later Rabbi's. Yom Kippur is considered the most important fast day of the Jewish calendar - it is set aside as a day of confession of sins. It is expected that every man and woman should fast; those who have passed the age of "Bar Mitzvah" and "Bat Mitzvah". Only sick people are pardoned to fast on this day, and those of them that could put their own life in jeopardy by such a fast. The Jews were concerned not to endanger the life of any Jew - its part of their Jewish faith. Those who must eat on the day of "Yom Kippur" eat as little as possible and the fast is more important to them than the prayers they recite on this day. Even if someone is lying in bed on this day and still fasts, it is seen as participating in "Yom Kippur" (a day of atonement for your sins, confessions).

They believe a person that fasts for the forgiveness of sins should be sincerely sorry for sins that they have committed. They believe to obtain forgiveness when they fast, they should read from the "Haftarah" on "Yom Kippur" - Isa 58:1-13. They believe that if you fast, you will receive forgiveness quicker as it would if you only pray and confess your sins - Joel 2:12-18. And the Jews believe that hard times come because of sin (Lev 26:14-41) and that is why they believe the bible teach that it is essential to fast -

Lev 23:27, 29.32; Num 29:7 (Tract Yoma 8:1, ibid. (Babylonian Talmud), 81a). The second important fast day for the Jews is "Tisha B'Av" a fast to portray the "grief and sorrow", and in the times of tragedies and catastrophes. In this fast all Jews remember the terrible things that happened to them such as the "Holocaust" - it is a tragedy that is not easily forgotten. It is a day of remembrance of something precious that they have lost, and they believe the scriptures that say that happiness will return once again that was once lost - Isa 66:10 *Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn over her,*

This fast also commemorates the day when the Babylonians (2500 years ago) destroyed the first Holy Temple of Jerusalem, and the Second Holy Temple was destroyed in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago by the Romans. This is a fast that they recall that they had to leave Jerusalem (the "Holy Land") and it is a fast of three weeks beginning on the 17th of the month Tammuz (on our calendar between June and July). Both fast starts from sunset to dawn the following morning. In some Jewish ("Ashkenazic") traditions it is a rule that men and women that are to be married should fast before the marriage ceremony and both should

confess their sins in their private prayer time before the marriage is consummated. There are other fasting days, which the Jews observe, but once again the Rabbi can decide to release the sick people, elderly people, or pregnant women from the fasts. These fasts are called:

The fast of Esther that is held right before the Purim festival.

The "Yom Kippur Katan" (literally "little Yom Kippur") held the day before "Rosh Chodesh".

The fast of the 10th day of Tevet (between December and January).

Then there is the fast of the firstborn on the day before the Easter festival which is held only by firstborn sons. A ritual may be held, and a feast is prepared, which takes priority over the fast of the day.

The fast of "Gedaliah" (the day after "Rosh Hashana")

The fast of "Bahab". A fast that is held on the 1st Monday, Thursday 1st and 2nd Monday of the two months' Marcheshvan" and "Lyar "

Besides for the above fast days the Jews are free to fast any day of the year as a personal fast day to pray over tragedy, or to pray for forgiveness of sins. During this fast they will do charity work for the less fortunate. Such a fast will be held on Mondays and Thursdays. They will also fast if they have an unexpected bad dream. They would fast during

the month of Talmud to pray for rain if there is a drought. A fast is sometimes undertaken by a congregation to ask for forgiveness of sins and catastrophes that occurred (Est 4:3, 16; Jon 3:7). A further reason for fasting in the Jewish faith is a sense of gratitude to God for their deliverance from sin and the gift of salvation. If a person is thankful for what Jehovah did, they would fast. They believe the deprivation of food and fluids increases the perception of spiritual connection with God. The "Midrash" someone can obtain a spiritual level of "Mal'achay HaShareyt" (serving or messengers "ministering Angels") during a fasting period, see Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer, 46. This fast is an appreciation to God for provision and for the fact that the Creation is kept in order.

QUOTE: You, Eternal One, are the Source of all blessing, our God, King of the universe, Creator of many souls, who gave needs for all who You created, to give life through [fulfilling those needs] to every living soul. Blessed is the Life-giver of the universe.

Classical Pentecostal Churches

There are no fixed fasting times in classical Pentecostal churches and most of the time people are led by the Holy Spirit. Although no Pentecostal church ever fixed fast there are Pentecostal preachers who in the

earlier years suggested fixed dates for fasting. "Arthur Wallis" wrote about the "Normal Fast" with only water for a certain period. Then there is also the "black fast" in which no water or food is ingested - it is however extremely dangerous, and Dr. Curtis Ward warns that a person can dehydrate with such a fast; that it can damage the kidneys and can cause death. And he noted that nowhere in the entire New Testament is there any evidence of a "black fast", and we must follow the examples in the Word of God. Many Pentecostal churches follow the Daniel-fast once a year.

Lutheran Churches

Luther's followers believe the same as Luther that a fast should be a personal experience, and no one should know when someone else is fasting. Despite this there are several Lutheran churches that set aside the "Lent" as a period of fasting and prayer. See what Martin Luther wrote: "Fasting and bodily preparation are certainly fine outward training, but a person who has faith in these words, 'given for you' and 'shed for you for the forgiveness of sin' is worthy and well prepared.



CHURCH FAST

Mormon Church

For Mormons who have churches with the name "The church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" also has a fast with the abstinence from food and liquid. Members of these churches are asked to fast every first Sunday of every month which is called the "Fast Sunday". During this fast they may not eat or drink for 24 hours. The "money" saved by not having to buy food or to prepare that Sunday is brought to church and is called a "fast-sacrifice." These fast donations are used to buy food for the poor who have no food. The question is whether this money is truly used for the poor people. During such "Fast Sundays" people is allowed to share their testimonials with the church. And they are also encouraged to fast regularly themselves so that their spirits can dominate their body. They are also advised about family fasts; group fasts and marriage fast.

Eastern Orthodox Greek Catholic

For Eastern Orthodox and Greek Catholic Jews fast is important to maintain discipline. It is also seen as a way between the body (Greek "soma") and soul (Greek "pnevma"). St. Gregory Palamas said that the body is your partner and co-operates with your soul. They believe there is no distinction between body and soul and see the two. They further believe if something happens to one,

then it also happens with the other. A further belief is that since Jesus Christ had a body, he has made the body a way to purification.

The same statement was made by St. Macarius the Great many years earlier. For them fast is not a way of abstinence, but a way to prevent them becoming gluttons ("gluttons") and the fasting forces them to clear their minds and be kept pure during this period. They believe that the fast is always accompanied with prayer and good deeds for the less fortunate. To reach out to the poor in a period of fasting is commendable and is seen as a "real fast".

For them there are four different fast periods:

The Big "Lent" (40 days) and Holy Week (7 days).

Nativity Fast (40 days) Apostolic fast (differ in time)

Apostolic Fast (differ in times)

Domitian Fast (two weeks).

Then they fast every Wednesday and Friday throughout the year. In certain "Monasteries" they fast on each Monday too. Monday-fasts are set aside for the Angels, and therefore it is called the "Angelic Life." The night before Christmas and the beheading of John the Baptist is also used as a reason to fast. And they also fast to celebrate Jesus on the Cross.

During their time of fast they are not

allowed to eat dairy products or fish, animal products, oil, red wine, and they may not have sexual intercourse during this time.

Eastern Orthodox Churches

They attach a lot of discipline to their fasting rules e.g., except for Saturdays, Sundays, and holy feast days they must keep a total fast and refrain from eating food and drinking any liquid from 12 o'clock the previous night until 3 o'clock the next day (the time that Jesus died on the Cross). After 3 o'clock they can eat until 12 o'clock at night and preferably only one large meal. The fifty days that follows Easter (Passover) weekend they are not allowed to eat any fish especially on Wednesdays, Fridays and "Baramon" Feast-days.

Protestant Churches

The Protestants says in their statement to fast is only an outward show and that it cannot bring salvation. Martin Luther believed that a Christian himself may fast on his/her own time as a spiritual way to crucify his/her flesh. He disagreed with the Catholic churches that appointed certain days as fast-days and said that every person has the right to decide when he/she wants to fast. John Calvin once suggested that every Christian should lead a life so that they are almost permanently on a kind of "fast" through eating less, eating healthy, so

that he/she will not become overweight. He also believed that compulsory fast-days should only be called when a tragedy strikes the country or war broke out. In general, fasting is not popular with Protestants. There are more Christians who are fasting than the Protestants. Most Protestants today believe that prayer should be accompanied with fasting and fasting should only be used when a major event took place in their lives that appears to need prayer. Their prayer and fasting are for them a spiritual experience and may not be enforced.

Roman Catholic

For the Roman Catholics fasting is a ritual where food intake is limited to only once a day, and they may not have any meat on a Friday (and not during the "Lent" period). To eat food during fast is not permitted. Fasting is required from ages 18 to 59 on certain days. Children from 13yrs and older should not eat meat on a specific day. In 1956, Pope Pius XII reduced certain rules about fasting. Also, Pope Paul VI changed the fast in his apostolic constitution named "Paenitemini" from compulsory to voluntary fasting. In America there are only two days of compulsory fasting, namely "Ash Wednesday" and "Good Friday". And meat is not allowed on the Friday of "Lent". Roman Catholics must also maintain the "Eucharistic" fast, which

means nothing, but water is allowed to be consumed one hour before the festival. Older Catholics still follow the old rules - to fast for three hours before the feast. The Catholics also have a fast which is called the "Black Fast" that just water and bread are allowed to be consumed.

