

FREEDOM ON THE INSIDE



BY KATE CAMPBELL AND STACIA RAY (ABRIDGED)

School was easy for Albert – so easy that he took the importance of his education for granted. Class wasn't very exciting. Gang life at that time, however, seemed anything but boring.

In Albert's east Los Angeles neighborhood, a local multigenerational gang ran the streets. Albert is the oldest son of Mexican-Salvadoran immigrants, who worked hard to pay the bills and to protect their kids from trouble.

But his parents' busy work schedules often left Albert and his two younger sisters unattended at home. Although Albert was a hard worker – he got his first paid job at only 11 years old – he didn't have to work hard to get good grades.

Academics came naturally to him, so he didn't spend much time studying.

During his free time, Albert would hang out with some neighborhood boys he had grown up with, and some of their older brothers were members of the local gang.

Eventually, Albert also joined the local gang. He felt it was the logical next step for a young man in this neighborhood.

Unfortunately for Albert, gang life was accompanied by criminal activities, from petty misdemeanors

to major felonies.

Shortly before his 18th birthday, Albert was under investigation for multiple activities.

When he turned 18, Albert was arrested for what he explains were decisions “that evolved from bad to worse.”

The judge handed down a life sentence.

Adding weight to his heavy sentence was the fact that Albert, barely an adult himself, was about to be a father.

He knew incarceration may mean missing out on his child's life.

Six months after his arrest, the

mother of his child gave birth to a daughter, whom he would not have the chance to hold in his arms for years.

New light

While he was in county jail, Albert ended up going to a chapel service so he could socialize with a friend from another unit.

It was there that Albert heard a man share about how God had become real in his life.

“In that story, I put together some very important things that I had never heard about God and Jesus,” says Albert.

Albert had grown up knowing about God, but he didn't really know

God. He attended Catholic school as a child and heard teachings that made Jesus sound impressive but rather impersonal. He had never formed a personal connection with his Savior.

“I knew that He died for our sins... I knew He rose from the dead. I knew all the essential things,” says Albert.

“I just couldn't make sense of them in a way that played into somebody's real life.”

When he heard that man's story in the jail chapel, he saw Jesus in a new light.

He was understanding the gospel (the good news that Jesus Christ came to Earth to die for our sins) for the very first time.

“There was grace, there was mercy, and there was His love for us – a desire to live in the hearts of those who trust and obey Him,” Albert explains.

Opening what was closed

A friend had been writing him letters with Bible verses in them. Albert asked her how he could get to know God and the Bible better.

She encouraged him to open his heart as he opened God's Word and to ask the Lord to guide his life.

Albert surrendered his life to God and prayed: “Lord, I know that I cannot ask you to open these prison doors because I'm here for what I did. But if You could just do something to not allow this to be a waste of time, I'll do whatever You want me to do.”

After that prayer, he read the whole Bible and began to have hope that God could transform his life.

Albert also became intentional about connecting with his daughter. As he grew in his relationship with her, he saw the parallels of his own spiritual growth.

How do we 'prove' love?

BY JODY BENNETT

LOTS of people say that **God loves you**. What do they mean by that? And is it true? The same people or others may say **I love God**. What do they mean by that? And how can we know whether that is true?

The only religions that claim that God is a God of love are Judaism and Christianity. They also believe in the same God and share a common Scripture (the Old Testament), although Christians believe that the promises in the OT were fulfilled in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (detailed in the New Testament). For them the Bible is the standard by which everything is judged. How does the Bible define love? Well, in the original Greek language of the New Testament there are four different words for love. Sexual love (eros), friendship love (philia), family love (storge), and perfect/holy love (agape).

When we talk of God's love that is not a sentimental or sexual love, it is agape – a perfect, unearned, active love, not a feeling-centred sentimentality.

How do we know that God loves us?

He demonstrated it by dying (as the God-Man Jesus Christ) on the cross for all our wrongdoings and rebellion, in order to make a way for us to be in relationship with Him. As the much-quoted verse John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whomsoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Does God love everyone equally? Yes, in the sense that He has made a way for everyone to come to Him through Jesus. Does that mean that God loves what

everyone does, doesn't expect them to change their behaviour or that He will love them forever and not throw them into hell for their sin? No. God's love is *unearned* but unless it is responded to, it will someday be superseded by God's hatred and wrath for sin. If you don't believe me, just read through the books of Psalms and Proverbs and see how many times it talks about God hating or abhorring the wicked.

And how do we know that we love God? Well the Bible is clear about that too. “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep

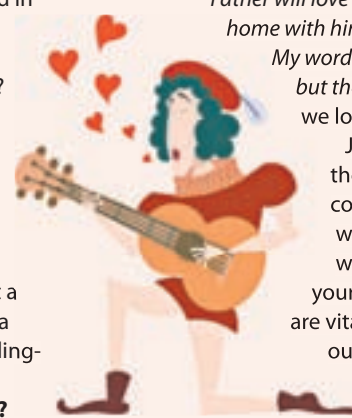
My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.’” (John 14:23-24) If we love God, we obey Him. Obey Him how?

Jesus said that all the many laws of the OT were summed up in the greatest commandment — to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind, and to love others as yourself. Loving God and doing what He said are vitally linked together. True love is shown by our actions, not in feelings and words. Love does.

A cheating or abusive husband may say he still loves his wife, but she won't feel loved, and he is not doing to her what he would like her to do to him. That is not love.

A person who claims to love God and yet is selfish, bitter, immoral and rude, is showing by their actions that they don't in fact love God. It doesn't matter what they say or think they feel.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:21 — “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”



NOT DEFINED BY THE WIN
SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER

Freedom on the inside

• From page 1

He credits his connection to her with his deeper understanding of his connection to God, in how deeply a father loves a child.

A new lease on life

More than two decades into his life sentence, Albert stood before the parole board for the fifth time – and was finally approved for parole. Six months later, he was released.

Albert says he believed the promises God revealed in His Word, “that He would restore me, He would restore my life, and He would make me the kind of person that people would trust.”

Upon his release, Albert connected to a Bible-based church and began faithfully serving there. He kept a reliable and positive attitude, and he felt God confirming that this was the right church to plant his roots.

After about a year, his pastor offered him a position on staff as the church’s community resource director, overseeing operations, which is still his role today.

At age 45, Albert married a wonderful woman who is the mother of two young children. He and his wife are about to celebrate their five-year anniversary. Albert and his daughter also continue to have a great relationship. They live near each other and enjoy spending time together.

If Albert could give advice to someone who is newly incarcerated, he’d tell them, “The best thing they could ever do is just turn their attention to the God that’s probably trying to get their attention. If they didn’t die out there, then there’s gotta be something else for them that’s better.”

The original of this story can be found at www.prisonfellowship.org and it is used with kind permission.

