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‘I FORGIVE YOU’

Demetrius Guyton grew up hating his mother after she tried to kill him when he was a baby by lacing his bottle of milk with acid so she could cash in on a life insurance policy. Somehow he was able to do what may seem impossible - he forgave her.

Demetrius Guyton was two months old when his mother tried to kill him. She laced his bottle of milk with hydrochloric acid so she could cash in on a \$25,000 life insurance policy. Miraculously, Demetrius survived but was left permanently scarred, a constant reminder of what his mother had done.



Demetrius' mother laced his bottle of milk with hydrochloric acid.

“I hated my mother,” he admits in an interview with CBN. “I resented her very bad and it was horrible.” His mother was sentenced to 15 years for first-degree assault. Aside from the scarring, Demetrius’ nose collapsed due to the attack, leaving him with no nasal passages.

“I went through two years of intense surgical attention,” he explains in his book, *The Chosen One: A Touch from Above*.

Then Demetrius’ world changed again. “I was given into custody of some very, very hateful foster parents.... My only meal would be multiple slices of light bread.”

He lived with three other boys there, including his own brother, although he didn’t learn that they were related until later in life. When he was five years old, Demetrius went back to live with his grandmother. At school he faced ridicule, abuse and rejection.

“It was very terrible for me growing up because I had to deal with a lot of bullying, a lot of low self-esteem, a lot of everything that comes with being ostracized and alienated.”

As a teenager, Demetrius started using drugs and joined a gang. Strangers who stared at his scars were often met with Demetrius’ violent anger. As a result, he was in and out of juvenile detention on assault and battery charges.

When he was 20, Demetrius caught his girlfriend cheating on him.

“Being rejected like that and betrayed took me to a horrible, horrible place of anger,” he says. He attacked the man he found her with and police arrested him on attempted murder charges. He was given a life sentence.

Demetrius worried about the attention his scars would bring behind bars but he was quickly

the Bible, the more he wanted to know about God. One night he was praying when he heard God speak to him: “I love you and I want to use you.”

Demetrius started telling others about what had happened.

“I began to share transparently about how angry I used to be, how I used to hate Jesus, how [I used to think] He wasn’t real and how even though I’m in this jungle He appeared to me and He’s real.”

Demetrius told CBN about a visiting speaker who had previously been cellmates with a woman who tried to kill her son.

“She was saying about this lady that had poisoned her son and she came to a place where she finally forgave herself and the speaker used that as a testimony of truth to try to empower us to forgive

ourselves.”

After the meeting, he spoke to the woman and confirmed that the woman she was talking about was his mother.

The speaker told Demetrius that Jesus had a purpose for his life. It was then that Demetrius finally surrendered his life to God.

“I fell on my knees and I began to cry out, tears began to leak out of my eyes: ‘First of all, God thank You for manifesting Yourself to me and showing me that You are real. Second of all, thank You for dying for me and shedding Your blood for me. Third of all, forgive me for all of my sins and help me to live for You.’” As he prayed, Demetrius felt peace and joy wash over him.

Demetrius was granted early parole for good behavior and released after five years. Immedi-



Demetrius Guyton has now reconciled with his mother.

ately, he found his mother and told her he forgave her.

“All I wanted to do was just tell her, ‘I love you. I forgive you.’ She fell on her knees and began to weep towards Jesus, thanking Him that I was alive, thanking Him that I had forgiven her.”

My Easter discovery

A makeshift stage, someone “plonking” away on an old piano, not a single laser beam or flashing light show, no sound equipment or great actors, just a group of youngsters with a message they hoped would touch hearts and transform lives.

Katy Spakman was 14 when she attended this amateur production put on by a local church – and it changed her life.

Up till that point she was a little girl lost. The product of a broken home, she says she was “on the road to hell” by the time she hit her early teens. “I was from a non-Christian home and it was not a very pleasant home,” she tells the YouTube channel WhyJesus.

“My dad left when their marriage broke up. I was three or four years old and that left me with a void in my life.

“Before I was 15 I started to get involved with parties.

“I mixed with ‘the cool kids’ at school and was mucking around with my boyfriend. I was really not on a



Katy Spakman. Photo: Facebook/spakmank

good track.”

Even so, Katy remembers she used to pray.

She attended a religious school and so she knew about God and the Bible. “I would whisper prayers to this Father who was far away,” she shares.

“I had a soft heart towards God but I didn’t know Him. Even though I talked to Him and asked Him things and needed Him in my life, I didn’t know Him.”

Perhaps it was this early sensitivity to God that made Katy say yes when a classmate invited her, when she was 14, to a youth camp for

Easter, where the highlight would be a passion play, which depicts the trial, suffering and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

“I remember really enjoying the atmosphere at the camp,” Katy says.

“I could feel the difference in the people and the warmth towards me. I felt really loved.”

However, when the invitation was made for people to “give their lives to Jesus” Katy blanched.

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BACK PAGE

**MMA
FIGHTER
BENEIL DARIUSH**

My Easter discovery

● From page 1

"I was trying to be mature; I was 14 and trying to put on my best voice and I said, 'I respect what your beliefs are but that sounds a bit too radical for me. That's not really my style.'

"I didn't even know what that meant to give my life to Jesus!

"It sounded so foreign. I was happy in my worldly life."

Not wanting to be rude, Katy stayed on till the final night of the camp – the night of the drama.

The play, which was interactive, began with a re-enactment of the last supper, where Jesus broke bread and handed it out to everyone.

As Katy handed the bread to the person next to her, "things got weird".

"I had a supernatural experience where I could feel bread in my hand.

