

JESUS TAKE THE WHEELS

BY JODY BENNETT

John Green was your typical Kiwi bloke. He had married young at 20, worked as a pipe welder, sported several tattoos, had two little boys and played rugby on the weekends. He drank moderately, but his real vice was marijuana.

In 1987 he moved the family to Perth, where they later bought a house; but in 1989 their world was upended never to be typical again.

John and his wife Christine had been talking about his rugby playing and how many times he had been injured. Christine was worried he would do himself some permanent damage, and John had agreed it was time to hang up his boots. His next game, on 27 May, 1989, would indeed be his last. And it was also the last time he held his wife, or picked up his kids, or walked.

John played flanker, and during one scrum in that match he went down and didn't get back up. He had broken his spine at his C4 vertebra. He was paralysed from the neck down at the age of 27, when his boys were just 3 and 7.

An ambulance was called, Christine left the children with kind strangers and rushed to hospital with her husband. There the prognosis was dire – they were told John would never come home, would have



John Green in his wheelchair and (inset) John as a young, healthy man. In the background is a painting that John painted later in life, holding the brush in his mouth.

decided that his first breath off the ventilator would be for God, the next for his family.

Seven months after his injury, John did come home, to the delight of his family: a broken body on the outside, but a brand new man on the inside. His father-in-law baptized him about a year later by pouring water on John's head, because immersing his paralysed body in water was too terrifying for him.

In the early years it took five times to transfer John in and out of the car and bed for the family to go to church every Sunday.

They adapted their home to accommodate John's wheelchair and hospital bed. Christine's parents came to support them in the early stages and her dad, Arthur, counselled the couple and helped them to grow in their faith.

Christine, and Claire, one of John's carers, described to *Challenge News* the enormous change that came from John's spiritual conversion. Where before he had been a strict, quiet man, self-centred, aggressive (although not physically so), and drawn to a bad crowd; now John rarely got angry, thought always of others, and exuded grace and strength in the midst of all his trials.

● Turn to page 2

to be institutionalized and would probably not live longer than about 10-12 years.

On 1 June, still in hospital, John went into respiratory distress and had to be on a ventilator for a month. During that time a second change happened in his life that was just as profound as his paralysis. He called out to Jesus, asking God to forgive

his sins and use what was left of his life for His purposes.

Christine also came back to her faith during those trying months. She had been raised with a good knowledge of Christianity as the daughter of a pastor and given her heart to God when about 16 or 17 at a Christian camp in Rotorua, New Zealand.

John and Christine met at that camp and he had also made a commitment to Jesus at the time, but had not really taken it seriously and had later gotten involved with some dodgy friends who got him heavily involved in marijuana smoking.

Now, when his life was on the line and he was struggling to breathe, John rededicated himself to God and

Youth truth
Page 9 & 10

Fun for Kids
Pages 5,6,7

BACK PAGE

ULTIMATE FRISBEE
ROSIE WOODBRIDGE

Was it David or Daniel with the lions?

BY NICO BOUGAS

THE phrase, "God helps those that help themselves", is often quoted as a favourite Bible verse (especially amongst pickpockets and shoplifters.) If you thought that this non-Biblical verse comes from the Bible you are in good company. According to an official survey, 82 percent of Americans thought so as well.

We get a sense of the widespread Biblical ignorance when we find that fewer than half of all adults can name the four gospels. Many Christians cannot identify more than two or three of the disciples. According to data from the Barna Research Group, 60 percent of the population can't



name even five of the Ten Commandments. And at least 12 percent of adults believe that Joan of Arc was Noah's wife. Another survey of students graduating from high school revealed that over 50 percent thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife. And many thought that the Sermon on the Mount was preached by Billy Graham. Truly, although the Bible is still a best seller, we have become a generation of biblical illiterates. Early on in his ministry, evangelist Billy Graham said, "When the Bible goes down anarchy and confusion will take its place. This will be followed by a condition such as the world has never known. This generation has to face the appalling fact that it is either back to the Bible or back to the jungle." We neglect the study of the Bible at our peril. The Bible makes it clear that the way to progress and develop your spiritual life is to spend time

studying and meditating on the Word of God. When Joshua took over from Moses to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land he was given this advice: "Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do." (Joshua 1.8) No book has had so much impact on the world as the Bible. George Washington said, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible." Former British Prime Minister, William Gladstone said, "I have known 95 great men of the world in my time and of these 87 were followers of the Bible." Abraham Lincoln said, "This Book is God's greatest gift to mankind. All the good things we know about God are communicated to us through this Book."