Sikhism

With this faith movement fast is not allowed - if someone would fast it would only be for medical reasons. The view of the "Sikh Guru's" is that it is unnecessary to fast because it provides no spiritual benefit for a person. See quote below for their beliefs about fasting:

QUOTE: The Sikh holy Scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib tell us: "Following the daily rituals, and austere self-discipline - those who keep the practice of these, are rewarded with less than a shell." (Guru Granth Sahib page 216).

Vaishnavism

This faith believes that if someone fasts during special periods such as "Caturmasya" (Ekadashi fast) and they maintain their fast spiritual rituals they will be released from sin that was accumulated in a hundred lifetimes. These spiritual rituals include:

To spend spiritual time with a "beloved" (Sadhu-Sangha).

To honor the names of "Hari" (Vishnu, Narayana, Rama, Krishna ...)/(kirtanam) and (shravanam, kirtanam vishno ...) in praise and worship.

It also believed that if someone fasts on Krishna Janmashtami and follow the vow they have taken, they will be exempted from the sins of ten million births. If someone does not follow this fast – this person is considered a great sinner. For this reason, it is suggested that they honor these fasts days ("Ekadashi, Caturmasya, Janmashtami" and other "vaishnava" holy feast days) for their faith believes the following:

QUOTE: "One who eats on Lord Krishna's birthday is lowest of mankind. ... His previous credits of ten million births are at once destroyed. he becomes a vulture for ten billion births, a pig for a hundred births, a dog for a hundred births, and a jackal for a hundred births."

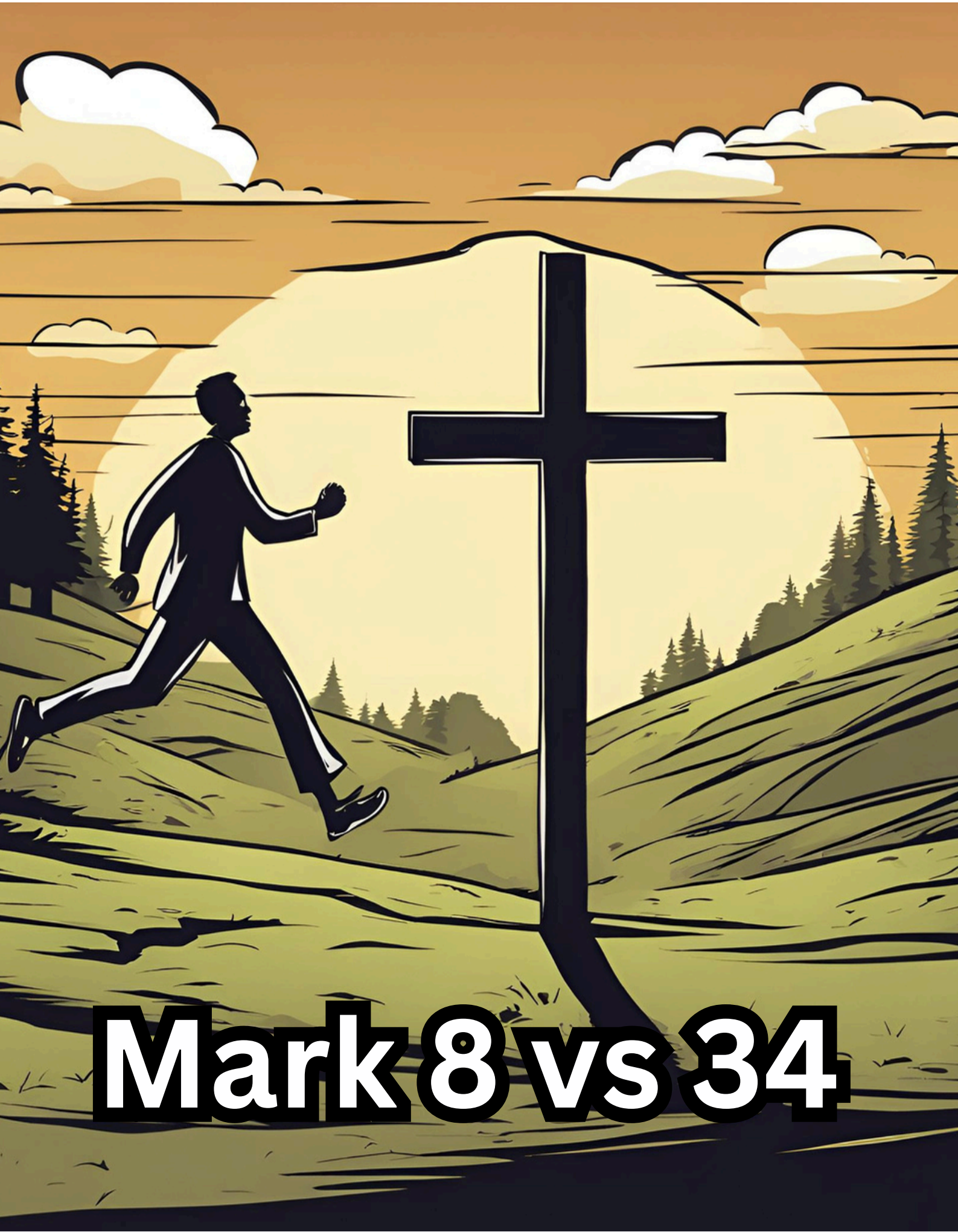
CREDITS: I Received these pages on fasting from an unknown source a few years ago. But wish to thank the person who created/wrote this and made this teaching possible with such interesting information. Thank you. Ps. Nomsa

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Mark 8 vs 34

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TESTIMONIES OF NOTE

THE LOVE OF *GOD*

Always remember when you give of yourself from a place of love and often sacrifice it is a testimony of the love of Christ within you. Yes. You have done more than enough.

“Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

After our call had ended, I went to the lord in prayer, "Please help her find her way back to self once again."

Edith Nevis

She had only a short time to spend with her husband of many years. Expert medical advice was sought, and multiple procedures endured, but to no avail. The illness swiftly took its toll upon his body and affected her as well. Her desire to make him as comfortable as possible outweighed her welfare and wellbeing. She gave of herself with a love that can only come from God. Nothing was too much or too hard. To take a break was never an option. What fueled her knew no boundaries. And then as she finally took her much-needed rest, he did too out of love for her. Through our conversation, I felt her longing to have her best friend and love of her life back. The feeling of numbness was evident and weighed on her heart. It was like a dream she wanted to awaken from. Understanding her conflicting emotions of whether she did enough, her next question gave me pause. When the services are completed and everyone moves on with life, how do you come to care for yourself once again?

Remember, God is near to those who seek him during times of trouble.

"The lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in

spirit."

I could not tell her what life will be like in the beginning months after the loss of a loved one. The journey of bereavement is a one-day-at-a-time process. But what I do know is when you step into the arms of Jesus, you will find rest and peace to carry you along the way. Get the Storm Watch newsletter in your i "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

Perhaps you have lost a loved one and are unsure what comes next. How do you begin to pick up the pieces and move on?

Look toward heaven. Praise the lord for the time spent with loved ones who has transition to the other side of the veil. Soon you shall all meet again.

To assure you will be heaven-bound to be with our lord and loved ones for eternity, a relationship with the son of God must be established. There is no other way to the father but through the son. When you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. It is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

Please repeat this prayer: "Lord Jesus, forgive my sins I committed against you. I believe Jesus died for my sins and has risen again. Please come into my life and heart and lead the way. I confess you as my lord and Saviour from this day forward. In Jesus' name, amen."

Welcome into the family of Christ.

May the lord keep you and bless you continuously. Shalom, go in peace.

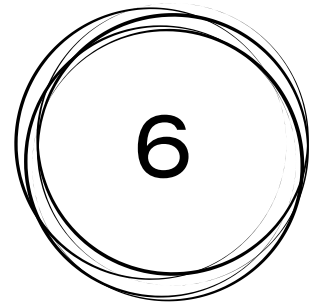
Bible references: 1 Corinthians 13:7; Psalm 34:18; Matthew 5:4. To obtain the full benefits of each verse, please read the five verses before and after each verse.

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SAY IT AS IT IS

BY WANESSA NUNES



Once saved, always saved!

Possibly the most dangerous heretic teaching today...

“ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED”

Hebrews 3:12-14 ‘Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.’

Why do we cling to error, even when the truth is so clear? Perhaps it is because we prefer a certain formula that we find comforting. We prefer to believe that it is just ‘one and one.’ But is that really an honest interpretation of the scripture? Shouldn’t we be impartial and interpret the scripture without bias? That would be wise. The Spirit of God leads us in these things.

Let’s consider the issue of salvation and continuance, or in other words: ‘Are we once saved always saved?’

According to the scriptures, this is not a reasonable exegesis based on key scriptures like John 15, Hebrews 3:12-14, Revelation 3, and many others. The simple theme of John 15 is that of continuance, or ‘abiding’ in Christ. To abide means to remain. Jesus urges us to ‘remain in me.’ And then he says in response ‘then I will remain in you’ It’s a fairly simple formula, we receive Jesus Christ as Savior, through faith, and then we must continue in the faith, remaining and walking with Jesus throughout our whole lives, overcoming sin, living in victory, and living out holiness in all we do. This is the teaching of the New Testament. But unfortunately some today teach a dangerous false doctrine of ‘once saved, always saved.’ This is the idea that once you get saved, you can never lose it no matter what you do. You can

leave church, you can never come back, never read your Bible, never do anything related to Jesus, and then you're still saved. Interesting isn't it?

We often see so many come to Christ, but then they never follow through. They don't continue in the faith. They don't dive into discipleship, and study of the word, and prayer. Because often they've been left with a false impression, much like what has sometimes been inferred by infant baptism, or even adult baptism, that it's 'one and done.' And thus someone would say, 'well I was baptized when I was 28, or 29, so I'm good.' And we've left people who are now in danger of eternal hellfire and darkness, with the impression that they are really eternally saved. What a terrible danger! What a terrible thing to teach followers of Jesus. Who will hold us accountable if we teach such a false way?