"And then the person who was playing Jesus became Jesus and suddenly the Holy Spirit opened my eyes and I wasn't in that room anymore.

"I was actually in an encounter where I went to Calvary [the place Jesus was crucified].

I watched Him getting whipped, I watched the crown of thorns go on His head.



Katy and her husband Daniel. Photo: Facebook/spakmank

"By the time I got to the cross I was in love with Jesus.

"I'm like, 'Whoa, He did this for me?'"

Katy dissolved into tears.

"At that point I realised I was a sinner and that I needed a Saviour.

"And I said, 'If You died for me, I will live for You.'"

Her initial reluctance disappeared, to be replaced by a lifelong commitment.

"I knew I was signing up my whole

life to Jesus to give every day to Him.

"I had that feeling that my life wasn't my own anymore, like I had been brought with a price I was giving my life back to the one who bought it.

"It was powerful and I've never been the same since."

"He was no longer a distant person; He was real and right in front of me. I still can't get over it.

"In 24 hours I went from, 'Yeah thanks but no thanks' to being totally in love with Jesus."

Today Katy and her husband Daniel, who live in Alice Springs, devote their lives to spreading the gospel (the good news that Jesus died for our sins).

They are volunteers with Iris Global, an international mission-

ary organisation that provides humanitarian aid in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

Katy holds a special place in her heart for that Easter camp so many years ago.

"God uses anything and anyone and my encouragement to anyone with a dream to spread the gospel is that God will use your humble offering. He's not asking you to give what you don't have."

Quoting the miracle of the loaves and fish from Matthew 14: 13-21, she says: "Just give what you have and let Jesus make it into something miraculous and beautiful."

THE DAY DEATH DIED

BY ANDREW HALLOWAY

DID you know that your greatest enemy has been defeated?

Death has been conquered – and it all happened back on the first Easter Sunday.

We've all had some gloomy reminders recently that death is a reality, whether through the Covid pandemic or the wars and other tragic events around the world.

But death no longer has the victory over us, it is NOT the end!

That's why Easter should be a party, not a funeral!

Invite everyone, get the music on, and get dancing on the grave of death – because we no longer have to fear it.

I say again, it is NOT the end.

Yes, Jesus died, but after a couple of days to show he was truly dead, he came back to life on the third day!

And with Him he brought the invitations for all of us to a party in heaven that will never end.

When He rose from the dead, Jesus guaranteed that we too can defeat death. How, you ask? No one comes back to tell us. But one Person has – Jesus.

That's what turned the world upside down 2,000 years ago as Christianity exploded onto the scene, as ordinary people encountered a living Jesus who could transform their lives.

Yes, we die physically, but – if we put our lives in Jesus' nail-scarred hands – we can live through death and enjoy a whole new life, forever.

That's why Jesus came. Not just to teach us how to live right, important though that is, but to give us eternal life.

That's why we can call Good Friday "Good". It was the awful day that Jesus was tortured and executed, but it was also the day death died.

Jesus' death opens up new life to all who will believe, and His resurrection was the proof!

As Jesus said: "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish" (John 10:28). Have you joined the party yet? ●



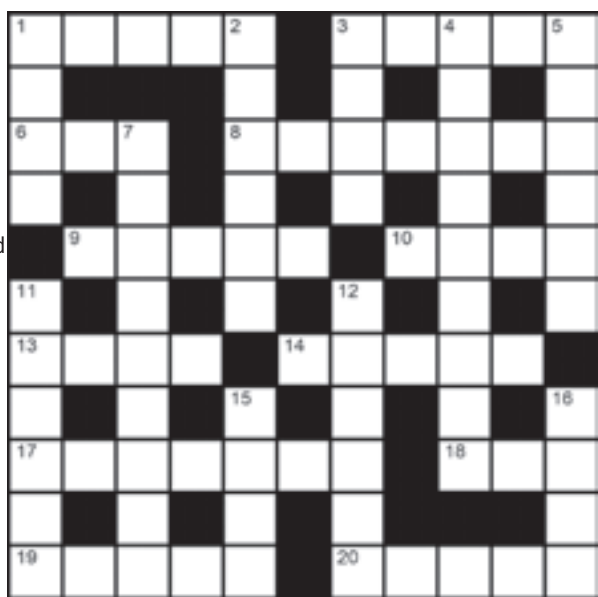
Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

ACROSS

- 1 Fly-fisher's target
- 3 Careless hurrying
- 6 Wrinkly faced dog
- 8 Woolly critters
- 9 Vegetable bulb
- 10 Wharf, pier
- 13 Chess piece or bird
- 14 Military trainee
- 17 Past middle age
- 18 Pool-testing digit!
- 19 Walk like you own the place
- 20 Darkest hours

DOWN

- 1 Oopsy on the keys
- 2 Receptacle for infusions
- 3 Cape of Good
- 4 Fleshy plant
- 5 School writings
- 7 Early explosive
- 11 Athens residents
- 12 Gorge, ravine
- 15 Horse's slow run
- 16 Thaw, dissolve



SOLUTIONS PAGE 7



"I know my instruments are sterilised every day, but I have no idea who does it!"

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Prison chaplain's search for answers

Erick Langat is a prison chaplain who speaks light into inmates suffering in darkness and shares the good news of Jesus's death and resurrection to anyone who will listen. Today, he says that God has immensely blessed him, his work and his family.

Things were not always smooth sailing, though. Before Erick came to know Jesus personally, he went through a stage of searching.

Erick says, "I was the last born in a family of six brothers and three sisters. I was brought up in a Christian family. I went to Sunday school as a child and Bible camps as a teenager. I first heard about Jesus in my Sunday school class but I did not understand what needed to happen to make it real. I was just doing the 'right' thing and serving God without really knowing Him."