● Turn to page 2

Jesus take the wheels

• From page 1

However, despite it all, he refused to wallow in self-pity; he was the rock and centre of his home, and had a passion to give back to the community. He helped the Armadale shire audit the wheelchair accessibility of their buildings. He joined the board of a Christian non-profit that helps the disabled and elderly with home help. He ran cake stalls to fundraise for various causes and — using his mouth stick — learnt to paint and did puzzles on his iPad, read books and kept busy online.

Before the accident John and Christine had been private people and John had not been a big talker. Now, their home had a constant stream of carers and medical professionals coming and going, and John had to learn to use his words to express what he needed and how he felt. It was a huge adjustment for the whole family. They had no privacy and John's sons suffered greatly,

since much of Christine's time was taken up caring for her husband. And she also had to go back to work full-time eventually to support the family.

Claire says that she and her fellow carers loved looking after John because he was always so interested in them, counselling them through problems, singing with them to loud worship music and constantly apologising for being a bother. On those occasions when he did have an angry outburst due to his pain, he was always so remorseful and repentant. He was funny and kind, and very involved in the lives of his six grandchildren (Sadly, he just missed meeting his seventh).

"He was a wonderful person. You enjoyed being in his presence. He did more for us as carers than we

could ever do for him. He was just so gracious, so sweet. God used him greatly," explains Claire, who looked after him for nine years. "In the last year or so, he talked a lot about going to heaven and getting his new body and dancing."

"I loved him," says Christine, still tearful. "We were childhood sweethearts. The disability did not define him. He was such a source of strength."

Now that John has died, those who knew him miss him terribly. After a year of excruciating pain which none of the medications could ease, his body tired and bloated from the multiple pills he took daily, John and his family decided, after much prayer, that he would stop using the machine that kept him breathing at night and let God decide when he

“ He did more for us as carers than we could ever do for him ”



Claire (far left) and some of John's other carers.



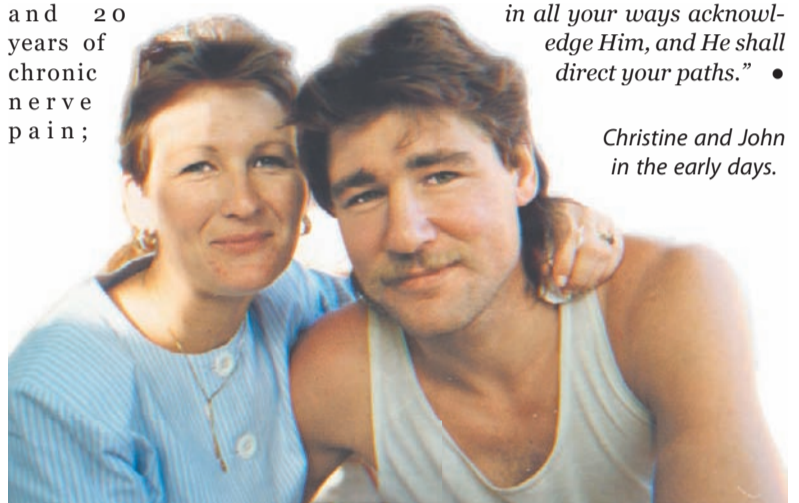
Christine and John near the end of his life.

would die. A few days later, on 18 December, 2022, John, aged 60, passed peacefully away in his sleep and woke up in heaven.

He had endured 33 and a half years of quadriplegia, and 20 years of chronic nerve pain;

outlived the doctor's predictions by decades and left a profoundly positive impression on so many people.

His favourite Bible verse was Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." •



Christine and John in the early days.

Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

- ACROSS**
 1 Herb or tree
 3 Skewered meat
 5 Lebanon flag symbol
 9 Two-toned whales
 13 Period of pregnancy
 15 Small European deer
 16 Small insect, midge
 17 Trash container, e.g.
 18 Military facility
 21 Archaeological undertakings
 23 Insect killer
 26 Small minded
 27 Laughing African carnivore
 29 Hard-to-detect amount
 30 Total, as a car

1				2		3				4
5	6	7	8			9	10	11	12	
		13				14				
15								16		
					17					
18	19		20				21		22	
		23		24		25				
26						27				28
29						30				

- DOWN**
 1 Plastic for making pipes
 2 Fruity pastry
 3 Half hitch or granny
 4 Suburban transport
 6 I problem?
 7 Sunken (eyes) (4-3)
 8 Beast of burden
 10 Offshore oil structure
 11 Share a secret
 12 Carrier to Osaka
 14 It might be airtight
 15 Bone; to tease
 19 Forest swinger
 20 Founded: Abbr.
 21 Do it yourself
 22 ___-X
 24 Compose e-mail
 25 Mess hall meal
 26 Cooking container
 28 Request information

SOLUTIONS PAGE 11



"Want my pickle?"