JAIL SAVED MY LIFE

BY AMY CAIN

Alexis grew up in a Christian home, but at 16, she began to act out and rebel.

“I decided to start doing what I wanted. I stopped going to church and started partying,” Alexis recalls.

At 21, she had her first baby with a boyfriend. After he got her pregnant again, they decided to get married – “more out of obligation than love,” she notes.

“We attended church, but I was just going through the motions of life. I became a workaholic and put work and drugs before my family,” Alexis recalls. “My husband verbally, mentally, emotionally, and physically abused me. I chose to walk away because of the toxicity, and I didn’t want our kids thinking it was acceptable. I continued down a bad pathway as a functioning addict.”

Unfortunately, her addiction soon overpowered her and led to accidental tragedy. Her arrest filled her with regret but also gratitude to God.

“When I hit rock bottom and ended up in jail, it was God’s way of saving my life,” Alexis shares. “Had I not ended up in jail, I would be dead from drugs and alcohol. My rock bottom ended with me on my knees in my jail cell, begging God for forgiveness.”

In jail, Alexis’s cellmate introduced her to Crossroads, and she signed up to receive lessons and a Bible.



STOCK PHOTO

She also decided to get baptized [a symbol of dying to your old life] a few months later. However, her addiction was still holding her back.

“I struggled off and on with my addiction while in county jail,” she admits. “When I was shipped to prison, it was a wake-up call.”

While serving her time in prison, she got serious about sobriety and her relationship with Jesus.

“The more I look back over my last four-and-a-half years of incarceration, the more God moments I see,” says Alexis. “All I can say is my God is amazing and has saved me from the hell I was living in.”

Reflecting on her time behind bars, she also recognizes and appreciates

the spiritual support she received from her Crossroads mentors.

In October 2022, Alexis was released on parole. She is now readjusting to her new life on the outside, grateful for the second chance God has given her.

“I am thankful to be granted parole and be given the chance to show the change God has made in my life and live the rest of my life living for God and sharing my story with others,” she says.

Used with kind permission of Crossroad Prison Ministries (CPM).

CPM instructors from churches across the world guide students in their walks with Christ through correspondence Bible studies and letters of encouragement. For more information, visit cpministries.org.

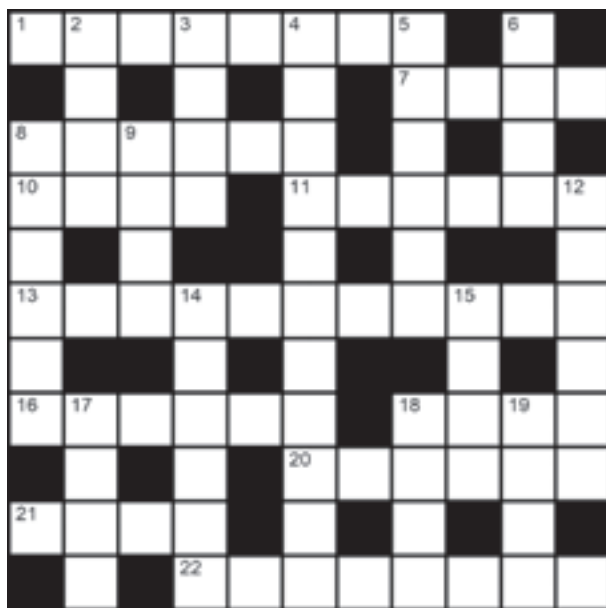
nudge WITH KARL FAASE

Broken pots

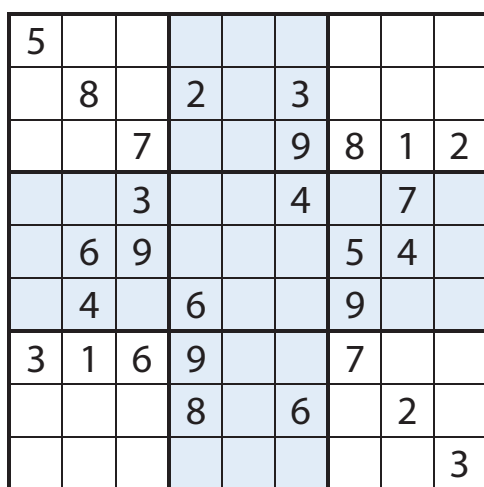
IF YOU have ever come across a broken pot or plate, you will know that you can actually still see what it was before it was smashed. If you look closely and reconstruct some of the pieces of the original pot, its shape, color and form are apparent. This is not a bad way of thinking about humanity. God’s original purpose for humanity was to live unbroken lives. But history demonstrates that humanity has not been able to live like this. Like a smashed pot, we are a poor reflection of our original state. Looking closely though and you can see our original state. Humanity is spiritual. We long for more in life. It is not enough for us just to go through the motions of living. We ask questions about purpose and meaning and the future. Why do we do this? Because this is how we were designed. Like a broken pot, we struggle to hold life together and we wonder why it’s so hard. Turn to God today and discover afresh the life you were designed for.

Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

- ACROSS**
- 1 Trickster, scammer
 - 7 Microscopic amount
 - 8 Slow graceful dance
 - 10 Situated atop
 - 11 Socialise upwardly
 - 13 Quick beginning (6,5)
 - 16 Carsick feeling
 - 18 Big shiny car, in short
 - 20 Electron opposite
 - 21 Small sheltered valley
 - 22 Engine part (3,5)
- DOWN**
- 2 Indiana Jones prop
 - 3 “Thing” word
 - 4 A printing process
 - 5 Warren maker
 - 6 Olympic water sport
 - 8 Small domed sponge cake
 - 9 Very inquisitive



- 12 Jacket fastener
- 14 What history repeats
- 15 ‘That didn’t hurt ___’ (1,3)
- 17 Sunday finale
- 18 Ness is one
- 19 Sulk aimlessly



SOLUTIONS PAGE 7



“Like I’m going to give up this to migrate.”

Something changed inside me

Mike’s addiction to drugs and alcohol began in 1981, when he was a soldier in Angola.

“I was just 18 years old and away from my father, who was very strict,” Mike explains as he looks back on his life. He says when his fellow soldiers introduced him to drugs, “My mind exploded into different directions.” Drugs gave him the escape he had been looking for since he was a child.

Mike says he had a mostly happy and stable childhood but his father was an alcoholic.

“Eventually he stopped drinking but I witnessed the wrongs that alcohol abuse brought into the home. I grew up without self-confidence. Rejection was embedded in me. If I look back now I recognise that’s why my mind was open for an escape when I grew up.”

Mike was homeless for 17 years and stole to supply his drug habit, which landed him in prison.

“My sentence was four years but I was in and out of many prisons in South Africa where I was waiting trial during my 30 years of drug addiction.”

As well as addictions, Mike says he also struggled with anger, pride, lying, jealousy, unforgiveness, ungratefulness and sexual immorality.