I imagine God Himself will hold us accountable, on the day of judgment. Please if you're out there today, teach continuance, that we must continue in the faith. Otherwise we leave no motivation for people to grow in Christ. We send them flying out the door with such a false doctrine of 'once saved always saved'

Now it is 100% true that we may have an assurance of salvation, that we can know that we are saved by Jesus Christ. It's not about works, it's about walking with Jesus, in repentance, and holiness. Don't give up your assurance of salvation. But don't get too comfortable either.

We have to live this thing out, week in and week out, attending Bible study, praying, practising the deeper spiritual disciplines and sharing the undiluted Gospel of the Kingdom of God with the unsaved. Imagine if more of us did that! The true Church would spread across the whole world! The Bride would be prepared for Her coming Groom. Continuance is vital. We must keep walking with Jesus. Now, what happens if you get saved by Jesus, and then you die right after that? Would you go to hell because you didn't have a chance to engage in the process of sanctification (growth in holiness)? The answer to that question is no. Just like the thief on the cross who repented (changed his mind) and gave Jesus glory, he was then that day with Jesus in paradise.

It's very simple, how we get saved, but we should live a long time after our day of salvation, we must of course continue in the faith, obeying God's commands and living for Jesus with our whole hearts. It's simple, and a

great blessing.

Let's address some of the common criticisms of continuance. One thing people will say is that God is our Father and He has adopted us, a father wouldn't unadopt us. We've been grafted in, so we can't be grafted out. We're now in Christ, held in his power and nothing can pluck us from his hand, nothing at all. First of all, we address the metaphor in the scriptures of God as Father. And he certainly is our heavenly Father. But there have been many beings who were once children of God, who are now outside the family of God. Angelic beings for example, Lucifer and those part of the rebellion. We can also consider Judas, who was part of the inner circle of Jesus, but ended up betraying him. So the metaphor of God as Father is a beautiful metaphor, but it's not a perfect metaphor. It's the same with the idea of us being branches grafted in. In fact, it says that Israel was grafted out so that we could be grafted in (Romans 11:11- 31). In fact, in this very scripture we're warned to fear God because just as some branches were grafted in, others were cut off. So once again the critics of continuance have taken a metaphor to an improper conclusion.

Now it is certainly true that God 'preserves' us in a state of salvation. He is our shepherd, we're the flock. Nothing can pluck us from His hand! That is certainly truth. Nothing can pull us out, not sadness, not grief, not death, not angels or demons, not Satan himself, but if we go on in sin and unbelief, we can step out of His hand. Falling away is a well documented reality of the Scriptures. We should remember that.

So that is the consideration I'd make for you today. Remember to continue in the faith. It's not a popular viewpoint today. But I would dare say it is a scriptural one. It might be better for our mental health to assume we're once saved always saved, but the reality of the truth is quite different. I'll take truth over mental health any day.

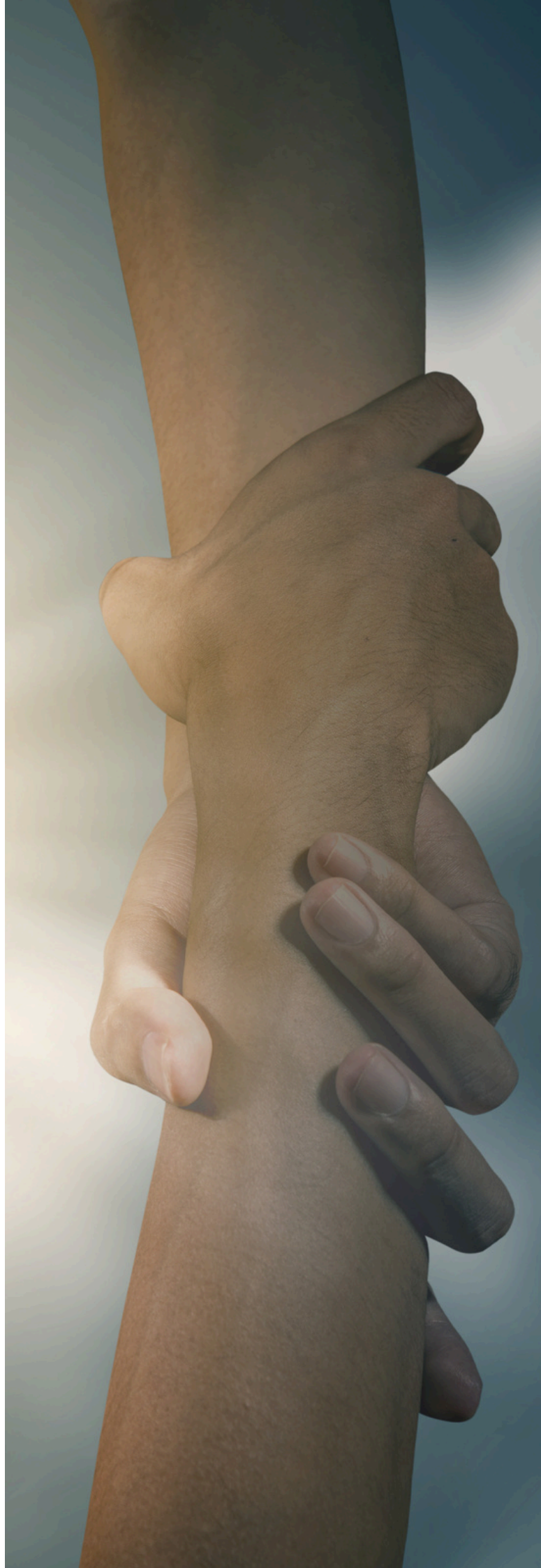
"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless

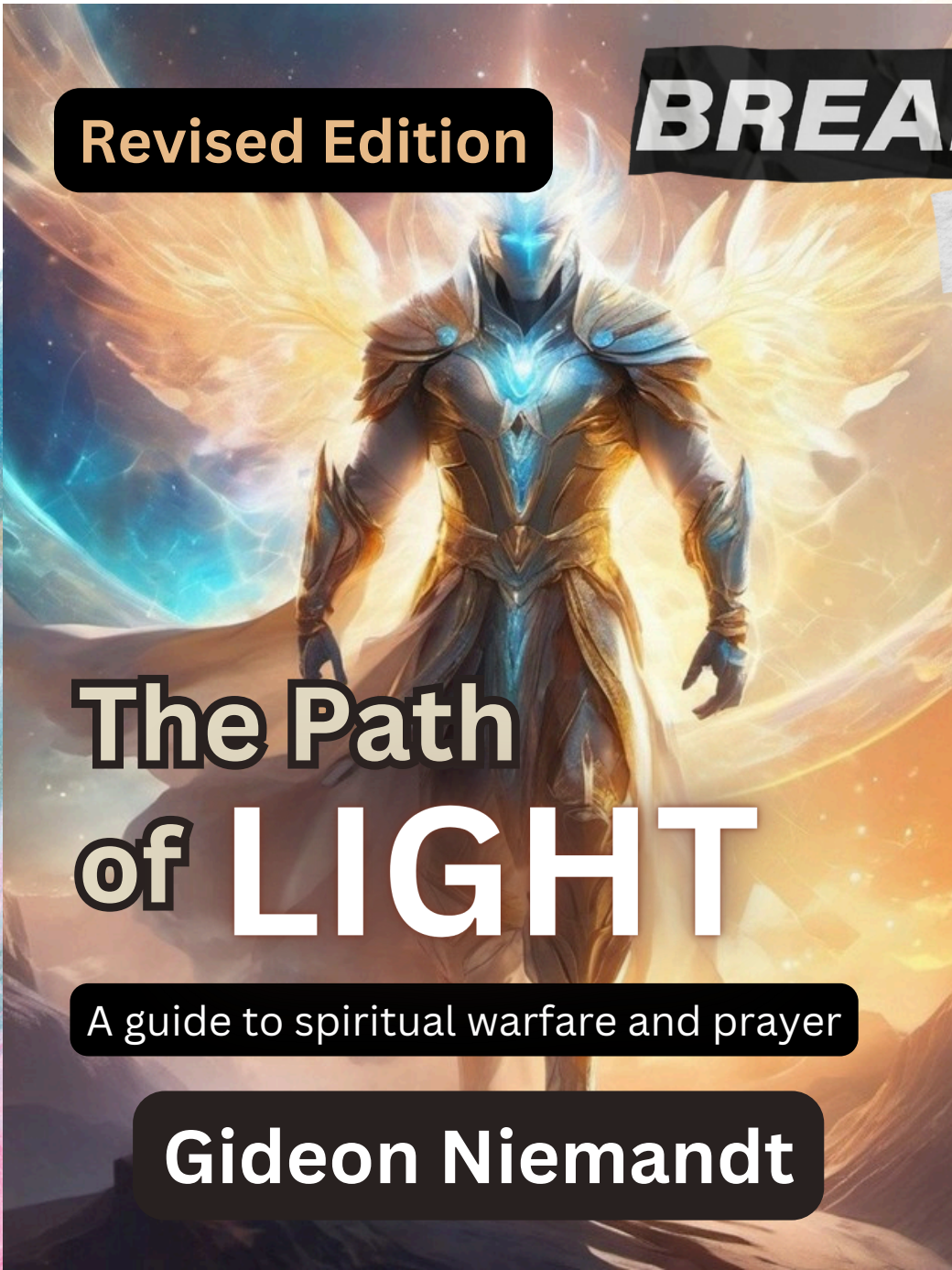
you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. - John 15:1-11.