It was not until Erick had finished his primary school exams and moved up to high school that he had a realisation that, just because his parents were Christians, it did not mean that he had a free ride to heaven. He needed to make that personal decision on his own.

This thought was further encouraged when he listened to a sermon during a rally and heard the Gospel [the good news of Jesus saving us from our sins] in full. He responded to the altar call and got saved.

"So, on the 2nd February, 2003, I gave my life to Christ," he relates. "I saw that life without Christ is useless. There were verses like Romans 5 and verse 8 that spoke to me. 'But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.'"

Erick previously struggled with ungratefulness. "Somebody would do something for me and I would not appreciate that they had helped me," he tells Challenge. Since his conversion, though, God has been working in Erick's life and helping him to overcome all of his struggles and sins.

"The biggest change in my life since that miraculous day is that I have been able to see that Christ has been

with me throughout the whole of my life. I have no doubt about it," he proclaims joyously.

"The best part of being a Christian is the truth expressed in the Bible in 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 17: 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, behold all things have become new.' I am now blessed with a family and have two kids."

Erick's favourite verse from the Bible is Colossians 2:14, which says, 'Having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; He [Jesus] has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.'

"I would like to tell others that to come to Christ is life changing," he smiles.

"Christ saves and He is the Lord of our lives, our Father, and our God. He is the Lord of our lives! The grace of God is sufficient for all."



Erick Langat



Cameron Arnett (left) with *I Still Believe* co-star KJ Apa. (Photo Michael Buckner/Variety/Penske Media via Getty Images)

Actor loses everything over one audition

Award-winning actor and producer Cameron Arnett was at the height of his career, climbing the Hollywood ladder and landing big roles in blockbuster movies like *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Miami Vice* when one audition ruined everything.

"I ended up evicted, divorced, alone. No agent, no acting jobs, nothing," he said.

What happened to have caused such a change of fortunes? Turns out Cameron had just been about to sign on the dotted line after his successful audition, when he was told one of the scenes required partial nudity.

He hesitated. Nudity did not sit well with Cameron's value system and he told the studio executives that. They said 'no problem', they would use a body double instead. Again Cameron refused. "Even with the body double, I felt God telling me people would still think it was me. It put a halt on everything. I felt God tap me on the shoulder and say, 'You know, it's time to get out of the system.'"

Born in Haiti in 1960, Cameron moved to California in the 90's to pursue a career in acting and modeling. "Things were moving right along there," he said. "Then, I found myself in Toronto, Canada doing a movie for a week. When I got back to L.A., they called me in by name, to audition for a TV series, which I ended up getting. It would have been my first lead in my own series."

It was for this series that Cameron was told about the need for him to be partially nude. Partial nudity would not seem to be that high a hurdle for a male actor in Hollywood, but Cameron was different. He is a Christian and had learned to listen to God's voice and follow His directions.

"It's all about God and not about us, no matter what platform He puts us on," Cameron said. "I want to be able to let people know that He's still Lord and He's still to be respected and honoured."

But obeying God had unpleasant consequences "The agency dropped me," Cameron recalled. "I lost everything – big house, cars, even family. I had nothing and no one," he said of those grim days, which also included a period of bankruptcy.

Later, Cameron felt God calling him to be a preacher. He moved to Atlanta

and started a church. "I thought I would never act again and I was completely fine with it," he said.

But God had other plans in store. Ten years on Cameron was able to step into a movie role again, this time in the Christian movie industry, and later start his own film production company.

Cameron now sees the production company as his ministry, and media and entertainment as his primary means of reaching people with the message of Jesus. His desire is to exalt God and the Bible through the shows and films he makes.

"One of my greatest joys in this is being able to collaborate with like-minded Christian filmmakers and artists. I love helping people be and do what they were ordained to by God. And as an actor, it is a joy to use the talent He gave me to honour Him within these various projects."

Cameron's recent faith-based movies include *Overcomer* and *I Still Believe*.

Today, he is happily married to BJ and they have a blended family of five children. He continues to run his production company, CAPS, with great success and founded Saving Destinies, an organisation dedicated to supporting and protecting young people.

He has published a series of children's books, is a public speaker, and continues to travel and shoot family-friendly films and other projects.

Talking about his decision to stick by his principals at that one audition years ago, Cameron said he has never looked back: "God sends everyone here for a reason, with a purpose, on a mission," he declares. "He leads and guides us in the way we should go. My life is a testimony of that. Our part is to obey, and as we do, He uses us to fulfil His will upon the earth."

Cameron urges others: "If you are a Christian, don't compromise God's integrity for man-made success. Be true to Him and to you. Honour Him and He will honour you."

On of Cameron's favourite Bible verses is Proverbs 19:21: '*Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.*' This verse gives me the most comfort. It allows you to realise that as long as I am falling forward towards God, He's going to cause what He intended, to prevail." ●

HARD ROAD, SOFT HEART

The fact Cindy Marais is alive today is a miracle. Her mother attempted to abort her – twice – and since her traumatic birth she has faced abuse, trauma and grief almost every step of the way. But there has been a shining light with her since she was a teenager, giving her the strength to continue with when life seemed hopeless.

Three days after she was born, Cindy's parents left her and her older sister with a couple that they thought were their grandparents. She describes it as a "godly home with love, abundance and education."

Cindy explains, "This was a normal, fantastic childhood, until I found out at age 10 that I was not family. This devastated me and the rejection was so bad that I decided to live with my mom and step dad... My world changed into an absolute nightmare. In this home I experienced drugs, alcohol, deception, adultery and poverty."