Mike was released in 1995 but two years later he was arrested again for theft. Around this time he also met a pastor of a church, who had a big impact on his life.

“He asked me if I wanted to surrender my life to Jesus Christ and I did.

My life changed but I soon went back to my old ways again. But Jesus always kept his hand over my life and in 2015 I totally surrendered everything to Jesus Christ.

“I decided to put all my hope, trust and faith in Jesus Christ, to have peace and freedom and to be set free from the bondage and shackles I was bound to. I prayed to God for forgiveness and said sorry for all the wrong things I’ve done and for hurting Him and

the people around me. I invited Jesus into my heart, to take up full residence and to be my Lord and Savior of my life.”

Mike says although he walked away from God after he first became a Christian in 1997, he knew something had changed inside of him.

“I knew He was with my all the time and I knew He had a plan for my life. Sometimes God takes time to form you, and I think after 1997 I was still holding onto me, myself and I. And I think I wasn’t ready back then to commit totally to God. But in all the time God was always protecting me and He was waiting for me to fully surrender to Him and I did. I give God all the honour and glory.”

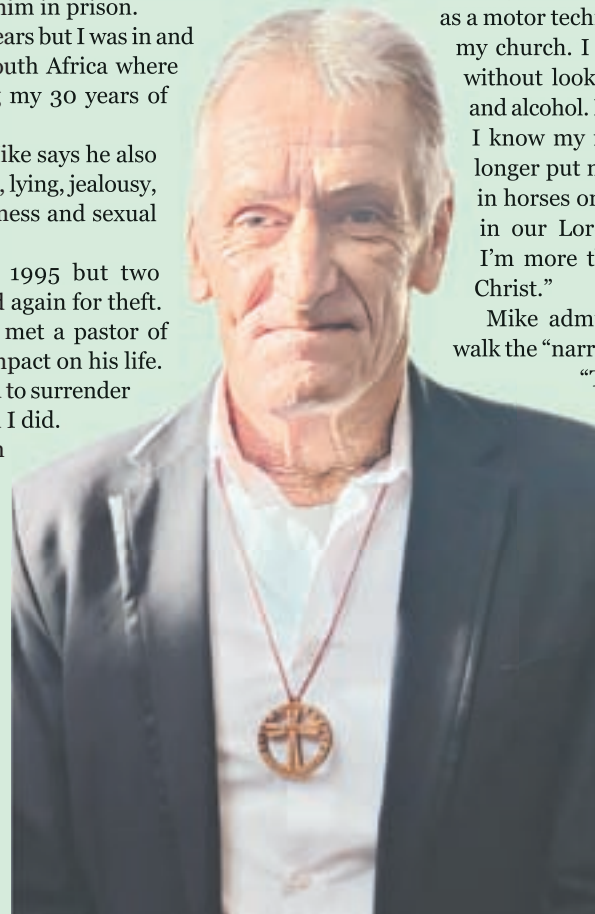
Mike is now married and has a beautiful family.

“I’m 12 years employed by the same company as a motor technician. I serve as a deacon in my church. I can handle life’s challenges without looking for an outlet like drugs and alcohol. I have become self-confident, I know my identity in Christ now. I no longer put my trust in worldly things or in horses or chariots, but I put my trust in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I’m more than an overcomer in Jesus Christ.”

Mike admits it is sometimes hard to walk the “narrow road” that is Christianity.

“The best part about being a Christian is knowing that God is with me on that narrow road and I’m never alone because He will never leave me nor forsake me. And I know I will receive my prize when the race is over.

“Jesus is our only hope and our only way out of an immoral life and without Him there’s no eternal life. For the only way to heaven and to receive eternal life is through Jesus and He promised us that He went to prepare a place for us.”



Mike Bester

Ask Y:

Peter Meadows answers your questions about God

QUESTION: I'M AN ATHEIST – WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT?

THANKS for even asking what I think. And for giving me the opportunity to ask you a few questions myself.



So you are an atheist – a word taken from the Greek and which roughly translates as 'no God'. And you are not alone. There is no shortage of highly intelligent people who have the same conviction.

Which brings me to my first question if I may.

Out of all the vast knowledge existing in the universe, how much of it do you personally possess? What do you reckon - five percent, one percent, perhaps only 0.001 percent? Or even less?

One thing seems sure. However much you know can only be the merest fraction of all there is to be known. Which leads me to other question. Is it remotely possible for God to exist somewhere in that vast area of knowledge that is not yet yours?

Let me put it another way, is there a spider in your room right now? I assume you can't see one, hear one, or smell one. But despite all that, who would be so bold as to say, with absolute certainty, 'This room has no spider'? Because there might just be one outside the limited knowledge they have.

In the same way could, just possibly, God exist beyond your present understanding, knowledge, and experience? What you don't know is vastly bigger than what you do know – and isn't it just possible God could be there too?

If you are honest to say 'yes' then you are not actually an atheist at all but an agnostic – a word that comes from the Greek and simply means 'not knowing'.

And it's a highly respectable name for anyone to have. There is nothing wrong with saying 'I don't know' – unless you are a man driving and needing directions.

So here's my final question – what kind of agnostic are you? I ask because there are two kinds.

There's the ornery agnostic who says, 'Not only do I not know if there is a God, neither do you or anyone. And nor will you know, now or for ever.' It's a kind of open mouth and closed mind approach.

In contrast, the ordinary agnostic says 'I don't know – but I'm open to knowing, should the right information come my way.' If that's you then keep asking the questions – and reading this column month by month – to see what clues there might be.

Peter Meadows is the co-author with Joseph Steinberg of The Book of Y the basis for the eight week Y Course that explores life's biggest questions.

"The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in Him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with His hand."
Psalm 37:23-24

Warlock drug dealer finds the light

Richard Lorenzo Jr was making a hundred grand a month but he still felt empty and depressed. To find fulfillment, he trained to be a warlock.

BY ZOE GEORGE (ABRIDGED)

Richard Lorenzo Jr was raised in Fort Lauderdale to Puerto Rican parents. His mom took him to Catholic mass, but the violence of his neighborhood pulled him down.

"I loved women, I loved partying, I loved drinking and smoking. I loved robbing," he says. "It wasn't because I needed the money. It was because I wanted acceptance from my peers. I'm a product of my environment. If you do these things, you're accepted and they look at you like you're more of a man."

In college, he and his friends were reckless; some even got shot. At his ex-girlfriend's apartment, he had an experience in his sleep in which he fought off a demon by reciting the Lord's Prayer. He remembered the prayer from his childhood.

Thinking he needed a "change of scenery," he moved to New York City, becoming a bouncer at clubs in Manhattan. The change of scenery didn't bring a change of heart.

"I was still robbing, finessing anything – clothing from department stores. I was credit-card-scamming. It was an adrenaline rush," Richard explains. But after the rush came guilt, depression and suicidal broodings.