					5		2	9
			7		9	3		
			8			4		
3							1	5
	7	6				2	8	
4	1							3
		5			7			
		7	6		3			
2	9		4					

Was it David or Daniel with the lions?

• From page 1

Napoleon Bonaparte said, "This is no mere Book but a living creature with a power to conquer all that would oppose it."

And then there were the doubters. Voltaire said, "Within 100 years you will only find the Bible in museums" — today his own house is the office for the Geneva Bible Society.

The American agnostic, Robert Ingersoll, predicted that within 15 years the Bible would be in a morgue — not long afterwards he was in a morgue and the Bible is still a best seller.

It is time for us to get back to the Bible. It is time for us to read, study and meditate on the Word of God. It is sharper than any two-edged sword; it is alive and powerful; it is like a fire that burns up the chaff in your life, and a sword that pierces into your inmost soul until you are no longer reading the Bible but the Bible is reading you. Along with your other good intentions — to lose weight or cut down on your alcohol consumption — why not make a positive goal of reading through the Bible in a year? It could just be the most life-changing thing you ever do.

Death without fear

BY BRANDON MARKETTE

IF there exists one experience that, throughout history and around the world binds mankind together, it is death. Death is something we all must face — no exercise or diet regimen, no meditation technique, no amount of money can avoid it. It is the great equaliser.

The finality of death, coupled with the uncertainty of an afterlife, results in fear for many. We see it all around us as we try so hard to stop the aging process. We hope that the next pill, the next surgery, or the next genetic discovery will be the key to extending our lives.

Not everyone, however, faces death with fear and uncertainty. A few years ago a friend of mine faced this faceless enemy. At 16 he was diagnosed with stomach cancer. The doctors tried every treatment at their disposal, all to no avail. For a year and a half, Rob was in three different hospitals in two different cities. In that time he lost 90 pounds and all of his hair. He was an inpatient and an outpatient. Sadly, after 18 months, nothing remained to be done for him.

Eventually, Rob's doctors sent him home to try to enjoy the last days of his life. At this point, I was horribly sad, afraid of losing a dear friend and mad at God. I was mad that God did not heal him. I was also mad that Rob would miss out on so much.

Amazingly, Rob did not share my anger. In fact, he seemed to be meeting this horrible fate with the anxiety one might experience on a first date. To this day, when I think of

his peace in the face of the storm, I am in awe.

His peace was not merely an inborn, laid-back look at life. Nor did it spring from a devil-may-care attitude. Instead it came from a decision Rob made only months before the initial diagnosis. With that decision, he found peace with God.

The peace Rob knew, he found in the Bible. In the book of Romans, he read that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). He also read, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:23).

Jesus is the one Isaiah referred to when he wrote, "And His name will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). The Prince of Peace came to Earth so that each person might have peace with God. Rob decided to put his trust in Jesus, and this peace became very evident.

We must each decide if we will accept God's gift of eternal life. If we reject God's gift, we are condemned to spiritual death — eternal separation from God. If we do accept, however, then eternal life is ours.

While this does not mean we will escape physical death, we can face death a lot easier knowing that it leads to eternal life in heaven. This is the truth which Rob discovered, and the ensuing relationship with God made all the difference in the world. This is the truth I have discovered, and the relationship makes all the difference every day of my life.

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

Grief and booze nearly ruined me

Benjamin Budde had hit rock bottom. Years of drug and alcohol abuse had left him lonely and unfulfilled. Now, lying on a borrowed couch in an apartment with no electricity, he looked through a green tub of odds and ends – everything he had left from his childhood. He was searching for something to give his heart peace and rest. And he found it.

In an article he wrote for *Christianity Today*, Benjamin shares that he had always loved music, viewing it as his ticket to belonging. He grew

up in a Christian home in Ohio, USA, and, when his church needed a bass player, he was quick to fill the spot.

“Wielding a modest, hand-me-down bass guitar and a pocket tuner, my love of music began to bloom,” Benjamin recalls. “Finally, I had found somewhere to fit in.”

Benjamin then started playing outside of the church, finding himself in places where people were drinking and taking drugs.

“Before long, I was joining in and enjoying this new lifestyle,” Benjamin admits. When he was 18, Benjamin’s alcohol use got him into trouble with the police, which in turn got him kicked out of the church band.

“That was when I started playing in bars and nightclubs. As the shows grew bigger, so did my habit of drinking and getting high.”

When Benjamin was 20, he found out that his mother had breast cancer.