Saints, we need to start understanding, practicing and teaching the TRUTH... Dividing the Word in TRUTH... Lives depend on it! Eternal lives...

With my hand in His

Wenessa Nunes





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THE SPIRIT OF DEATH AND WITCHCRAFT WAS BROKEN

I was 28 years old, born again and baptised. I made Yeshua (Jesus) the lord and Saviour and my first-born baby was 2 years old. With lots of excitement I and my husband looked forward to the birth of our second baby. I was a little uneasy about the pregnancy because I had dreams that the baby is not fine. In 20 weeks into the pregnancy when I went for my regular check-up, the doctor seemed concerned as he picked up some abnormalities with the baby. He referred me to a foetal specialist, who then confirmed that our baby had abnormalities. The condition that the baby was diagnosed with is a syndrome which confirmed that the baby's arms were deformed, he had no thumbs, and the arms were undergrown. The baby also did not have normal kidneys, which they call polycystic kidneys. The doctor made it clear that there was no guarantee that our baby will survive after birth.

This immediately put me in a place of fear and doubt and the only thing I could think of was that I do not want to put my child through so much pain and trauma. I started thinking that this could be a curse but no one in our church was able to answer my questions or knew how to pray for this. The only other option was to end the pregnancy before birth which meant abortion. After a few days of agony and prayer and seeking answers, we decided to terminate the pregnancy. There are no words to describe the pain emotionally that I went through. I was struggling with the questions of why God would allow this and the guilt that I had taken a life.

After approximately 3 months, I fell pregnant again. I believed that God is doing a new thing and I tried to focus on the good and positive, still I had a fear that I was going to lose the baby. At 31 weeks into the pregnancy, one day I felt an excruciating pain in my stomach, we rushed to the hospital, but the doctor was not available. The sisters admitted me, and they were sure they were monitoring the heartbeat of the baby but they were not aware that my uterus had ruptured and that I was bleeding internally.

I was slowly slipping into a coma because of the blood loss and my spirit man, (the inside person) knew that the baby was busy dying, but I was too weak to say anything or to speak. 7 Hours later I received an emergency operation and blood transfusion when my blood pressure was 20 over 10. I was actually busy dying and it was just grace that I was still alive.

After the operation, they told me that the baby had died. I was even now more shattered, and I was pulling away from God, thinking that He was the one that caused this and He did not stop it. I went through a few years of coping and depression trying to get the pieces together and trying to get answers. I eventually met a Pastor from Soldiers 4 Christ Ministry, who shared his testimony of how he was freed by God to get out of the occult. Here he shared how the enemy (satan) can use bloodline curses to attack children of God, whichcraft, and also how satan attacks people because of items that they have in their homes, that is against the word of God. Demons and satanists can astral project through the walls if we give them the legal right by having things that is evil.

I immediately knew that I had to cleanse my property and anoint my home, as holy Spirit was speaking to me. As I was cleaning every room, I was throwing items into bags which I felt was against God's will. These items included wooden statues, scull pictures, children books and movies with super powers and whcihcraft, there was too much to mention, but I eventually had 2 full black bags that needed to be burned, as the word of God says that we should burn anything that is not from God. As I was cleaning the property and throwing things into bags, I was not aware that I was busy disturbing the spirit realm. Demons re-act if you move their territory and there was a demon power that started to manifest in the home. He started throwing items in the house around, quicky slamming doors and pulling curtains, etc. it looked like something from a sci-fi movie. At first, I was afraid, but Pastor Gideon was there to assist, and he used grape juice, which was declared as the blood of the lamb to anoint the property. As he checked the manhole in the roof, he also found a sachet of hair, and it suddenly started making sense to me. A cleaning lady that was working for me, must have gotten a hold of my hair, through my hairbrush. She took the hair which is DNA and placed a curse on me and buried the hair in the manhole. Father God also showed me that it was soon after she had left her job at me, that I started with the illness and the babies that had prematurely died.

I was so overwhelmed at this whole journey of cleaning my property and finding cursed objects, but I was also so grateful for the new knowledge that enabled me to be free. Pastor Gideon prayed for me and the curse was cancelled through deliverance, so that now, it cannot affect my children or their children any more. I am so thankful to Yeshua (Jesus) for his blood that we can have the victory over the enemy. We also anointed the property again

after the hair was burned, and there was no more attacks or manifestations. The demon was gone, and I am so relieved.

I truly hope that this story will help you understand that witchcraft and spirit of death is a spiritual bondage that many people walk with and struggle with. If you often have near death experiences, accidents, premature deaths in the family, you need prayer to break the spirit of death. Thank you for this opportunity so share my testimony. For more information, visit www.soldiers4christ.co.za

Blessings
Esther



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DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY BISHOP MATTHEW DANIELS

OVERCOMING

DARKNESS!

7

"and having strapped on YOUR FEET THE GOSPEL OF PEACE IN PREPARATION [to face the enemy with firm-footed stability and the readiness produced by the good news]" Ephesians 6:15 AMP.

Perseverance and stamina are essential virtues that we need in our walk of faith and the shoes of peace provides these virtues. These virtues from peace allows us free movement and also they enable us to stand firm for long periods of time.

On the flip side, one of the quickest ways for the enemy to render us useless is to steal our peace, leaving us worried, anxious, and afraid. If I get a dollar for every time a Christian told me they were anxious, I will be a very wealthy bishop. The devil uses anxiety to paralyze a believer. When you get worried about the outcome of a situation, you can't think of nothing else but that circumstances, which means your mind will not be on advancing God's kingdom. Instead, you get stuck in a web of apprehension and that is the scenario, the devil want you



to be: distracted, distraught, and disabled from effective kingdom-building work.

Just like the rest of the armor of God, we need our gospel-sealed, faith-filled shoes of peace if we're going to stand strong in this warfare.

Colossians 3:15 says: "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." In other words, let it be at the forefront of your mind. Let it be what's on our feet, no matter where you go or what you encounter. The human mind does not enjoy confusion. If we do not look to God for peace, we will naturally look to food, drugs, relationships, pleasure, things, desires, or some other substitute to calm the mayhem brewing within us.

The truth is we will come up empty-handed anytime we search for peace anywhere other than God. He alone is the keeper of peace—a peace that surpasses understanding (Phil. 4:6–7). A peace that springs from the gospel. The only way to cling to peace in this troubled world is to cling to Christ. Jesus said in John 16:33: "I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

The only way to cling to peace in this troubled world is to cling to Christ. If we cling to any other hope, it will leave us paralyzed for the devil to easily prey on us.

**Bishop Daniels can be contacted at:
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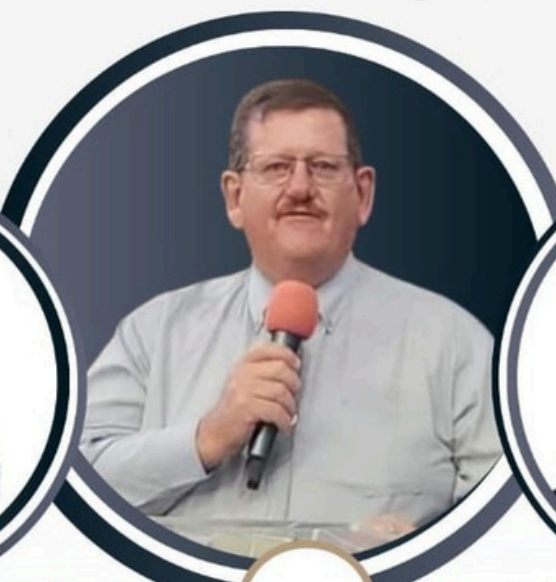
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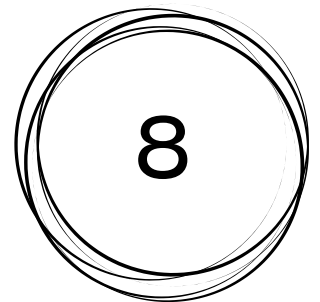
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GIRLS ON THE MOVE FOR JESUS

BY HYBRE KIVEDO



"Unity in the Spirit, Unity in the Body: Unlocking the Power of the Five-Fold Ministry

Introduction

We are commanded as Christians to be one in the Spirit and one in Christ's body. However, how does this oneness manifest itself in daily life? How are we going to make it happen? This essay will examine the hidden key scriptures found in 1 Corinthians 12:12 and Ephesians 4:11–12, which highlight the crucial function of the five-fold ministry in creating a cohesive church. Unity in the Spirit, which is predicated on the idea that all Christians are bonded together into a single body, the Church, by the power of the Holy Spirit, forms the cornerstone of the Christian faith. This oneness is more than simply an abstract concept; believers' love, cooperation, and mutual edifying are actual expressions of it.

Unity in the Spirit: The Foundation

The foundation of the Christian faith is unity in the Spirit, which is based on the conviction that all Christians are joined together into one body, the Church, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Believers' love, collaboration, and mutual edification are practical manifestations of this oneness, which is more than just an intellectual idea. We are endowed for different vocations that uplift the Church and



are baptised into one body by the power of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Unification of the Body: The Useful Expression

The daily exchanges and cooperation among members of the Christian community serve as a tangible representation of this spiritual oneness. Believers are urged to "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3-6). One Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in all is all that exists." "There is one body and one Spirit. This chapter emphasizes the value of unity within the body of Christ by showing that, despite our differences in upbringing and skill sets, we are expected to work together as a single, coherent entity.

The Opposite of Unity in the Spirit: The Problem of Disunity

Disunity in the church is a problem that has plagued believers for centuries. We see it in the denominational divisions, theological disagreements, and personal conflicts that arise within our congregations. But disunity is not just a problem; it is a sin. In John 17:21, Jesus prayed for His disciples, "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you." Disunity is a hindrance to the fulfilment of this prayer.