"I cut off everybody in my life because I was so depressed," he says. "I had so much paranoia and lived in so much chaos that I just cut everybody off. I thought it was better to die."

Despondent one day in his apartment, he heard a supernatural voice break through the darkness. Even though he didn't recognize the voice, it encouraged him, and he decided not to take his life.

Friends were going to jail and getting killed in New York, so Richard decided to flee the city and join the Navy as an air traffic controller. He spent a lot of his deployment in Greece.

In the military, Richard didn't reform. As a matter of fact, he began selling marijuana. Still, he was

depressed, so one day on a beach in Crete, while his friends were in the club, he went to the beach alone to cry out to whatever higher power might be out there.

"I didn't know anything about the Bible. I was crying profusely, just screaming, 'Who are You? What's the purpose of life?'" he recalls.

He heard the same voice he had heard in New York. "I'm going to show you now."

He was stunned. Though the supernatural encounter was overwhelming, he was still very lost. He diversified his trafficking to cocaine, ecstasy, pills and 'lean' (codeine cough syrup mixed with soda).

A friend recommended he try LSD; the psychedelic experience in the spiritual realm would help him become less reckless, he was told. The hallucinatory trip did indeed awaken a spiritual curiosity in him, and he started reading books about the New Age, yoga and spiritual journeys.

Back in the US, Richard became a weed supplier. He trained friends in trafficking and opened sales points across the country. He supplied his buyers through the mail, a risky delivery method because if you get caught, you get charged with additional crimes.

When one shipment of weed disappeared in the mail in 2019, Richard became obsessed with finding the culprit.

He connected with a Haitian voodoo practitioner who promised to unveil the thief. There was only one catch: Richard had to fly to Haiti and meet him in the voodoo mecca Jacmel. Richard was so obsessed over the package that he purchased tickets.

The voodoo priest told Richard he would find out who stole his package when he returned to the US.

The visit had inspired him and Richard now felt called to become a warlock. He would make money divining spirits, he thought.

He bought crystals and beads, bought books, set up altars around his house and dipped in sage baths.

“I loved women, I loved partying, I loved drinking and smoking. I loved robbing.”



Richard is now a pastor of a church in Florida.

He consulted with prominent mediums, shamans, Reiki healers, and psychics. He spent days in a cemetery and prepared himself to be tortured by whipping – all initiation rites.

In his foray into witchcraft, he forgot about the package.

With his girlfriend now pregnant, Richard moved to Florida, to be near family. That's where Christians started popping up in his life.

The first was a multimillionaire at a liquor store who bubbled over with the joy of Jesus. He invited Richard to his house for Bible study and fellowship.

Then Richard's new barber talked to him about Jesus. The coincidences started mounting.

Bored one night, he clicked on a video of a local woman who had been delivered of evil spirits. Richard contacted her and arranged to meet her.

She prayed for Richard and invited him to follow Jesus as his Lord and Savior. He agreed. When he attended church with her, his barber was playing bass guitar in the worship team.

He started reading the Bible and burned all his demonic paraphernalia behind his house in a huge bonfire.

"I came to the revelation that Jesus Christ is the highest power," he says. He describes an encounter with Jesus in his apartment where a light came and knocked him to the ground.

"I curled up in a ball and I was shaking," he recalls. "I was manifesting demons. I was crying profusely, and coughing up. I felt like things were coming out of me, it was in my spirit and my soul, I just knew it was Jesus. I got a peace I'd never felt before. I felt fulfillment."

He stopped watching porn and stopped sleeping with his girlfriend, who was seven months pregnant. A week later, his girlfriend also became a Christian. The pair married not long afterwards and Richard is now a pastor of a church in Florida.

This article was first published on GodReports.com and is used with kind permission

About Crossroads

The Crossroads Prison Ministries mentorship program connects you with mentors who help you study the Bible.

Mentors write to you, answer your questions, share stories from their own lives, help you see how God is speaking to you through His Word and encourage you to continue to grow in your faith.

Through the mentorship program, Crossroads offers more than one dozen different correspondence Bible study courses that each contain up to 14 lessons.

Each course is designed to help you learn more about God and how to follow Him.

If you are interested in joining the program, please fill out the attached application form and mail it to us today!

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STUDENT COMMITMENT

I will finish each lesson I receive in a timely manner and, with the help of my mentors, I will complete each course that I start. I agree that Crossroads may use anything I submit, such as my picture, testimony, writings or artwork, for promotional purposes or to further its mission.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

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 Crossroads Prison Ministries | PO Box 900 | Grand Rapids, MI 49509-0900
 Crossroads Prison Ministries Canada | PO Box 5037 | Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8

The power of unconditional love

BY JOANNA BREAUTL (ABRIDGED)

Joy couldn't comprehend what she was seeing. Her ambitious, self-reliant husband – the man who hadn't cried once in their 25-year marriage – was curled up on the floor, sobbing.

Joy had been excited to bring Mark on their new church retreat to learn more about the Holy Spirit [the unseen presence of God in the believer]. Their new church was breathing fresh life into her walk with God, and she was eager for Mark to experience the same.

"Mark absolutely gave his heart to Christ that day," Joy says. "He was a new man, and all of the friends who knew him before, and all of our kids, now talk about 'old Mark' and 'new Mark.'"

Joy knew the tears spilling down Mark's face were a sign of powerful surrender. But she didn't yet know that Mark was also weeping over a secret he had been carrying for two-and-a-half years.

Just one more time

The youngest of four daughters from a small town in Iowa,

Joy grew up going to church every Sunday. She loved to babysit for local families and help her aunt on her farm. Popular and bubbly, Joy got used to hearing the comment "your mom named you right!" Her name became something to live up to.

"I wanted to be liked," she says. "And to be liked, you need to do the things that others think you should do. I wanted to be the best wife, the best mother. Image was extremely important to me."

When Mark confessed his secret to Joy, her security in being someone others admired evaporated.

In his role as area sales manager at a Fortune 500 company, Mark had been siphoning company funds to support a short-lived business ven-

ture, to take customers on trips, and for personal use.

After he gave his life to Christ at the retreat, Mark had begun begging



Mark and Joy



Mark and Joy met in college.

conspiracy to commit money laundering and – because his crime crossed state lines via the U.S. mail – was sentenced to 16 months in a federal prison.

Joy never expected to sit in a courtroom and absorb facts like these. She never dreamed that the man who shielded her from embarrassment during a card game would expose her to this kind of shame. But all around her sat members of their church small group, a band of people committed to walking beside the couple no matter what.

Held together by love and truth

While Mark was incarcerated, members of their church showed up in ways big and small.

They left gift cards for gas on Joy's porch. They prayed for her and invited her to holiday celebrations and picnics. They wrote letters to Mark and sometimes came along to visit him.

"If I hadn't had my church, if they had left me alone and I had

to go through it all by myself, then I do not know if our marriage could have survived it," Joy admits. "I think I would have divorced him so my image wasn't tarnished. I would have felt so alone."