Cindy helped look after her siblings and learned to run the household while their mother was at the pub or smoking dagga or using narcotics and alcohol.

"This led to endless adulterous affairs, all while my stepfather was sexually molesting us. We moved from place to place, one year we were in three different schools, and three different provinces. This obviously created a huge impact on my school career."

School was the last thing on her Cindy's mind with so much going on at home and she left in standard 7 (grade 9).

At 14 Cindy was raped by a man who supplied her mother with drugs. Petrified, she kept the assault a secret. A turning point came soon after however when a friend invited her to a Scripture Union meeting. She had heard about God from the couple who had raised her but it wasn't until this meeting that she realised her need for a saviour – Jesus – and gave her life to Him.

"I threw myself into the church, and felt accepted and loved," Cindy remembers.

Before long Cindy's mother and stepfather forbade her from going to church. She recalls her mother beating her and giving her 'medicine' from witchdoctors, but throughout it all she clung to hope in her faith.

"All I had hidden deep in my heart was Jesus. I was all alone in a world where I was so different in every way."

Cindy experienced multiple assaults by multi-



Cindy Marais

ple men. "I was haunted by this fear of men and started just giving in to them. I knew a guy that had been pursuing me for some time who was separated from his wife, but still married. He offered me his home and fell in love with me. For me this was a way out and I grabbed it. I then fell pregnant at the age of 18 and had a beautiful baby girl. But life changed and he started flirting with and running after other women. He loved to party and stopped working, leaving me to go back to work while he took care of our baby girl. We had to move into a garage, with no toilet or running water."

Cindy longed to give her daughter a better life than she had had so she decided to leave her daughter's father and returned home.

After Cindy's mother stole her belongings and left for a new life in a new town, Cindy moved in with a friend and started a new life in Port Edward.

"I started devoting my life to God and was on fire for my Messiah. I met my husband – a man of honour, integrity and compassion, who taught me how to live and be a part of a family. He knew about my past but loved me and made me the queen of his life. God gave me a home, furniture and finally my own bed to lay my head on."

But tragedy struck again when after finally falling pregnant, their son, David, was stillborn at 39 weeks. The grief only compounded the rejection Cindy had experienced from before she was born.

"I then started focusing a bit on Cindy by God's grace and started a career. So, at age 40 I decided to do my NQF4 and do my matric... which I passed with three distinctions!"

In 2018, Cindy opened a restaurant and ran it successfully for five years.

"But when Covid19 hit the world, this took my precious husband. I was too young to be a widow but I knew God had a plan. I said, 'Lord, you cannot give me all these tears, and not have a greater plan

for my life.'"

Last year Cindy gave up her business and began volunteering at child welfare. She also plans to launch an online ministry helping people deal with mental health issues, abuse and grief in the hopes that God will use her pain to help other people.

"I have forgiven my parents and only tell this story to bring honour to God," she says.

Looking back at her difficult life now, Cindy remains positive: "I always felt God had a plan for my life, and even though I felt abandoned, I knew God was with me. He was most certainly my strength and hope of a better life." ●

“Even though I felt abandoned, I knew God was with me.”

“I had nothing and no one.”

WITH KARL FAASE

Growing in the presence of God

BY KARL FAASE

HAVE you ever considered how your view of God impacts your ability to grow in your relationship with God?

There are those who see God as an angry and aloof divine being, judgmental and angry. This has been replaced in some quarters by a God that gives us all we want and cares for our every need without any moral parameters. Bishop Geoffrey Robinson has written, "We cannot grow under an angry god and we will not grow under a god of soft, indulgent love."

Both these views of God are extreme and unhelpful. God loves us and reaches out to us, but God is holy and concerned with how we live. Love does not mean He has no concerns with our behaviour and attitudes. ●

Afrikaans translation

EK HET DIE ANTWOORD GEVIND

Die streng dissipline in die gesin het Isaac Moloko op die reguit, nou pad gehou. Dit was moeilik toe die skewe, maklike pad hom aanhou lok het met beloftes van pret, en hy erken dat hy baie ingeperk gevoel het.

“Ek was nie toegelaat om in die aand uit te gaan nie, of om met die ander kinders in die dorpie te speel nie,” het hy vir Challenge News vertel.

“Ander gesinne het rituele en inisiasie seremonies gehad. Almal, behalwe ons familie, het dit beoefen, en ek wou baie graag dieselfde doen om aanvaar te word, maar ek kon nie as gevolg van ons streng gesins- omgewing”

Die rede vir hierdie streng reëls? Isaac se ouers was Christene en wou hul kinders van onbybelse gebruikte en gewoontes beskerm.

Hy het met sommige slegte gedrag geflankeer.

Hy erken dat hy vir sy pa gejoj het, byvoorbeeld wanneer hy sou sê dat hy het geld nodig gehad het om skoolboeke te koop, maar dan hou hy die geld vir homself.

Toe sy pa weggegaan het om by 'n Bybelskool te studeer, was daar finansiële beperkinge en het hy

begin om van ander te steel.

“Ja ek het daardie slegte dinge gedoen, maar as gevolg van my ouers se leiding was ek in staat om daardie slegte gedrag af te lê, en in hulle voetspore te volg.”

Toe hy 17 jaar oud was, het Isaac by die kerk gereageer op die roepstem om sy lewe aan Jesus te gee. “My pa het nooit ophou vertel van die belangrikheid vir my om na Jesus toe te draai nie,” sê hy.

“Ek het die behoefte vir God gesien en ek het my lewe vir Hom gegee. Ek is geseënd want ek is omring en beïnvloed deur mense wat God ken en hulle moedig my aan om 'n persoonlike verhouding met Hom te hê.”