Understanding Disunity

Disunity within the body of Christ refers to a state of division, conflict, and fragmentation among believers. It manifests in various forms, including doctrinal disagreements, personal conflicts, competition, and a lack of cooperation. Disunity is contrary to the biblical call for unity in the Spirit, which is essential for the Church's health and effectiveness in its mission.

Causes of Disunity

1. **Doctrinal Differences:** Differing interpretations of Scripture and theological beliefs can lead to divisions within the Church. While diversity in understanding can enrich the community, unresolved doctrinal conflicts can create significant barriers to unity.
2. **Personal Conflicts:** Interpersonal issues, such as jealousy, pride, and unforgiveness, often result in broken relationships and factions within the Church. These conflicts can arise from misunderstandings, unmet expectations, or competition for recognition and influence.

3. Cultural and Social Differences: Differences in cultural backgrounds, social status, and personal preferences can lead to divisions if not handled with sensitivity and inclusiveness. The Church, being a diverse body, must navigate these differences with grace to maintain unity.

4. Leadership Issues: Poor leadership, including authoritarianism, lack of transparency, and favoritism, can foster an environment of distrust and division. Effective, servant-hearted leadership is crucial for promoting unity.

5. Spiritual Immaturity: A lack of spiritual growth and maturity among believers can result in selfishness, divisiveness, and an inability to resolve conflicts in a Christ-like manner. Mature believers are more likely to prioritize unity and work towards reconciliation.

Consequences of Disunity

1. Hindered Mission: Disunity weakens the Church's witness to the world. Jesus prayed for unity among believers so that the world would believe in Him (John 17:21). A divided Church presents a conflicting message and diminishes its impact on society.

2. Internal Strife: Disunity leads to internal strife and a toxic environment within the Church. This can cause emotional and spiritual harm to members, leading to burnout, discouragement, and even departure from the faith community.

3. Ineffective Ministry: A divided Church struggles to effectively carry out its ministries. Resources are wasted on resolving conflicts rather than advancing the gospel, and collaborative efforts are hampered by a lack of cooperation and mutual support.

4. Loss of Spiritual Authority: Disunity erodes the Church's spiritual authority. A fragmented body lacks the credibility and moral high ground needed to address societal issues and guide believers in their spiritual journey.

Addressing Disunity

1. Promote Doctrinal Humility: Encourage a spirit of humility and openness in doctrinal discussions. Recognize that no single person or group has a monopoly on the truth and that unity in essential beliefs can coexist with

diversity in non-essentials.

2. Foster Reconciliation: Actively work towards reconciliation in personal conflicts. This includes promoting forgiveness, seeking mediation when needed, and creating a culture where conflicts are addressed constructively and biblically.

3. Embrace Diversity: Celebrate the cultural and social diversity within the Church. Create inclusive environments where all members feel valued and respected, and differences are seen as strengths rather than sources of division.

4. Develop Effective Leadership: Invest in developing leaders who are servant-hearted, transparent, and committed to fostering unity. Effective leadership models humility, inclusiveness, and a commitment to the well-being of the entire body.

5. Encourage Spiritual Growth: Promote discipleship and spiritual growth among believers. Encourage practices such as regular Bible study, prayer, and accountability, which contribute to maturity and a greater capacity for unity.

The Path to Unity

Unity in the Spirit is both a divine gift and a human responsibility. While the Holy Spirit unites believers, it is incumbent upon the Church to actively pursue and maintain this unity. This involves prioritizing love, humility, and cooperation over personal preferences and agendas.

Ephesians 4:2-3 offers practical advice: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." These qualities—humility, gentleness, patience, and love—are essential for overcoming disunity and fostering a cohesive, effective body of Christ.

In Conclusion to the aspect of Disunity

Disunity is a significant problem that undermines the Church's mission, effectiveness, and witness to the world. By understanding its causes and consequences, and by actively working towards reconciliation, inclusiveness, and spiritual maturity, the Church can overcome disunity and embody the unity in the Spirit that it is called to. This unity not only reflects the nature of

God but also empowers the Church to fulfil its purpose in the world.

Unlocking the Power of the Five-Fold Ministry to bring forth Unity

The Five-Fold Ministry, as outlined in Ephesians 4:11-13, includes apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. These roles are given to equip the saints for the work of ministry and to build up the body of Christ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God. Each of these ministries plays a crucial role in fostering unity and maturity within the Church.

1. Apostles are visionary leaders who establish and oversee churches, ensuring that the foundational truths of the faith are upheld. They play a key role in unifying different congregations and ministries, promoting a broader sense of unity within the body of Christ.
2. Prophets provide spiritual direction and correction, speaking God's truth into situations to guide and unify believers. Their insights help align the Church's mission with God's will, fostering unity through a shared understanding of divine purpose.

The true purpose of a prophet of Jesus Christ in the Church is multifaceted, centred around spiritual guidance, teaching, and edification of the congregation. The important roles of the Prophet in the Church today is to bring forth revelation and communication, receive from the Holy Spirit, and convey the messages from God, providing divine insight and direction to the church.

The purpose of the Prophet is to enlighten and encourage in the building up of the church by encouraging and comforting believers, fostering spiritual growth and unity.

The true Prophet of Christ is there to bring forth correction and reproof and to address sin and error within the church, calling for repentance and aligning the congregation with God's will.

The alignment of foretelling and forth-telling of which the Prophet of the living God can and may predict future events (foretelling) and declare God's truth and will in current situations (forth-telling).

Through the aim of unity within the Body of Christ, the real Prophet of God advocates intercession to the church, where there is frequently intercession in prayer on behalf of the church, asking God's favor and intervention not just for the local church but for the church globally.

In essence, a prophet serves as a spiritual leader who helps guide the church in understanding and fulfilling God's purposes.

3. Evangelists spread the gospel, bringing new believers into the fold. Their work expands the body of Christ, adding to its diversity and richness while emphasizing the universal call to unity in Christ.

4. Pastors shepherd the flock, providing care, guidance, and support to believers. Their nurturing role helps maintain unity within the local congregation by addressing individual needs and fostering a sense of community.

5. Teachers impart biblical knowledge and wisdom, equipping believers to live out their faith. By grounding the Church in sound doctrine, they help prevent divisions caused by false teachings and promote unity in understanding and practice.

The Power of Unity

When the Five-Fold Ministry functions effectively, the Church experiences a powerful synergy. Each ministry complements the others, creating a balanced and dynamic community that can fulfil its mission. This unity not only strengthens the Church internally but also enhances its witness to the world. Jesus prayed for this unity in John 17:21, asking that all believers may be one so that the world may believe that the Father sent Him. Thus, our unity serves as a testament to the reality and power of the gospel.

Practical Steps to Foster Unity

1. Embrace Diversity: Recognize and celebrate the diverse gifts and backgrounds within the Church. Encourage collaboration and mutual respect among different ministries and the church as a whole.

2. Promote Communication: Establish clear and open lines of communication within and between different church bodies. Regular meetings, joint activities, and shared platforms can help bridge gaps and

foster a sense of unity within the body of Christ – not as individuals or as a self-scented spirit.

3. Focus on Common Goals: Identify and pursue common goals that align with the Church's mission as a body. Whether it's community outreach, discipleship programs, or social justice initiatives, working together towards shared objectives strengthens unity.

4. Provide Education and Training: Equip believers with the knowledge and skills they need to serve effectively in their respective ministries. This includes providing resources on the Five-Fold Ministry and its importance in building up the body of Christ.

5. Cultivate a Culture of Love and Respect: Encourage a culture where love, respect, and humility are paramount. Remind believers of the importance of bearing with one another in love and striving to maintain the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

The Conclusion of Unity in the Spirit – the Body of Christ

"Unity in the Spirit, Unity in the Body: Unlocking the Power of the Five-Fold Ministry" is not just a theme for this month but a call to action for the Church. By embracing the diverse gifts and roles within the Five-Fold Ministry, we can achieve greater unity and maturity in the faith. This unity is essential for the effective functioning of the Church and its mission to the world. Let us strive to maintain the unity of the Spirit and build up the body of Christ, reflecting the love and oneness that Jesus prayed for and that the world so desperately needs to see.