Joy says that in addition to helping in practical ways, her church

friends loved her with their words, reminding her that she is God's beloved, that Mark has been forgiven by Christ and is loved, that no sin we commit can separate us from God.

"They spoke God's truth to me when I forgot," she says. "And they also continued to help Mark transform into a godly man. That transformation – along with their support – is what saved our marriage."

After Mark's release from prison, the church came through. A friend offered Mark a job at a drug and alcohol treatment center, giving him a ride daily until Mark was allowed to use his own car. Mark became certified as a drug and alcohol counselor and began a new chapter.

Eight years later, Prison Fellowship hired Mark as a prison ministry manager, a role in which he establishes and leads in-prison programming in facilities throughout the Midwest. ●

The original of this story can be found at www.prisonfellowship.org and it is used with kind permission.

Mark and Joy on their wedding day.

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

BY JANICE TEO

Abdul Hadji learned the hard way about fair-weather friends.

The gang of "street brothers" he had bonded with from the time he was 16 and considered to be his family deserted him when he went to jail at 23 for crimes including grievous bodily harm and drug dealing.

When he came out of prison two years later, he found himself alone, a drug addict with nowhere to go and no-one he could count on.

Abdul didn't start out on the wrong side of the tracks. Moving to Western Australia from Somalia with his

mother when he was two, he tells *Challenge News* he had "a great childhood, even though my father was never in the picture". He did his primary education at the Australian Islamic College. When he was 12, his mother sent her increasingly rebellious son to Egypt for three years to be further immersed in Muslim studies and culture.

"I was a good Muslim boy. I prayed five times a day and learned my Koran. I had a lot of freedom, but my life there was quite disciplined because I had family friends who looked after me."

He returned to Western Australia in 2010. Tragedy struck the following year when his mother, who was pregnant and planning to get married, died suddenly. Her baby died too.

Abdul was 16. Heartbroken, lonely and without any parental supervision, Abdul began hanging out with the wrong crowd – the gang was the closest thing to a family he could find.

"I tried to numb myself with drinks and drugs. Nobody would help because the Muslim community frowned on my behaviour."

Soon he was not only taking drugs, but became "a functioning addict" hooked on meth.

"Meth makes you crazy. You lose all your morals, your self-respect. That's what happened to me."

His path became "very dark" as he drifted into more and more crime – drug-dealing, break-ins, robberies and assaults.

His crimes led to several short stints in prison, but he faced a much lengthier sentence in 2017 when he was arrested on a charge of grievous bodily harm.

He spent six months in remand while his case was investigated and was very relieved when he was handed a suspended sentence for the crime.

The time he spent in remand taught him one thing – "I realized I didn't have any real friends or family," he says.



Abdul Hadji

"My gang family deserted me. After my arrest and sentencing I knew I needed to change. I honestly thought I would be dead by 30 if I didn't change my life."

However, without the resources or contacts to change his environment, he drifted as a "functioning addict" for the next five years working odd jobs and still dealing drugs.

Then, while getting high at a friend's house one day, he met Ian, a young Christian who dropped in occasionally.

Ian invited Abdul to church and he agreed to go.

"Why did I go? I wanted to go somewhere where there weren't any drug people. I knew I couldn't change if I stayed in the same environment."

Abdul began going to church. "The music was awesome, the people were friendly. There was no judgement. Also, I saw that Ian was always so joyful and at peace. I wanted what he had – and he said all of that came from Jesus." He was, however, still hopelessly hooked on drugs. So when a friend told him about Teen Challenge, the international Christian rehabilitation organisation, he jumped at the chance and enrolled in its residential program in October 2021.

"When I first got here, I wasn't the nicest person," he admits. "I was hostile and disagreeable."

But within six months Abdul changed completely and committed his life to Jesus Christ.

What made the difference?

"I was loved as I had never been loved before. The people here loved on me without anything to gain. They just accepted me, even with my bad attitude."

"And I learned about Christ. The biggest thing for me was the concept of grace – of His freely given salvation. Growing up my faith had been very works-based. I had to earn God's favour. But Jesus gives it freely. You just have to accept it."

"I saw that same quality in the people here."

Today Abdul is on staff at Teen Challenge. He completed his studies as a support worker and works as a mentor and student leader.

"Jesus has changed everything about me. I no longer carry around all that anger and resentment."

"Today I can think about getting married and having a family one day – it's a miracle that I can actually think of doing that. I used to think I was too far gone to be fixed but that's just not true. God can change your life if you're willing to obey Him and do the work."

"Nothing is wasted in His kingdom. Everything you've been through can be a lesson for other people so they won't have to go through what you did." ●



Mark and Joy on their wedding day.

ENCOUNTER LEADS TO NEW LIFE

BY PAIGE DEUR

Juan Carlos Yahua grew up with an alcoholic, abusive father. He harbored resentment and unforgiveness toward his father after watching him beat his mom for many years.

After his mother was killed when he was 12 years old, Juan Carlos sank into depression and turned to drugs. At 18, he became involved in criminal activity, which led to an 80-month prison sentence for robbery a year later.

Juan Carlos resented God and doubted He was real. In prison, Juan Carlos continued to steal and fight, frequently ending up in solitary confinement. In 2000, during one of many lonely nights in his cell, Juan Carlos was ready to give up on life. But at that very moment, his cell filled with what he now knows was the presence of God. The presence was so profound that he fell to his knees in repentance and asked God for forgiveness.

Around midnight, with tears pouring down his face, he began knocking on his door until a guard appeared at the small window. Juan Carlos shared his strange experience with the guard, who sent a nurse to him. The nurse gave him some anxiety medication and began telling him the story of Saul, who had a dramatic encounter while on his way to Damascus. The nurse explained to Juan Carlos that he had experienced the same thing.

Juan Carlos was moved to a cell with a Brazilian man. This man had tried to share the Gospel [the good news about Jesus dying for us] with him before, but Juan Carlos had dismissed him as a hypocrite.

That night, they did not sleep as Juan Carlos again listened to the man proclaim the Gospel. This time, Juan Carlos had ears to hear. He knew it was time to commit to



Juan Carlos, director of Crossroads Peru, speaks at a youth detention facility more than twenty years after his incarceration.

following Jesus. With a significant portion of his sentence left, Juan Carlos began to look for ways to serve the Lord inside the prison.

But eight months later, in January 2001, he received the shocking news that he had been granted a presidential pardon.

“From that moment, I have not stopped being able to share what God did in my life,” says Juan Carlos. “And from that moment to today, I dedicate myself to sharing the Word in many places... I go especially to prisons, where people need it.”

He continues, “[Twenty-three] years have passed, and today, I continue to preach the Word.”

Used with kind permission of Crossroad Prison Ministries (CPM).