“Nine months later she died,” he shares. “On the day of her funeral, I got a bag of dope and a bottle of whiskey

and jammed all night.”

He wondered how his Jesus-loving mother could have suffered such an unjust fate.

While he had believed in God since he was a child, that all changed now. He blamed God for his mother’s death and decided he could no longer believe in Him.

In the midst of his grief, Benjamin’s addiction deepened.

“For nearly 10 years, I was popping pills, consuming whiskey like water, and snorting or smoking anything that would get me higher. I was in the process of losing myself, my friends, and eventually almost everything I had. Music might have been my ticket into the party, but my rock-and-roll lifestyle ensured that I was continually getting kicked out. It was hardly unusual for me to fall off the stage during a show because of my drugged stupor.”

Despite this, Benjamin’s band was given some incredible music opportunities, including working with blues harp player Arthur Williams, and opening for Chuck Berry, credited by many as the father of rock and roll.

“I was over-the-moon excited to meet these icons. But the experience changed me in ways I didn’t expect. As I looked into their eyes, I somehow realised that music wouldn’t ever fill my emptiness.”

“**I somehow realised that music wouldn’t ever fill my emptiness.**”

Benjamin was now abusing morphine, OxyContin, and heroin. At the bottom of a downward spiral, he called a long-time friend, Missy – the woman who would one day become his wife.

“I told her I was sick. She spoke life into me! Sharing the gospel, she told me that Jesus has a plan and purpose for my life, but that I needed to quit drinking and drugging.”

Benjamin wondered if Jesus could offer the fulfilment drugs no longer brought. It was then he searched through the green box from his childhood.

“Underneath a chessboard with no pieces sat my mom’s Bible, with the

Benjamin Budde



Benjamin Budde and his wife Missy

cover worn off and her handwriting all over it.”

The next morning, after partying all night and waking up full of remorse and sadness, he had a new conviction, as though he had seen a light in the darkness.

“I started asking Jesus to forgive me for all the sinful things I had ever said, for everything I had done to alienate my family, friends, and all those around me. The amazing thing is that I felt this forgiveness change me from the inside out.”

As he started reading his mother’s Bible, Benjamin saw himself described in certain passages. “*Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes?*” (Proverbs 23:29).

He read on: “*Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler. Whoever is led astray by them is not wise*” (Proverbs 20:1).

“The verse that really stopped me in my tracks was Proverbs 4:19: *The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.*’ I realised I was stumbling through life because I was always trying to fit in ... Drinking and drugging to win approval from the crowd. But all it did was push me down an increasingly dark path ... I cried out to Jesus, and He saved me. He also started changing me by the power of His Spirit.”

Benjamin’s craving for drugs or alcohol was now replaced with a new desire to pray and read the Bible.

Benjamin has been married to Missy for 11 years. Together they run an event called Night of Hope, a concert geared toward helping and encouraging people facing all types of addiction.

“We have seen the mighty hand of God moving in people’s lives to change and rearrange them from hopelessness to new life in Jesus Christ.”

Benjamin has also written two books called *Pathways* and *War a Good Warfare: Fighting the Battles Within* as well as a children’s book, *The Tale of Louie the Lion Tamer*. •

Hindu boy’s big dreams fulfilled

Bhimrao Thavare was a small boy with a big dream. He wanted to be a secondary school teacher in India, where he was born.

As there was no university in his village, Bhimrao had to go to a Christian boarding school to get his degree.

He went with high hopes – and his parents’ stern admonition not to “fall prey to Christian influence or give up my Hindu faith and practices.”

Bhimrao didn’t think there was much chance of him changing religion – he had plenty of other gods to believe in and had never heard of Jesus Christ.

He achieved his degree in four years, then worked at the college for another year.

During his time there he attended chapel and Sunday services, as was expected of him.

As a Hindu, Bhimrao believed that good moral character and good works were enough to earn him a place in heaven.

“But as five years passed, I gained knowledge of a new God steadily and slowly – this ‘Jesus Christ,’” he tells *Challenge News*.

“I learned about Him through Bible reading and attending prayer times, singing hymns and listening to sermons. He was completely different to what I had imagined.”