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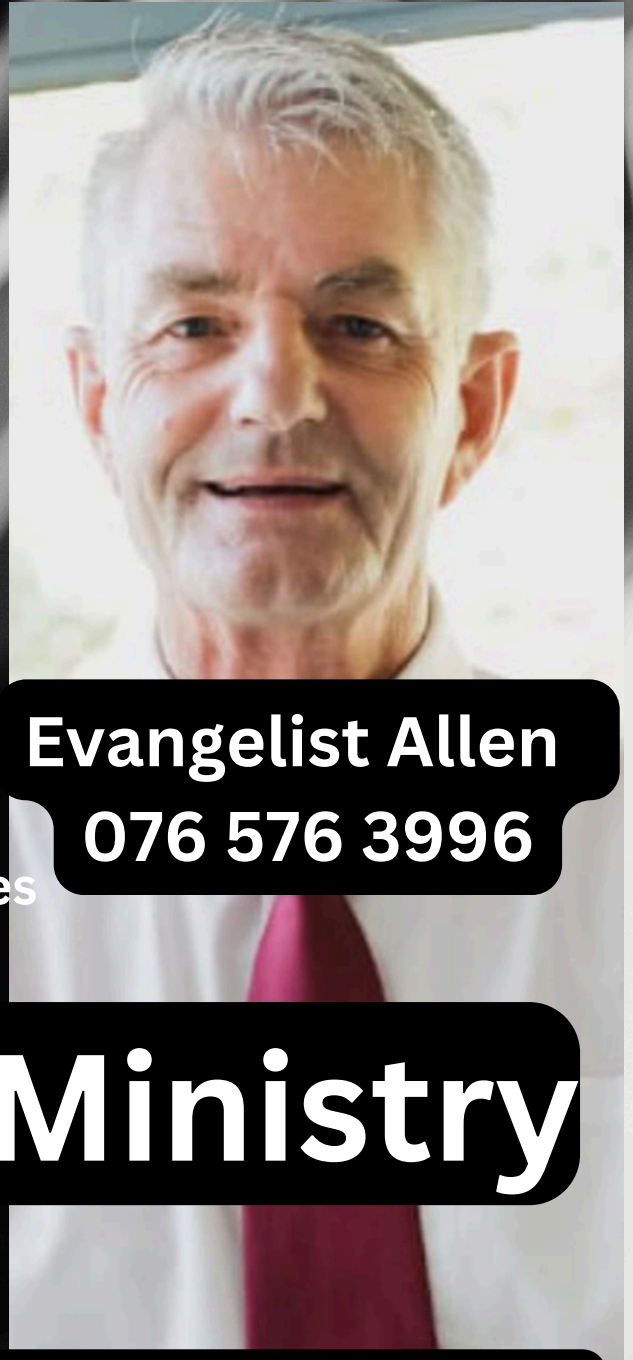
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WHAT HAPPENS TO HUMANS WHEN THEY DIE?

NOTHING → HEAVEN → HELL → ANGELS → REINCARNATION



WHAT HAPPENS TO PEOPLE WHEN THEY DIE? IS THERE LIFE AFTER DEATH?

These types of questions are the kind that come up daily and are much debated. In this article we are going to do an in-depth study to look at some of the most common views and then of course delve deeper into the Bible to see what the word of God has to say on this subject.

NOTHING

Atheists believe that there is no God and no life after death. They believe that when a person dies it is the end of the existence of the individual. Slightly similar to the atheists' view the Jehovah's Witnesses also believe that when a person dies, nothing happens for at least a period of time, for some individuals. They believe that when a person dies, his life ends. Death is the opposite of life, so when someone dies, his feelings and memories do not keep on living somewhere else. The dead cannot see, cannot hear, and cannot think anymore. Jehovah's Witnesses however do believe that there will be a

resurrection at the end of times, but only for individuals who Jehovah will remember for their good works (they believe that these individuals are in a deep sleep and all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out). These individuals will be resurrected and will live on the new Earth. Only 144 000 chosen ones will go to Heaven and will rule and reign with Jehovah, no one else.

REINCARNATION

Reincarnation is a mainstream teaching in Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism. Reincarnation is when the soul, which is seen as eternal and part of a spiritual realm, returns to the physical realm in a new body. A soul will complete this cycle many times, learning new things each time and working through its karma. This cycle of reincarnation is called samsara. Depending upon the tradition, these existences may be human, animal, spiritual, or, in some instances, vegetable.

ANGELS

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) declare that people definitely can turn into angels in heaven. They believe that the Book of Mormon was dictated by the angel Moroni, who was once a human being (a prophet) but became an angel after he died. Mormons also believe that the first human being, Adam, is now the archangel Michael and that the biblical prophet Noah who built the famous ark is now the archangel Gabriel. Sometimes Mormon scripture refers to angels as holy people, such as Alma 10:9 from the Book of Mormon, which says: "And the angel said unto me he is a holy man; wherefore I know he is a holy man because it was said by an angel of God."

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

In this section we will take a closer look at what the Christian faith beliefs about death, it will automatically include Heaven and Hell and what the Bible teaches on these subjects.

Death

Sadly, there are a lot of Christians who are very confused when it comes to what exactly happens after a person dies. When people are trying to comfort

someone who is grieving, they sometimes say that the deceased person could be an angel in heaven now. If a loved one has died suddenly, people may even say that God must have needed another angel in heaven, so that must be why the person passed away. These comments that well-meaning people often make imply that people turning into angels are possible, which is not the case.

The Bible teaches 3 kinds of death:

1. **Physical Death** – The separation from the inner man from the body (Jam. 2:26 - For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also)
2. **Spiritual Death** – Separation from God because of sin (Eph. 2:1,5; Is. 59:2 - But your iniquities have separated you from your God and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. Mt. 8:22; Col. 2:13; 1 Tim. 5:6)
3. **Eternal Death** – Eternal separation from God, because man chooses to remain separated from God in sin. (Mt. 10:28 - And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Mt.25:41,46 - Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons. 46 "And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life."; Rev. 2:11 - Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. Whoever is victorious will not be harmed by the second death. Rev. 14:9-11; 20:11-15; 21:8; 22:15; Is. 66:22-24)

Penalty for sin

The penalty for sin was eternal death or eternal separation from God in hell. It can not be physical or spiritual death. Physical death is the result of spiritual and eternal death. Eternal death is the penalty for spiritual death or committing sin (Eph. 2:1-9)

Immortality of the soul

The soul and spirit called the inner man are immortal. They continue in full

consciousness between death and resurrection of the body and in the new resurrected body into all eternity.

Here are 23 Biblical points proving the immortality of the soul

1. 1 Pet. 3:4 - Instead, your beauty should consist of your true inner self, the ageless beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of the greatest value in God's sight. (The hidden man of the heart is not corruptible, but immortal)
2. Is. 14:9-11 – In the place of the dead, spirits of world leaders and mighty kings cry out to Satan.
3. John 3:15,16; 6:54,58; 17:2-3 – Through Christ there is eternal life.
4. John 5:24; 6:40,47 - They pass from death unto life.
5. John 6:51 - Anyone who eats from the bread of life (Jesus) is offered eternal life.
6. John 10:28 – God's children will never perish, nor will anyone be able to snatch them from His hands.
7. John 11:25,26 – Those who believe in Christ will never die spiritually.
8. Matt. 10:28; Luke 12:5 – Man is not able to kill the soul.
9. Matt. 17:3; – Moses had been dead over 1700 years and his body was then in corruption. (Deut.34:6, Jude 9) He evidently was brought up from Abraham's bosom below the earth. (Luke 16:21-31) This is an example of full consciousness after death and a soul wearing clothes between death and resurrection (Rev. 6:9-11; Heb.12:23; Ps. 16:10). Christ had not yet become the first-fruits of all that had died, so Moses could not have had a resurrected body. (1 Cor.15:20-23) For all souls of saints were taken to Heaven as captives, who had died before Christ's resurrection (Ps. 68:18; Eph.4:8-10). Every just man's spirit is in heaven. Every person who dies physically, goes to heaven as an inner man (spirit) 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1 :21-24.
10. Mark 9:43-49 - If one hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better to enter eternal life with one hand than to go to hell with two hands. The worm (v44) never dies.
11. Luke 16:19-31 – In hell he lifts up his eyes in torment.
12. Luke 20:37,38 – All live unto Him.
13. 2 Cor. 4:16-18 – The outward man may perish, but our inward man is renewed day by day. The things that are not seen (soul and spirit) are eternal.
14. 2 Cor. 5:8 – To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

15. Jam. 2:26; Phil. 1:21-24 – To depart (die, the inner man leaving the body) is to be with Christ.
16. 1 Thes.5:10 – Whether we wake (live) or sleep (die), we shall live with Him.
17. 1 Pet. 4:6 – The souls of the dead live according to God in the spirit.
18. 1 John 2:17 – The world and everyone in it is fading, but those who do the will of God lives forever.
19. 1 John 3:14,15 – We pass from death to life, because we love.
20. 1 John 5:11 – God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son.
21. Psalm 22:26 – Those who praise God, their hearts will live forever.
22. Prov. 4:18 - The path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.
23. Rev. 6:9-11 John saw under the altar in heaven the souls of the martyred saints who cried.

Places the Bible mention where the dead go.

The Old Testament believers went to a place of comfort and rest called “paradise” when they died. The Old Testament taught life after death and that everyone who departed from this life went to a place of conscious existence. The general term for this place was Sheol, which could be translated “the grave” or “the realm of the dead.” The wicked were there (Psalm 9:17; 31:17; 49:14; Isaiah 5:14), and so were the righteous (Genesis 37:35; Job 14:13; Psalm 6:5; 16:10; 88:3; Isaiah 38:10).

The New Testament equivalent of Sheol is Hades. Luke 16:19–31 shows that, prior to Christ’s resurrection, Hades was divided into two realms: a place of comfort where Lazarus was (Abraham’s bosom or Abraham’s side) and a place of torment where the rich man was (hell). Lazarus’s place of comfort is elsewhere called “paradise” (Luke 23:43). The place of torment is called “Gehenna” in the Greek in Mark 9:45. Between paradise and hell (the two districts of Hades) there was “a great chasm” (Luke 16:26). The fact that no one could cross this chasm indicates that, after death, one’s fate is sealed.

Today, when an unbeliever dies, he follows the Old Testament unbelievers to the torment side of Hades. At the final judgment, Hades will be emptied before the Great White Throne, where its occupants will be judged prior to

entering the lake of fire (Revelation 20:13–15).

On the other hand, when a believer dies today, he is “present with the Lord” in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:6–9). There, he joins the Old Testament saints who have been enjoying their reward for thousands of years.

SUMMARY

We can clearly see from the Biblical scriptures given that when people die, the body stay behind in the grave, but the soul leaves the body to spend eternity either in Paradise if you are a believer or Hades, if you are an unbeliever, until Jesus returns to get His bride with the Rapture. Everyone who died in Christ, who’s spirits are waiting in Paradise will receive a new body as their spirit and old body (dust particles) come together where God will miraculously create an incorruptible body suitable for heaven (1 Thes.4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:51-56). Unbelievers stay in Hades until the final judgment. Enoch and Elijah were taken to heaven in their earthly bodies, so they are currently in Heaven. Moses, Lazarus, the rich man and Abraham are examples of people who died, and their spirits/ souls lived on. Jesus even preached to the spirits of the Old Testament saints, while He was “dead” for 3 days and 3 nights (1Pet 4:6).