CPM instructors from churches across the world guide students in their walks with Christ through correspondence Bible studies and letters of encouragement. For more information, visit cpministries.org.

I now have hope and peace

BY PAIGE DEUR

When Sam (right) was 13, his mom died, and he had to move to Kuala Lumpur from the Malaysian highlands to live with his aunt's family. He began selling newspapers and cigarettes at a roadside stall to support himself. After a few years, Sam dropped out of school to lead a gang of 30 other boys, including 10 of his classmates. The money and worldly attractions of the gang lifestyle were great temptations. To protect himself and his gang, he smuggled a gun across the Malaysia-Thailand border. For 15 years, Sam rose through the ranks of one of the biggest gang networks in Malaysia.

Life as he knew it came to a halt when one of his debt collection meetings went awry and a debtor refused to pay back his loan.

Enraged, Sam pulled out his gun, fired warning shots into the wall, and commanded the man to empty his safe.

“My actions in those few minutes turned my life upside down and led to me being put behind bars,” Sam says.

For two years, while Sam waited for his trial in Pudu Jail, he lived in a small, crowded cell infested with lice and bedbugs. He and his 10 cellmates had to take turns sleeping, and the bucket they used for a toilet was only emptied once a day.

“Awaiting the date of my trial was the most painful time in my life... I had never appreciated the freedom I had until I was placed behind bars,” Sam shares.

In the early days of his incarceration, Sam held on to the hope that he would be bailed out by his gang network. But after he received his life sentence, he sank into self-pity and hopelessness.

Shortly after being transferred to Kajang Prison, he was invited to join a Bible study.

At this point, he had little experience with or interest in Christianity.



One of the first glimpses he had of Scripture had been some torn pages that covered the bucket in his cell at Pudu Jail.

After a year of attending Bible studies, he recognized the value of those pages, asked God for forgiveness, and turned his life over to Christ.

Hungry to learn more, Sam read the Bible from cover to cover four times that year.

“I had to be brought down to my knees before I could see that there was Someone far greater than

Sam Kian Seng. My pride dissipated, and I began to see a great light,” he recalls.

Although he was still facing life in prison, Sam watched his life transform.

“As God changed my life, my passion to serve Him grew,” he says. He stepped in to help lead worship and disciple newcomers at the prison.

In 2016, Sam was surprised to hear that an application he had submitted for a royal pardon was accepted. After 28 years in prison, at 59 years old, Sam was released on good behavior.

After his release, he quickly looked for ways to share the Gospel that had transformed his life. One of the ways he has done this is through a book he published in Malaysia, *Kajang Redemption*, in which he shares his story.

“I am certain that the things that happened in my life were God's lessons for me, preparing me to face the future,” Sam explains.

“I believe God has worked all things out for good according to His perfect plan and timing, and He continues to do so. I look forward to seeing what He has in store for me ahead.”

Sam now participates in the Crossroads Malaysia discipleship program and is passionate about helping those who have lost their way like he did.

Used with kind permission of Crossroad Prison Ministries (CPM).

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“My pride dissipated and I began to see a great light.”

I got my life back

It's not surprising that Derek and Molly Schaefer found each other: They both grew up in Vancouver, Washington, and attended the same schools. After high school, they realized they had a lot in common and began a relationship. Unfortunately, one of their shared interests was partying.

When Derek and Molly first got together, they were already heavy drinkers. Alcohol was their way to unwind and have fun—and, for Molly, a way to cope after her abusive upbringing. Derek had also gotten into hard drugs during a brief stint in the military. As a pair, he and Molly only fuelled each other's habits.

“We were functional alcoholics,” Molly says.

“We were doing the bare minimum really well, trying to raise my two step-children and our son Zyan amidst the dysfunction,” Derek adds, “but behind closed doors, the drinking was terrible. We would just fight.”

For several years, the Schaefers struggled to nurture a growing family while sinking deeper into addiction. Their unfaithfulness and abuse toward each other worsened. Over time, their relationship was tearing at the seams.

Recalling those years, Molly says they were “barely surviving.”

Their fighting continued to escalate. One night, Molly called the police. Derek was sitting in the living room about to get high when cops in full SWAT gear kicked the door in to arrest him.

When Derek landed in Clark County Jail, he already had a history of violence and knew he was facing prison time. He also faced a hard truth: His life had spiralled out of control. His family was falling apart.

In jail, Derek stayed in contact with his dad, who encouraged him and offered to send him Christian books.

“I wanted nothing to do with Jesus,” Derek says. “I wanted to find some other way through this.”

Bored with limited reading material, Derek reluctantly opened a Bible to pass the time. He read about Job's struggle in the Old Testament—a story he remembered learning as a kid in church. But in jail, Derek says, “it hit me way different.”

“It wasn't just a story, it was a struggle,” Derek says. “It was what I was going through. I remember thinking, ‘Job didn't even deserve it. I deserve it.’”

Alone in his cell, Derek fell to his knees weeping. He needed Christ in his life. Derek started a Bible study behind bars and began mentoring others as he grew in his faith. He attended chapel services and surrounded himself with Christian community.

Still, Derek struggled with the separation from his family.

For some time, he did not have consistent contact with Molly and their young son Zyan, partly due to mandatory no-contact orders. Even after those orders were lifted, their connection was limited to phone calls. Molly wrestled with resentment toward Derek. Taking her child to see him sounded like a hassle. Derek understood that the pain of their situation, and of his actions, ran deep for his loved ones. He savoured every phone call, however brief.

One day his two-year-old son asked him, “Just because you're far away, does that mean ... Do you still love mom?”

Every bittersweet phone call reminded Derek of how he longed to make things right. He got involved with Prison Fellowship Angel Tree, which provides a gift, the Gospel, and a personal message of love to children on behalf of their incarcerated parents. Derek knew he needed to sign up Zyan for Angel Tree.

Zyan jumped up and down when he opened his Angel Tree gift from dad.

When Derek was released, he walked out of prison closer to the Lord and to his family—even though he hadn't seen them in two years.

“I never got to see my son the whole time I was incarcerated,” Derek says. “God didn't grant me that then. God granted me a much greater moment.”

On Derek's first night home, Zyan ran across the room and jumped into Derek's arms. “Daddy!” Zyan cried. “Don't ever leave me again.”

Derek says it was one of the greatest moments of his life.

“It was just realizing too how important it is to be a dad, how much of a blessing it is,” says Derek.

“It's work, it's stressful, and it's frustrating at times, but it's such a blessing. Just to sit there and watch him, it made all the waiting, all the struggle, all the tearful nights, just worth it. Because here he was, and it was awesome.”

Soon, Derek and Molly sought counselling to strengthen their relationship and help them build a healthy home.

Today they are married and have welcomed twins into their family. Derek is working toward a certification in Christian counselling, aside from his day job as an electrician. While ministry may be his calling, Derek counts family as his greatest gift. “I want to use what God's gifted me with,” says Derek.