Vandag lei Isaac (61), en sy vrou 'n kerk in Suid-Afrika.

Hy sê verwerping en beproewing is deel van die Christen ervaring, maar “God is getrou.

Ek sou dit nie sonder Hom so vêr gemaak het nie. Ek sien die vervulling van Sy Woord en waarheid in my lewe.”

Hy moedig ander aan wat deur moeilike tye gaan met hierdie gedagte “As enige mens deur situasies van teleurstelling, mislukking, of lyding gaan, laat hulle na Jesus toe kom en Hy sal hulle help.”

“Hy sê ‘Kom na my toe, almal wat

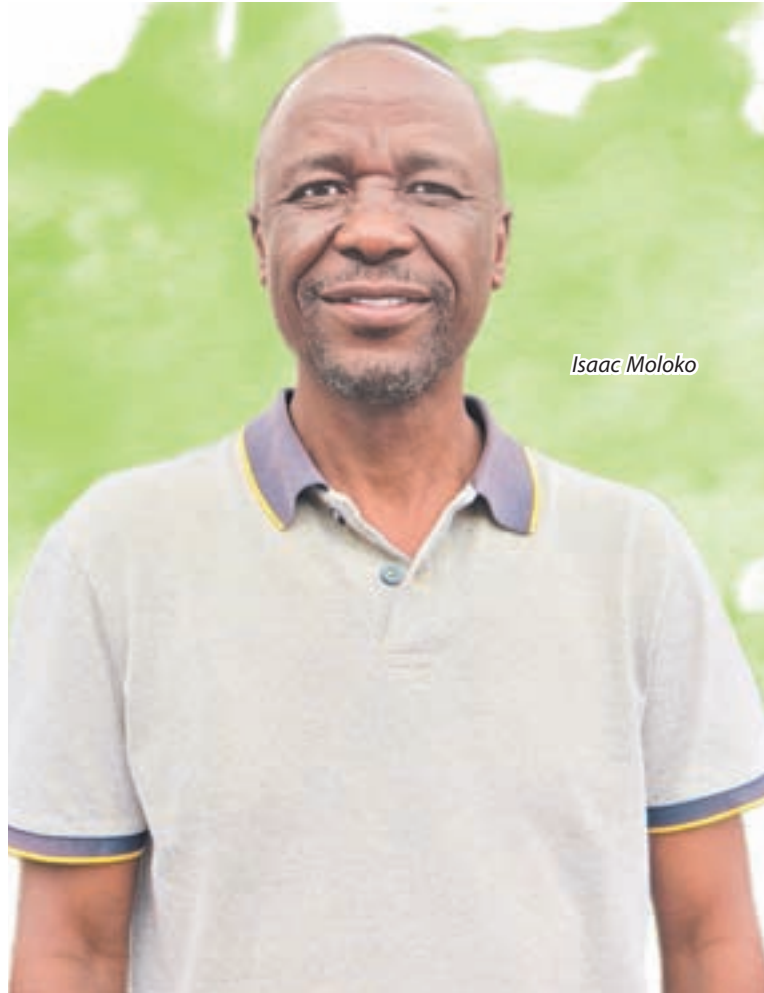
uitgeput en oorlaai is, en Ek sal julle rus gee.’ Matteus 11:28”

“Jesus is gereed om enige een, enige tyd te red, en dit maak nie saak hoe sleg of afvallig jy mag wees nie,

Hy sal jou lewe verander.

“Hy sal jou lewe sin en 'n betekenis gee.”

“Hy is die antwoord op al die lewe se probleme.”



Isaac Moloko

“**Ek sou dit nie so ver sonder Hom gemaak het nie.**”

Zulu translation

Ngayithola impendulo

I sandla esiqinile somthetho wasekhaya sagcina u Isaac Moloko eqondile.

Kwakunzima uma indlela elula ephume endleleni ithembisa lensizwa ubumnandi, uyazivumela ukuthi wayenemincele.

“Ngangingavunyelwe ukuphuma ebusuku ngiyodlala nezingane zakulesigodi,” etshela I Challenge news.

“Eminyane imindeni yayiba nemicimbi yamasiko okusoka. Bonke abantu babekwenza lokho ngaphandle komndeni wakithi ngangilangazelela ukwenza nami ukuze ngamukelekele, nganginkwazi ngenxa yesandla esiqinile somndeni.”

Yini isizathu semithetho engaka? Abazali ba Isaac babengamakhohla befuna ukuvikela ingane zabo ezenzweni ezingahambisani nebhayibheli.

Noma kunjalo wayenokugwegwa u Isaac, uyasho ukuthi wayenokucela imali kubabakhe ethi eyencwadi azigcinele yona.

Ngesikhathi ubabawakhe eya eskoleni sebhayibheli wayentula kakhulu wacina entshontsha.

“Yebo ngawenza zonke lezozinto ezimbi, kodwa ngenxa yezulelo zabazali bakhe wabayela endleleni walandela ezinyathelweni zabo.”

Eneminyaka ewu 17 u Isaac wanikela Impilo yakhe kuJesus. “Ubaba wayehlala engikhuthaza njalo ngokubaluleka kokunikela impilo yami kuJesus.” Esho yena.

“Ngasibona isidingo sikaNkulunkulu nganikela impilo yami kuYena. Ngibusisekile ukuthi ngangizungezwe ngabantu abamaziyu uNkulunkulu futhi bangikhuthaza ukuthi ngibe nobudlelwano naYe.”

Namhlanje, uIsaac, una 61 yena nonkosikazi wakhe bangabafundisi bebandla eMzansi Africa.