People do not become angels when they die. Angels are beings created by God (Colossians 1:15-17) and are entirely different from humans. They are God’s special agents to carry out His plan and to minister to the followers of Christ (Hebrews 1:13-14). There is no indication that angels were formerly humans or anything else—they were created as angels. Both Elijah and Moses were recognizable on the Mount of Transfiguration. They had not transformed into angels, but appeared as themselves—although glorified—and were recognizable to Peter, James and John. Likewise, people do not reincarnate and come back to earth as an animal, vegetable, or another human being.





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BY BISHOP O T WHITTAKER

THE BLEEDING

WOMAN

9

The last time we addressed the issue of the woman's bleeding, we drew parallels to the emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual wounds that women today also endure. Just as the woman sought advice from many doctors, many seek guidance from various sources, but instead of finding relief, their conditions worsen. In this edition we will be addressing how the woman dealt with her bleeding issue and it will be a lesson for the modern day women in dealing with their issues.

1. She Heard (Mk 5:27)

The narrative conveys that she "Heard" of Jesus' presence in the vicinity. It holds immense significance in the realm of what women choose to lend their ears to. Just as the narrative underscores the value of hearing about Jesus and how her hearing had caused her to push through the crowd in order to meet Him. The information that women absorb can serve as either a catalyst for positive endeavours or a deterrent. It is imperative for them to be discerning about the content or the people they expose themselves to, as it holds the power to deeply influence their beliefs and actions. They internalize the messages which they hear and that then

later shapes their perspectives and faith in due course. Proverbs 4:23 counsels the individuals to safeguard their hearts, as all their actions stem from it. The impact of the words they hear should not be underestimated. They need to surround themselves with spiritually enriching and edifying material which can foster their emotional and spiritual well-being. Ephesians 4:29 urges individuals to communicate only what is constructive and uplifting, tailored to the needs of others. In a world brimming with clamour and diversions, it is crucial for the individuals to filter the information that permeates their minds. By

opting to tune into messages of love, hope, and faith, they can cultivate a mindset that resonates with their values and beliefs. Proverbs 18:15 serves as a reminder that the discerning ear seeks knowledge, highlighting the significance of consciously selecting what they hear and assimilate. 1 Corinthians 14:10 speaks of many voices in the world and all of them are calling for our attention; it then becomes important for the women to know the voice of God amidst all others voices. Jesus says my sheep knows my voice and they will follow me (Jn 10:27). By implication, the voice you lean more towards is the voice you will follow. I pose this question to all woman: “What Are You Hearing?”

2. “She Thought Or Said To Herself.”

(Mk 5:28 NLT)

In the New Living Translation bible, specifically in Mark 5:28, it is mentioned she thought to herself. The significance of the phrase “She thought to herself” lies in its ability to capture the internal dialogue that women have. This internal dialogue is a powerful tool that allows them to reflect on their thoughts and emotions without verbalizing them aloud. It is a common practice among women, who are often adept at navigating their inner thoughts and feelings through this internal dialogue. So now it becomes imperative for the woman to watch what internal dialogue she is having

with herself.

This means paying close attention to the thoughts and beliefs that she holds about herself, others, and the world around her. It is crucial for her to challenge these negative beliefs and replace them with more positive and empowering ones. Moreover, the internal dialogue that a woman engages in can greatly influence her emotions, behaviours, and relationships. If she constantly criticizes herself or doubts her abilities, she may struggle with feelings of anxiety, insecurity, or inadequacy. On the other hand, if she cultivates a more compassionate and supportive inner voice, she is likely to experience greater self-confidence, resilience, and inner peace. For instance, imagine a scenario where a woman faces a challenging decision. Instead of immediately reacting, she takes a moment to think to herself, weighing the pros and cons of each option. This internal dialogue enables her to make a more informed decision based on her thoughts and feelings. This woman’s internal dialogue directed her to Jesus but where does your internal dialogue direct you too?

Conclusion.

Your thoughts and beliefs shape your reality. What you choose to focus on and believe in can greatly impact your life’s direction Surround yourself with positivity and uplifting

influences. The people you interact with and the content you consume can either inspire growth or hinder progress. Stay connected to Jesus. What you hear and say should push to Jesus. Finding strength and guidance in Him. He can provide a sense of purpose and peace in challenging times. Surround yourself with positive influences who will uplift; encourage and also correct you. Be mindful of the words you speak to yourself and others, as they have the power to shape your reality. Practice gratitude and focus on the blessings in your life, fostering a mindset of abundance and positivity.

**Bishop Whittaker can be contacted at
michelley679@gmail.com**



WISDOM SEED

BY PASTOR OLUWATOMI OYEBANJI

KNOWLEDGE *SEED*

Theme* : *Visitation of His Favour

Dearly beloved,
Greetings to you in the name of Jesus,
we pray that the mercies of the Lord
will never depart from you and
members of your household forever in
Jesus name. Amen.

Psalm 118:1-2

"O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is
good: Because his mercy endureth for
ever. [2] Let Israel now say, That his
mercy endureth for ever."

May you continue to see the goodness
of the Lord in the land of the Living.

Psalm 27:13

"I had fainted, Unless I had believed to
see the goodness of the LORD in the
land of the living."

Welcome to the sixth month in the year
2024, the season of the visitation of the
Lord by His favour.

Remember that in the sixth month, just
like this sixth month in biblical history,
we saw how a young virgin by name
Mary attracted the attention of heaven
and took delivery of heaven's visitation
that brought about the conception and
birth of our Lord Jesus.



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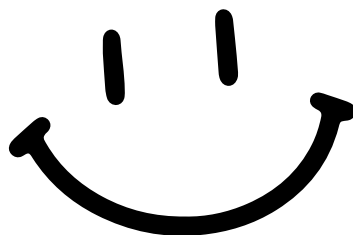
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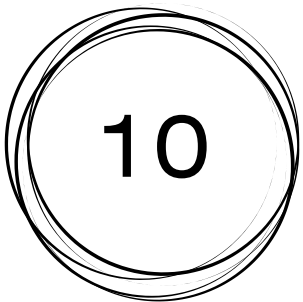
Forgiveness

There was a man standing before a judge in California for shooting a Condor. This a protected bird and people who kill them must pay the consequences. The man pleaded with the judge by saying, “I just arrived in this state, and I have never seen a bird that large before. I was hungry and could not help myself to shoot and eat it. The judge said, “I forgive you, just don’t let it happen again!” The man replied, “Yes, sir!” The judge curious about the bird asked the man how did it taste? The man replied, “Oh, I guess somewhere between a Whooping Crane and a spotted owl.”



REVIVAL'S FIRE

BY PASTOR RIAAN
ENGELBRECHT



10

LESSONS OF BIBLICAL *REVIVALS*

Part 2

In the book of Nehemiah, by the end of chapters 1-7, the people were on the other side of a miracle. Not only had the Persian king Artaxerxes allowed the people to return to the city following the captivity at the hands of Babylon, but they were able to rebuild the wall of the city in only fifty-two days. This was done even while enemy nations all around them were threatening them and trying to make them stop. This was something so remarkable that even those enemy nations had to acknowledge that it was a work of God (6:16). But restoring the temple and rebuilding the wall was not enough. It was time for the people themselves to be rebuilt. They needed to be 'revived'. In chapter 8, we find a desire among the people to hear God's Word. Remember, this is after the wall had been built; and the people had seen a tremendous work of God. They

could see that God had His hand on them, and was calling them to a deeper relationship with Himself. Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel (v. 1). Yes, the people called for the Book of Law. They were the ones who asked Ezra—the godly scribe—to get a copy of the word of God and feed them from it. They had a yearning to hear from God! And of course, Ezra answered that call and fulfilled that yearning. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. Then he read from it in the open square that was in front

of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law (vv. 2-3). Men and women, young and old, all who could hear and understand—they all stood in the open square and listened carefully. They stood from morning to midday giving their full attention to the reading of God's law. And this is happened also in the days of Hezekiah and Josiah! Times of great revival have always been characterised by a restoration of listening and knowing the Word of God. Revival should spark a desire for the holy word of God. For only the Word leads us on the right path, and away from error and evil. The work that God does to renew and revive His people has always been through His word.

True revival not only involves a hearing of the word of God. It also involves a response to God. We read in chapter 8, "5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. 6 And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. Then all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground." The people responded by acknowledging what is right and

wrong. True revival is marked by returning to God's Word which teaches us what is God's will and God's way. After all, we live in a world where nothing is wrong or right anymore. We can only truly know what God's path is if we know the Word, but not only know it but also agree to it.

A response to the Word should be a natural outcome to the revived and awakened, for Jesus is the Word (1 John 1:1-4). If we love the Lord, we shall love His Word, for His Word is life and truth. David writes in "Psalm 119: 1 Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord! 2 Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart! 3 They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways. 4 You have commanded us to keep Your precepts diligently. 5 Oh, that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes! 6 Then I would not be ashamed, when I look into all Your commandments. 7 I will praise You with uprightness of heart, when I learn Your righteous judgments. 8 I will keep Your statutes; Oh, do not forsake me utterly!" We may not follow the Law of Moses, but we must uphold God's Word in its entirety, for His Word is God's truth so every precept, jot and tittle we must cherish, understand, and in the Spirit obey and follow.