“[I] got my life back, which I thought was gone. I knew I'd get pieces of it back, but somehow, He gave me the whole thing back.

“It's been hard work and a blessing.”

The original of this story can be found at www.prisonfellowship.org

and it is used with kind permission.



We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. — ROMANS 6:4 NIV

WORDS FOR THE HEART

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Welcome to this Bible Study. Read slowly what I have written. If you have a Bible, look up the reference verses given, and allow the Holy Spirit to minister to your soul through them. – ALAN BAILEY

Mark 2:18-3:12

INTRODUCTION

WE have already seen that Mark wants us to see that the Lord's ministry was accompanied by miracles. Chapter two records the healing of the paralytic man, much to the surprise of those present. These miracles were not just a display of power, but they were proof that Jesus' claim to come from the Father in heaven was true. As well, the wonder works taught truths. For instance, physical sight for the blind pointed to spiritual sight for the spiritually blind. There was a reason behind all that Jesus did. It is our joy to read on and appreciate more about Him.

Chapter 2, verses 18-20

"Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, 'How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?' Jesus answered, 'How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.'"

There were certain people who followed John the Baptist, and others who followed the Pharisees (Jewish leaders), putting aside time to go without food and to pray. The question seemed to contain the idea that Jesus' disciples were not as sincere as these others. Jesus explains that while the bridegroom is present, guests are glad, not solemn. Of course, He is referring to Himself as the bridegroom who will one day be taken away.

Verses 21, 22 *"No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins."*

Here are two simple lessons. New cloth sewn to old cloth doesn't work. Neither does new wine work with old wineskins. What is Jesus driving at? He is saying that the religious observances of the Jews were old and out of date. Something new was now in place. The old must be set aside.

Verses 23, 24 *"One Sabbath, Jesus was going through the grain-fields, and as His disciples walked along, they began to pick up some heads of grain. The Pharisees said to Him, 'Look, why*



IMAGE: BIBLEPICS.CO

are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"

Walking through grain-fields and picking ears of corn was quite lawful according to the Old Testament. (The disciples must have been feeling a bit hungry.) But the point the Pharisees were making was that picking grain was working, which is not allowed on the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week.

Verses 25-28 *"He answered, 'Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? In the time of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is only lawful for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.' Then He said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.'"*

Jesus points out that there are times when human need is more important than religious observations. David was much respected by the Jews and yet he ate bread not meant for him. Also, the Sabbath is not more important than people. It has its purpose and the Son of Man (Jesus) is Lord over it.

Chapter 3 Verses 1, 2 *"Another time, He went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Some of them were looking for a reason*

to accuse Jesus, so they watched Him closely to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath."

It seems that Jesus not only had faithful followers, but there were others who criticised and opposed Jesus on many occasions. They wanted to find some fault, or wrongdoing so that they could condemn Him. Jesus was aware of this of course.

Verses 3-6 *"Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, 'Stand up in front of everyone.' Then Jesus asked them, 'Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?' But they remained silent. He looked around them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus."*

Obviously, the Lord was not cowed by the presence of Pharisees. He made His move in front of everyone. His question about the way the Sabbath should be used had an obvious answer. Everyone knows that good should be done on any day of the week. But they would not reply which caused the Lord to be angry.

They were stubborn, having no pity for the disabled man, and acting dishonestly. All present saw the

miracle. The hand was restored. Again, showing that Jesus was who He said He was, the Lord from heaven. But here is an amazing thing. Having seen a miracle which would have blessed the man in a wonderful way, these Jews wanted to get rid of Jesus. He was a threat to them and their whole outlook on life. They claimed to be holy but were plotting something that was evil.

Verses 7, 8 *"Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. When they heard all He was doing, many people came to Him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon."*

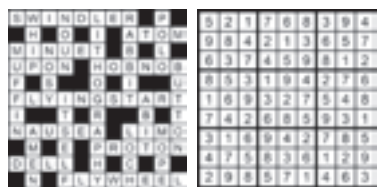
The lake mentioned is Galilee, around which much of the ministry of Christ took place. But here we learn of His growing reputation. People from all around, and some from fairly long distances were coming to observe Jesus, but perhaps mainly to obtain healing. It is clear that the miracles of Jesus actually happened and were completely genuine. Otherwise, why would people go to so much trouble to see Him; not a few but crowds.

Verses 9-12 *"Because of the crowd, He told His disciples to have a small boat ready for Him, to keep the people from crowding Him. For He had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch Him. Whenever the evil spirits saw Him, they fell down before Him and cried out, 'You are the Son of God.' But He gave them strict orders not to tell who He was."*

We can see that if Jesus was in a boat near the edge of the water, He could still speak to the people, but the people could not press upon Him. It must have been thought that even touching Jesus would give them healing. It appears that there was a rise in the activity of evil spirits (demons) during the time of Jesus' ministry. They seemed to know who He was and they feared Him. Why He told them not to reveal Him, we can't be sure.

Conclusion

Mark's Gospel compels us to see the power of the life of the Lord Jesus. No one can be compared to Him. No one should ignore Him right now, seeing He is alive and He is Lord. Let us come to Him with all our needs just as people did of old.



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 <i>"Everyone has sinned. Nobody is good enough because God's standards are perfect" (Romans 3:23)</i>	ADMIT
GOD'S REMEDY / SOLUTION:	Jesus died on the cross <i>"God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8)</i>	BELIEVE
OUR RESPONSE:	Trust Jesus by receiving Him <i>"To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12)</i>	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 fellow prisoner who is a Christian, or your Prison Chaplain.
2. Ask a friend or family member to bring you a Bible. Ask the Prison Chaplain to sign you up to a correspondence discipleship program.
3. Keep praying. Talk to God anywhere, about anything. He is always listening, and you don't need a formula.
4. Find out if your prison has church services and attend them regularly.

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

I have prayed the prayer [ABOVE]

* Please check and write clearly *

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

Send to: Challenge Literature Fellowship, 2634 Drake Road, Lebanon Ohio, 45036

All overseas enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

WHEN FAITH COMES SLOWLY

BY FAY FOSTER

HOW easy, or difficult, do you find it to believe that Jesus is alive, that He rose from the dead, that He is with you and for you? For some people, faith comes easily. They might find some things hard to understand, but they don't doubt that they are true.

For others, faith is something that comes slowly. We are cautious. We don't want to believe just because we're told to. We need to check things out for ourselves, to get evidence before we can believe.

Not convinced

After Jesus had come back to life, He appeared to the disciples in the room where they were hiding. But one of the disciples wasn't there. That disciple was Thomas, also known as Didymus. When he arrived, the other disciples said to him, "We've seen the Master!"

Thomas wasn't so easily convinced. "Unless I see the mark of the nails in His hands," he said, "and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into His side, I'm not going to believe!"