Uthi izilingo nokuhlukumezeka ziyinxenye lohambo lobu Krestu kodwa uNkulunkulu wethembekile.” Bengingeke ngifike lana ngaphandle kwakhe. Izwi lakhe lifezekile empilweni yami.”

Ukhuthaza labo abasebunzimeni ngalemi-cabango: “Uma kukhona ojabhile, ohlulekile nodangele empilweni akeze kuJesus, uzobasiza.”

Uthi, Yizani kimi nina nonke enikhathale, nenisindwayo ngizoniphumuza (Matewu 11:28)

UJesus ulungele ukusindisa noma ngabe ubani oza kuYena, akuhluphi ukuthi wenzeni noma izolo lakho libole kanjani, angayiguqula impilo yakho, akunikezele isizathu sokuphila.

“UJesus uyimpendulo yazo zonke izinkinga zempilo.”

“**Bengingeke ngifike la ngaphandle Kwakhe.**”

English translation

I found the answer

Firm family discipline kept Isaac Moloko on the straight and narrow. It was hard when the crooked and easy way kept beckoning the young man with its promises of fun, and he admits he felt very limited.

“I was not allowed to go out at night or to play with other kids in the village,” he tells *Challenge News*.

“Other families had rituals and initiation ceremonies. Everyone else practiced them except my family and I really wanted to do the same thing to be accepted, but I had to abstain because of the strict environment of my family.”

The reason for the stringent rules? Isaac’s parents were Christians and wanted to shield their children from unbiblical practices or habits. Even so, Isaac did flirt with some bad behaviour, admitting that he would lie to his father that he needed money to buy school books but keep the money for himself.

When his father left to study at Bible School, Isaac felt more cash-strapped than ever and resorted to stealing from others.

“Yes I did those bad things, but because of my parents’ guidance I was able to turn from that bad behavior and follow in their footsteps.”

When he was 17, Isaac responded to an altar call at church to commit his life to Jesus.

“My father never stopped stressing the need for me to come to Jesus,” he says. “I saw the need for God and I gave my life to Him. I am blessed to have been surrounded and influenced by people who knew God and encouraged me to have a personal relationship with Him.”

Today Isaac, 61, and his wife pastor a church in South Africa. He says rejections and trials are part and parcel of the Christian experience but that “God is faithful. I would not have made it so far without Him. I see His Word and truth being fulfilled in my life.”

He encourages those who are doing it tough with these thoughts: “If anyone has been disappointed, failed or suffered through situations, let them come to Jesus and He will help them.

“He says ‘Come to Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.’ (Matthew 11:28)

“Jesus is ready to save anyone, anytime and it doesn’t matter what you did in the past or how rotten or disadvantaged you may be, He will change your life. He will give you a reason and meaning for living.

“He is the answer to all of life’s problems.”

“**I would not have made it so far without Him.**”

Are we qualified?

BY PASTOR MERVYN APPADU

FOR many people, paper qualifications have become all-important. Some even resort to purchasing a degree so they can present themselves with the “right qualifications”.

Some have even resorted to fraud and misrepresentation by falsifying certificates and buying forged qualifications. Others get honorary degrees.

Someone who had never been to university once expressed jokingly that he had studied at INOGO University of Hawaii.

He then explained to me that it was his way of expressing “I no go to university” in poor, broken English. It made me wonder if I should put MWQ (My Wife’s Qualifications) as one of my credentials!

As I considered the importance of qualifications, I thought about the qualifications that would impress God. Do we need qualifications before we can serve Him?

As the Lord brought my attention to Isaiah 6, I found that His question, “Whom shall I send?” and Isaiah’s response, “Here I am, send me”, occurred after Isaiah had repented [turned away from his wrongdoing] and God had forgiven him.

I began to realise that whom God forgives, He also asks to serve Him.

The “qualification” God seeks in His servants is a repentant heart. This idea is affirmed in Hebrews 9:14, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

Repentance, forgiveness and readiness are far more important qualifications than paper qualifications. •



STOCK PHOTO

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MY ANXIETY PARALYSED ME

After a traumatic event as a child, anxious thoughts would race through Cindy Rivera's mind, leaving her exhausted and frightened. Enduring years of this with no relief, she turned to alcohol and even attempted suicide twice. Finally Cindy found hope and the tools she needed to deal with her intrusive thoughts.

In a Delafe Testimonies video on YouTube, Cindy recalls when she was five and visiting extended family, she got into trouble for something. She ran to her 12-year-old uncle to tell him what happened. "He said, 'Don't worry, it'll be okay,' and his hand started to wander," she shares. "At five years old I didn't understand what was happening but I knew that I felt so uncomfortable and shameful."

Cindy says she didn't want to get into trouble and told herself it must be "normal".

After this, Cindy recalls feeling fearful out of nowhere. "I felt so anxious and I would wake up in the middle of the night trembling," Cindy recalls. "I would have racing thoughts go through my mind. I was so scared that something bad was gonna happen... I would have thoughts of hurting myself or other people. I would see images in my

mind of things that would scare me and I didn't tell anyone."

In middle school, Cindy started drinking and smoking in the hopes it would numb her anxiety.

"But none of that was making me feel any better – it actually was making me feel worse."

As time went on, Cindy became overwhelmed with hopelessness that nothing was helping her anxiety.

"I tried to commit suicide two times," she admits.

After her second attempt, she cried out to God in her desperation: "Lord, I don't know if You're real but I need You to show up for me. I need You to come and

Cindy Rivera.
Photo:
YouTube/@
delafetestimonies



help me because if You don't I'm gonna do it again and I'm gonna succeed."