In the days of Hezekiah and Josiah, the people also responded by reaffirming the Covenant. If we stand under God's Covenant, we agree that God's way and truth are the right way and everything else is but false. As in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra, along with Josiah and Hezekiah, because the people understood truth from God's word we find yet another characteristic of true revival. Yes, people repented as they repented! After all, how can you know what to repent for if you do not know you are wrong, have sinned or are walking in iniquity? If we know the Word of God, we shall know God's truth which shows us the path of holiness and purity. It highlights where we have been disobedient, gone astray or violated the Covenant.

If we are truly touched by God and touched by His Word, then His light falls on the darkness and exposes where we have strayed. It shall lead to conviction to seek God and repent! In the days of Ezra, as the word of God was being read to the people, and as their understanding was being opened, and as they became increasingly overwhelmed with emotional worship of God as He truly is, they began to get a sense of their own sinfulness before Him.

We see something of this in verse 9; where it says, "And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law."

We can be sure that this was mourning over sin; because, in chapter 9, we read of how the people wrote a great public confession of sin and presented it to God in repentance. This is an important part of the spiritual renewal of revival. We see it in other places in the Bible. Isaiah 6, for example, tells us of the time that God called Isaiah into the prophetic ministry. God gave him a vision of Himself in heavenly glory-"high and lifted up". God allowed Isaiah to see the angelic hosts singing loud praises all around the throne of God; and allowed him to feel the temple shaking and the pillars trembling at the glory of His majesty. And when Isaiah saw the majesty and holiness of God, he responded by mourning over his sin. He took a look at the glory of God and said, "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;

for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (Isaiah 6:5). True revival doesn’t leave God’s people with a feeling of pride or self-righteousness. A genuine work of God in revival is characterised by deep sorrow over sin. It involves a profound encounter with God; and such a true encounter with God always reveals our sin—and our personal need for His pardoning grace. True revival can at times leave God’s people deeply grieved for their sins, and profoundly repentant for their disobedience. In Zechariah 13 we read, “1 On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity. 2 “On that day, I will banish the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more,” declares the Lord Almighty. “I will remove both the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land.” We see how following the mourning and the grieving, God comes to cleanse and renew. And such renewal comes in the form of cleansing of all sin and idolatry in the land. And that is a lot of sin and idolatry when we study in the Bible!

Josiah and Hezekiah removed the idols in their days, yet in Zachariah 13 God takes action Himself. Therefore, before any renewal, revival, or cleansing, there is first

repentance, followed by the action to address what is wrong to walk on the right path. Remember, the purpose of God’s actions in Zachariah 13 is to restore Israel, therefore, this speaks of God’s blessing! God will open a fountain, with water always speaking of cleansing, of the flow of the Holy Spirit, of blessing and hope. When we truly seek God and are revived in His Presence, the fountain is open and the water will flow to cleanse, to heal, to restore, to nurture and to sustain. Revival is always the invite to come to God, to drink from Him and to allow God’s love to cleanse and heal us. It is the truth of Isaiah 55 which says, “1 “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”

True repentance is a process of cleansing and renewal, for with it comes God’s love and mercy. A time comes when the dark cloud of sorrow lifts and God assures the hearts of His people that they have been washed clean in His sight by the blood of Jesus. There is joy over the forgiveness through Christ, and rejoice that they have an eternal home in heaven. In Nehemiah 8, once the people repented, we read, “10 Then he said to them, “Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and

send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” In a true revival, God’s people are restored to the joy of their salvation. They can say, “The joy of the Lord is my strength!” Isaiah 61 says of the ministry of Jesus, “3 To console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.” As we mourn and repent of our sins and iniquities, the Lord comes in His glorious presence, removes that spirit of heaviness and adorns us with a garment of praise! Out of the ashes of repentance, we arise in the beauty of God, overflowing with the oil of gladness! Yes, such oil and garment of praise flow from a soul that seeks to be realigned and, therefore, revived unto God’s presence, truth and ways. One of the things that most characterises true revival is genuine, lasting life transformation. People who used to have no care at all about following the Lord’s commands and instructions become very eager to do so. They want to obey God. Genuine revival isn’t characterised by instantaneous perfection. It speaks of true discipleship, which is a process of growing in God’s holiness, seeking His righteousness and obeying God’s Word. True revival is not just when we seek God’s hand (provision), but also His face (worship). It is a time when we seek to truly bow before Him as Lord and Master, crowning Him King of our lives and worshipping Him as our Saviour. In true revival, the cry that arises in our hearts is that “Your will be done Lord”, not ours! Psalm 36:9 says, “For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.” As we draw to God, we are revived and restored by His fountain of life as the fountain will one day restore Israel. God’s life and hope, represented by a fountain of water, restores, renews, revives and strengthens us to worship and follow Him.

Riaan Engelbrecht is the co-founder of Avishua Ministries and also serves on the board of Lighthouse Ministries. He has been teaching the Word for the past couple of decades, which included being involved with online Christian radio stations (Lighthouse Radio, Rainbow Radio) for many years, and also featured on Osasogie TV (Nigeria-based). He has written over 85 books to uplift, edify, prophetically guide and speak the Lord’s will in the last of days. His heart’s desire is to seek the world flooded with God’s truth, for only such a truth sets free. To contact the author, send an email to prophetriaan@gmail.com or forward a WhatsApp message to 084 666 3070.





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Memory Verse

John 10:10 - The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.



JEHOVAH NISSI

BY APOSTLE MATTIE HAMM

COMMITMENT

11

2 Samuel 15:21 – “And, Ittai answered the King, and he said, " As the LORD liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.” Ittai was one of King David's most loyal commanders. Ittai's reward was leading a large group of soldiers to battle. They were victorious in that battle, and the kingdom was restored to David. Job 13:15 – “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” Job endured many hardships, but he remained faithful. Job's reward was receiving double of everything he had lost – his family, his possessions, his health. Esther 4:14-17 – “For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.” Esther received Haman's house for her commitment. The plan against the Jews failed. Ruth 1: 17 – “Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.” Ruth's reward for her commitment is being the grandmother of King David and in the lineage of Jesus. 2 Chronicles 20:20 – “And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. When you believe in God, you will be established. Believe his prophet, you will be rewarded



NPO 265-652

Serenity - Oak Rehab Centre

**Tanya Engelbrecht 060 9948 390
015 065 0971**

E mail: serenityoak.64@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.serenityoakrehab.co.za/>

Who we are?

Serenity Oak Recovery and Wellness Centre is a non-profit organisation, found by Pastor Pieter Engelbrecht, who has a TBH degree, as well as a Diploma in Apologetics. Pastor Pieter, as well as his wife Tanya, who has a bachelor's degree in Pastoral Counselling are well loved in their congregation and in their community. Serenity-Oak is designed to provide a drug and alcohol rehabilitation service in the Polokwane area of Limpopo Province, where there is a critical shortage of such facilities to address the

currently alarming statistics of drug misuse and addiction in the area. It is Serenity Oak's primary aim to provide a highly effective and expertly managed Recovery and Wellness centre, in a welcoming home-like setting, with the assistance of individually appointed specialized and appropriately skilled and qualified personnel. With a good success rate over the past three years, we are destined for greater things.

Our Vision

Our vision is to become the number one choice accredited drug centre for drug rehabilitation and recovery services, in Polokwane and the neighbouring rural regions. Provide a safe and professional environment for inpatients and give them the necessary tools to become viable in the society. To give them the life they deserve.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide a professional, quality, and affordable service to anyone who needs alcohol and drug rehabilitation treatment and to give them the assurance that this is the best choice they made. The assistance of individually appointed specialized and appropriately skilled and qualified personnel.

Running the following Programs:

1. 12 Step plan of the Narcotic Anonymous.
2. Authentic Manhood
3. C.B.T Treatment (Cognitive Behaviour Treatment)
4. One-on-one sessions and counsel sessions
5. Recreational exercises

The 24/7 physical and emotional support of the well-trained staff members helps the road to recovery to become just that much easier. It is also very important to repair the broken relationships between the loved ones and the addict due to the behaviour of the addict, with the assistance of individually appointed specialized and appropriately skilled and qualified personnel regular counsel meetings between patients and family, the family bond will be reconciled. The road to recovery is always better when we stand together. "United we stand but alone we fall".

Our Goals

- Provision of counselling to corporate employees, individuals, couples, and

families. □ Provision of a temporary save-heaven for Alcohol and drug addiction patients. □ Provision of various therapeutic group sessions, including the provision of drug prevention and health maintenance groups. □ Development and provision of drug prevention and recovery plans and after-care services for recovered patients. □ Evaluation of patients' addictions and their readiness for treatment. □ Review and recommendations of treatment options with patients and their families/support groups. □ Assistance to patients to help develop their own treatment goals and plans. □ Development of the necessary skills and behaviours to enable patients to recover from their addictions. □ Work closely with patients to help them to understand and manage their behaviours and/or the situations that can interfere with their recovery. □ Educate patient's families and support groups about drug addiction and help them to understand and develop strategies to assist the patients with their recovery. □ Promotion of a sobrieties lifestyle and the provision of a support system for the after-care of recovered patients, providing them with the necessary tools and support to ensure they remain recovered. □ Prepare the patients to not only recover from their afflictions, but also to be able to fit back into society as productive members of their community.

Sponsorship

Because of our nature of business, we are a Non-Profit Organisation, and we are fully relied on the sponsorship of the community. There are a lot of needy people that we had to showaway because of funding. We would love if the big businesses can become involved and sponsor us, through your sponsorship we can help the needy and the business sector of Polokwane can become personally involved in a good “cause” that will improve the quality of life of everyone.

□ Sponsor a bed:

Provide finances to accommodate some one who can not afford to be in rehab.

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