As a result of this conversation, we sometimes hear Thomas called "the doubter". But to be fair to Thomas, he hadn't seen what the others had seen. It's never the same hearing it from someone else. A week later, the disciples were again in the house and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were shut. And again, Jesus appeared and stood in the middle of them.

Proof given

"Peace be with you," He said. Then He spoke directly to Thomas. "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe!" We sometimes think that God is going to be angry at us if we don't just believe. But here we see Jesus giving Thomas exactly the proof he needed. And Thomas was convinced. "My Lord and my God!" he said.

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen; and yet have believed." (John 20:24-29)

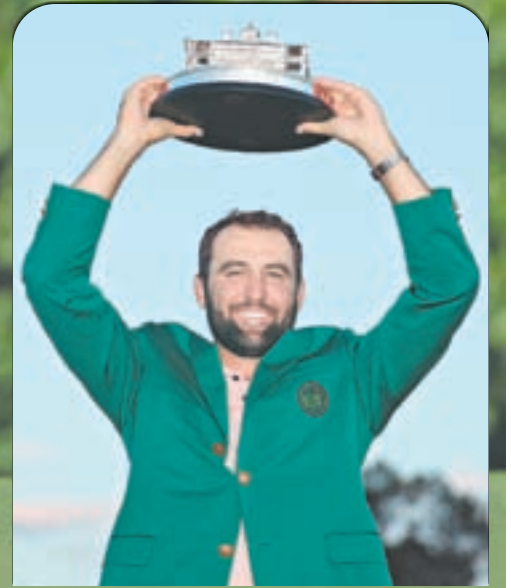
There is definitely an advantage for those who believe easily. But for those of us for whom faith comes more slowly, when we look for evidence of God with open, honest hearts and minds, He will supply it. We don't have to leave our brains at the door when we think about God. He wants us to love Him with our whole heart and MIND and soul.

Whatever amount of faith you have, live according to that. We don't have to pretend to believe without questioning. When you use your mind to try to figure out the truth, God absolutely approves. Please do ask all the questions you need to ask. Ask God, ask a pastor, go to Bible study groups and check out the Bible. Every effort to understand will help us examine God's truth and to grow our faith.

This article was first published in Salvos Magazine and is used with kind permission.

Scottie Scheffler of the United States plays his second shot on the 11th hole during the final round of the 2024 Masters Tournament at Augusta National Golf Club on April 14, 2024 in Augusta, Georgia. (Photo by David Cannon/Getty Images)

INSET: Scottie holds aloft the 2024 Masters trophy. (Photo by Warren Little/Getty Images)



NOT DEFINED BY THE WIN

World number one golfer and now two-time Masters champion Scottie Scheffler says his “identity is secure forever”. But his identity isn’t in winning – though he admits he does enjoy that – it’s in the fact that his “victory was secure on the cross”.

The 27-year-old won his second Masters Tournament in three years on April 14 and says he’s “trying to glorify God” through his golf career, giving all the credit to the Lord when speaking with reporters after his wins.

This is something he does a lot, having also won back-to-back Players Championships in 2023 and 2024.

When asked how he balances his desire to golf competitively without letting it define him as a person, he says, “That all goes back to my faith... The reason why I play golf is because I’m trying to glorify God and all that He’s done in my life.”

Before his first Masters win, Scottie’s wife, Meredith, reminded him that his “identity isn’t a golf score”.

“If you win this golf tournament today, if you lose this golf tournament by 10 shots, if you never win another golf tournament again, I’m still going to love you, you’re still going to be the same person; Jesus loves you, and nothing changes,” Scottie recounts his wife’s reassurance.

“All I’m trying to do is

glorify God, and that’s why I’m here, and that’s why I’m in this position.”

Scottie says his wife regularly prays for him. “Every day when we go out there, Meredith always prays for peace, because that’s what I want to feel on the golf course, is peace and have fun and just feel [God’s] presence,” he says.

Scottie says his wife helps him to remember: “God is in control, and the Lord is leading me, and if today’s my time, then it’s my time.”

Scottie says he doesn’t expect to win.

“You don’t expect things to come to you in this life, you just do the best that you can with the hand you’re dealt and just go from there. I never really thought I was that good at golf, so I just kept practising and working hard.”

Scottie’s caddie, Ted Scott, is a veteran in the game who was on the

bag for Bubba Watson for nearly 15 years previously.

Ted had been planning to retire until he got Scottie’s call, and knows the Augusta Course better than almost any one.

“You know, I can’t speak highly enough of Ted as a person, and as a caddie,” Scottie told a press conference after a win.

“I respect him so much just as a person. He’s such a fun guy to be around, he’s a man of faith and I love him. I can’t say enough about him. The qualities you look for in a person, Ted embodies pretty much all of them.”

One of the biggest reasons Scottie wanted to work with Ted was because they’re both Christians. They first met through a Bible study about a year before they teamed up.

The caddie told Sports Spectrum Podcast in 2018, “People a lot of times think, well, if you become a Christian, God’s just gonna make everything easy for you, and that’s not the case.

“But having the God of the universe, the Creator, on your side just makes things a lot easier to deal with. And the principles of the Bible are something that, when you use them, you can see it manifest in your life.”

“[Ted] keeps things loose,” Scottie says.

“We have a lot of fun together. I respect him a lot as a person, and I respect his work ethic as a caddie. And so, for me, it’s been a pretty easy relationship so far, just because I respect him so much.”

Scottie believes it is faith, family and friends that give his life meaning.

“I’m a Christian guy, so that’s

important to me,” he said in a 2019 interview with PGATour.com.

“But even if you’re not a Christian, it is important to spend life with people you enjoy. If you don’t have close, quality friends, I don’t think whatever you’re doing is important. So that would be my most important advice to someone. Find something you enjoy doing, and enjoy doing it with other people.”

The person Scottie enjoys spending the most time with is his best friend since high school, his wife, Meredith, whom he married in 2020.

Meredith told Golf Digest: “At the beginning of high school I always thought he had a super humble ambiance about him, that he was just a really down-to-earth guy that doesn’t take himself too seriously. Even when he had amazing accomplishments, that wasn’t the most important thing about him.”

Speaking to reporters after his recent Masters win, Scottie admitted he was keen to return home to Meredith, especially as they are expecting their first child in a few weeks. Before the competition he even shared that if she went into labour mid-tournament, he’d leave the Masters, even if he was in the lead!

“**I’m just out here trying to do my best.**”

One of the regular golfers at Scottie’s home golf course of Royal Oaks Country Club in Dallas concurred: “As good a golfer as Scottie is, he is an even better person and the membership here certainly knows that.”

“My faith affects all aspects of my life, not just my life on the golf course,” Scottie explained.

“The Lord has given me a skill and I’m trying to use it for His glory. Outside of that, I’m just out here trying to do my best.”



Scottie and Meredith Scheffler married in 2020.

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