Not long after this, she heard an announcement at school inviting students to go to a Bible study and she decided to go.

It was there that she heard the good news about Jesus, that He had died on the cross for her and wanted a relationship with her.

"People were sharing their [stories]," Cindy recalls. "They shared how broken they were and how they were free now, and so that gave me a lot of hope. I thought, 'Wow, I want that. I want this Jesus that they're talking about.' So I continued to go and I gave my life to Jesus. I started to experience this peace that I had never felt before."

She was given a Bible and began to read it. "I felt so loved," Cindy shares.

For a while she was free from the intrusive thoughts, but six months later, new thoughts began to plague her. *You're not really saved. This isn't real. Anxiety's still*

here. What if you try to kill yourself again?

"I remember crying out to God and saying, 'God I can't do this. I won't get married, I won't have children because I don't want my husband to deal with this. I don't want my children to have it. I don't want to be scared to hurt myself or them.'"

Suddenly a thought dropped into her mind: "One day you're gonna talk about this with your husband."

At the time she dismissed it. But a few years later, she started dating Isaac.

One day after church, he told her

about a dream he'd had about her.

"He said that in the dream I was much older and that I had a son and I looked at my son with a lot of love and that I was a great mother. When he told me that I began to cry because I hadn't told anyone besides the Lord about not wanting to have kids because of anxiety. In that moment the Lord reminded me of what He said to me, that one day I was gonna talk about this with my husband."

Cindy recalls feeling a peace and the thoughts subsided again.

Three years later, Isaac and Cindy got engaged and Cindy was overjoyed. But a couple of months before the wedding, the anxious thoughts returned. Cindy remembers praying about her anxiety when God showed her a picture of a toolbox.

"I remember God telling me, 'I'm gonna give you the tools to be free from this forever and you're going to help others be free.'"

God showed Cindy how to "rewrite" the thoughts that popped into her mind.

When she had an anxious "what if" thought, she would choose to think about a positive "what if" scenario. When a negative image popped into her mind (for example, hurting herself), she would envision herself doing something positive (for example, praying for someone).

As Cindy put these strategies into practice, she realised she was living out 2 Corinthians 10:5: "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

Through God's help, Cindy was able to forgive her uncle.

She is now a youth leader in her church and draws upon her experiences with anxiety to help young people.

“ I felt so loved. ”

HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

Anyone can gain the eternal life offered through Jesus Christ

We read in God's word: "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16)

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------|
| OUR PROBLEM: | Separation from God "Everyone has sinned. Nobody is good enough because God's standards are perfect" (Romans 3:23) | ADMIT |
| GOD'S REMEDY / SOLUTION: | Jesus died on the cross "God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8) | BELIEVE |
| OUR RESPONSE: | Trust Jesus by receiving Him "To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12) | COMMIT |

Here is an example of how you can pray.

Dear Father in Heaven. I come to you now because I want to be saved. Please, forgive me of my sins. I believe that you sent your Son Jesus Christ to die for me and that you have raised him from the dead. I now ask Jesus Christ to come into my life as my Saviour and Lord. Take control of my life. Please make me the person You created me to be. In Jesus Christ's name. Amen

The Lord Jesus says: "I tell you the truth. Everyone who believes in me has eternal life." (John 6:47).
He gives life of a wonderful quality that continues forever.

What now?

1. Tell someone - either a Christian that you know or email us at info@challengenews.org
2. Use the resources in the green box on this page to find a Bible to read and more information regarding Christianity.
3. Keep praying. Talk to God anywhere, about anything. He is always listening, and you don't need a formula.
4. Reach out to the ministry that distributed this paper (see back page) and/or find a Bible-teaching church to attend.

AS A NEXT STEP: Please send me: Bible Some 'starting off' literature Information on a helpful church

I have prayed the prayer [ABOVE]

* Please tick and write clearly *

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Email address _____

Email to:
christabritz@challnews.onmicrosoft.com
OR sachallengenews@gmail.com

Out of South Africa enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

Want to explore more?

Here are some free, helpful, online Christian resources:

| | |
|--|--|
| Online Bible - Olive Tree app (we recommend that you start with an easy-to-read version like the ESV) | |
| Audio Bible - Bible.is app , or Youversion Bible app | |
| Christian radio station - CBN radio app (different channels for all genres of music) | |
| Christian podcasts and sermons - Edifi app | |
| Christian movies/TV shows - Good. app | |
| Daily thoughts and inspiration - Our Daily Bread app | |
| Advice on specific issues, Bible reading plans and studies for new believers - Youversion Bible app . | |
| The Bible explained with visual aides - the Bible Project on YouTube . | |
| Alpha Film Series on Youtube - an online introduction to Christianity. | |
| For kids - Superbook Kids Bible, videos and games app | |
| Comic book Bible online- goodandevilbook.com | |
| More inspiring faith stories - back issues of Challenge News at challengenews.online | |

No longer a slave

Francois Potgieter recalls a time when he felt angry and weighed down, like a heavy burden was on his back, lowering him into the posture of a slave. The peace, joy and freedom he experiences now seemed completely out of reach.

Francois tells *Challenge News* that he grew up in a Christian home but he realised he was only pretending to be a Christian for his family's sake. "In reality I was lost and filled with rage and all of the dark side of human nature," he admits. "I destroyed myself and everything around me."

Francois turned his back on God and searched for truth in other religions and philosophies.

"Yet the more I tried to deny Him the more I only saw His truth and undeniable evidence for His existence. I could no longer deny it and I surrendered, gave my heart to Him, and accepted His truth."

The difference in Francois' life was undeniable.

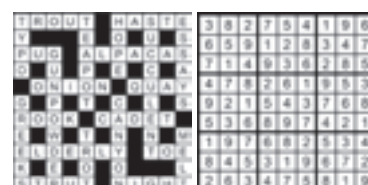
"I began to calm down and found peace and joy in my turmoil," he shares. "Life is not always easy but at least now I know I am not alone. I am able to face all my problems knowing my Lord God is with me."

"I may be judged, persecuted, belittled and more, yet I shall not fear for God is with me. I was lost, but now I am found. I have been a slave, but now I am free."

Francois' favourite Bible verses are John 3:16: "God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die" and Romans 6:14: "For sin will no longer be a master over you, since you are not under Law [as slaves], but under [unmerited] grace [as recipients of God's favour and mercy]."

"What He did for me, He will do for everyone," Francois attests. "He paid the sacrifice for us because He loves us. He is our Father."

My god was made of tin
then the Holy Spirit convicted me of sin.
I was miserable for some days
and hoped to change my ways.
I met a Christian man
who told me of God's plan.
As I pictured Jesus on the cross
to reject would be my loss.
To Him I surrendered all
and felt my sins fall.
I knew I was forgiven
and would go to heaven.
Born again to live
in peace which only God can give.
Many years have past
and my love is steadfast
For my Saviour, when we meet
I will kneel at His feet.
- Poem by Seymour Mattinson





Beneil Dariush of Iran punches Mateusz Gamrot of Poland in a lightweight fight during the UFC 280 event at Etihad Arena on October 22, 2022 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. (Photo by Chris Unger/Zuffa LLC/Getty Images)

TOUGH GUY FINDS TRUE GRIT

Mixed martial artist Beneil Dariush is currently ranked No.4 in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) lightweight rankings but eight years ago he was pursuing a different sport.

Beneil and his family moved from their farm in Iran to America when he was nine. At 18 he began training in Brazilian jiu-jitsu and earned his black belt in five years. He became a no-gi world champion as a blue, purple, and brown belt.

He explains in an interview with Run N Tell on YouTube that he moved to UFC when he was 25 after his mother confided in him that the family was struggling financially.

"It's okay mom, I got it," Beneil told his mother.

"Then I went into my room and I sat down and I was like, 'Why did I say that? What am I gonna do?'"

Beneil considered quitting fighting and getting a 9-5 job but he hated the idea.

"I was in such a bad place, I actually started to pray," he recalls.

Beneil had been raised attending an Aramaic church at Easter and Christmas but he says it was more of a "cultural thing".

"So I just was like, 'Alright God, if You're real, if You're up there, give me something.' A week or two later, I got a call for a professional fight in Brazil."

The only problem was that it was a professional MMA fight and at

that point, Beneil had only trained in jiu-jitsu.

But when he was offered the opportunity to fight MMA, he says, "I didn't want to sound like a wimp," and agreed.

Beneil began training immediately for the fight, which was in six weeks.

Against the odds, he won the fight and the pay cheque that went with it. He remembers handing it over to his mother with pride until he realised his winnings wouldn't last forever. There were payments to be made every month.

"I went back into my room and I prayed again and I was just like, 'Alright, You did it once, but I need another one. I don't know if You're really up there. I need to know if that was really You.'"

Then he had a call from a friend, asking if Beneil could train with him. He agreed and after their first session, the friend insisted on paying Beneil.

"All of a sudden I was working with him three or four times a week. I got another coaching job somewhere else — they just kept offering me jobs to teach and all while still fighting."

Beneil was making enough money to survive which was bolstered every now and again by his fight wins. He says he started to feel guilty that it seemed as though he received everything he prayed for and wondered what God wanted

from him in return.

He remembered an old wrestling coach he had who was also a pastor, Josh Holiday, and gave him a call.

Josh invited him to come to church and Beneil showed up the next weekend — dressed in his Sunday best.

"[Josh] was wearing just jeans and a T-shirt and I was like, 'Okay I may have made a mistake here!' But I sat through the service. I was very uncomfortable.

"The music wasn't something I was used to, the message wasn't something I was used to... but then I showed up again the next week and the next week and the next week and as I was showing up something was happening. I kept hearing about Jesus and the sacrifice and the cross. So I picked up my Bible and I started reading it."

Beneil read the entire Bible from front to back.

He says he "started to understand the cross". When he finished reading it, he started again.

"At the same time I gave my life to the Lord," he shares.

Beneil now says he recognises that his talents come from God.

"The whole purpose of my career is to point to my Lord and Saviour Jesus," he says in an interview with Brian Sumner.

"People forget fighting isn't just

violence. It doesn't necessarily mean violence if two people stop for a fight — it all depends on their intentions ... I believe fighting is the ultimate form of competition ...

“ I don't fight out of hate anymore. ”

"I don't fight out of hate anymore, I don't fight out of anger anymore — I focus on being disciplined. I focus on what is my motivation and what is my goal. The goal is to glorify God."

Last year a video of Beneil went viral regarding his comments about Iranian protestors.

The demonstrations started in September when a woman was arrested for allegedly

ignoring the government's requirements to wear hijabs or head coverings. She died in custody three days later.

"My people in Iran, I know you are struggling," he said in an in-cage interview. "I know you are fighting for freedom. I want you guys to know we're praying for you and we love you."

He went on to say, "There is true freedom — a freedom that no one can take from you — in the name of Jesus Christ, the son of God. Don't ever forget that. If you remember one thing I say, remember that."

Some news outlets referred to his final comments as "bizarre", but for Beneil, his faith is the foundation of his life. ●

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