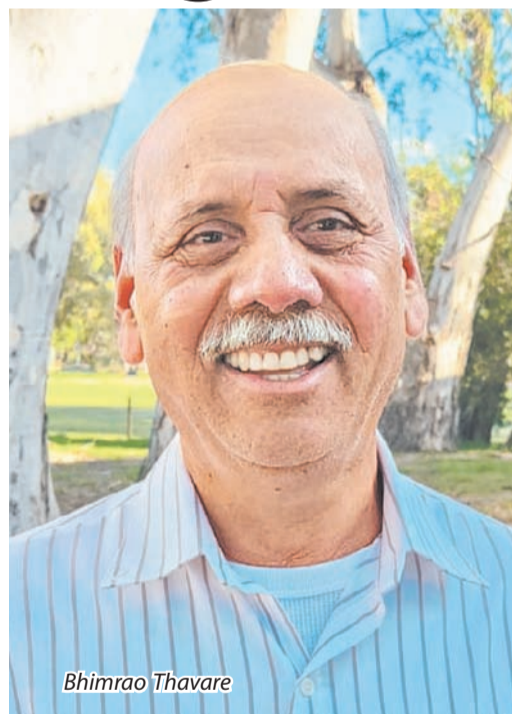
The more he learned about Jesus, the more fascinated he became with Him. “I wanted to know and worship this one God instead of running after many other gods and ideologies.

“I learned that Jesus died on the cross, shedding His blood to take away human sins. I never heard it before that someone can die on my behalf.”

Bhimrao felt a great internal struggle. “There were two forces battling in my inner being as if light was fighting against darkness – God’s kingdom against the kingdom of the world.

“I knew that it was impossible to sail in two boats but my self-righteousness, education, strong allegiance to Hinduism and community status held me back from accepting Jesus Christ even though I had started to appreciate this new way, truth and life that He offered.”

The struggle continued until he heard a message based on Mark 8: 36-37 – “*What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his*



Bhimrao Thavare

own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

“Those words pricked my heart,” Bhimrao shares. “I had no answers to these questions. I did not want to lose my soul. I needed someone to qualify and save my soul and spirit so that I could enter heaven.”

“I realised that I needed to resolve the dilemma once and for all – was I for Christ or against Him?”

The preacher continued: “*Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness*” (Hebrews 9:22).”

“In that one moment my eyes, which had been blinded for many years, by the things of this world were opened to the truth of God.”

“The Holy Spirit (the presence of God) prompted me to make a decision. I raised my hand after a long period of dilemma and inner struggle.

“It was very challenging and yet the most important decision of my life. I never regretted this decision and have always been grateful to the Lord for choosing me to be part of His kingdom.”

The next six months were not easy. Bhimrao

reveals he went through many trials and temptations as he went through a touch of ‘buyer’s remorse’.

“I wondered if I had made the right decision and my heart became unsettled. But God helped me through and led me to make my final act of commitment when I publicly declared Jesus as my Lord in water baptism.”

The next chapter of his spiritual journey was to share his faith with his family. This was nerve-racking for the filial son who had been warned specifically against leaving Hinduism.

As he feared, his mother was heartbroken. And angry. First she clammed up – “it was the calm before the storm,” Bhimrao remembers.

Then she burst into tears. “She felt disgraced, fearful and abandoned by her first-born son who she loved the most.

“She asked ‘Why have you done it? Why have you deceived us? How can we show our face to our families, friends and relatives?’”

Bhimrao tried to reason with her, saying he had not become a thief or an alcoholic. But he might as well have been talking to a brick wall and the stony silence, punctuated with much weeping and heated arguments, continued for a few days. His mother refused to eat.

His father was none the happier. But Bhimrao stuck to his guns. He went on to complete his Bachelor of Divinity and to his great joy, was eventually able to lead his parents and several siblings to Christ.

Their decision however cost them greatly; they were harassed and persecuted by their village and eventually had to migrate to a different town.

“In all of this, there were no regrets, but more joy and blessings in Christ,” says Bhimrao, who has served God for 46 years as a pastor, full-time missionary and Bible seminary lecturer.

“I am overwhelmed by God’s goodness, faithfulness and grace. My purpose in sharing this story is to encourage those who are struggling to make decisions for Christ.

“There is no gain without pain, no ending without beginning, no harvesting without sowing. All glory to God!” •

I always wanted to be a boy

BY NAZARII BAYTLER

Linda Seiler's struggle with transgender desires and same-sex attraction had always made her feel like God was condemning her—but it wasn't until she spoke to fellow Christians about her issue that her journey towards healing truly began.

"From my earliest memory I wanted to be a boy instead of a girl," Linda says on her personal web page. "As a child, I prayed repeatedly for God to make me into a boy and became obsessed with my pursuit."

No one knew about Linda's frustrations. To everyone around her, she was simply a tomboy, and nothing more.

"Around fourth grade, I heard about sex reassignment surgeries and vowed I would have the operation as soon as I was old enough and had the money," Linda recounts.

Linda's sexuality was further confused when her friends introduced her to pornography. Watching it, she envisioned herself as a male, reinforcing her dysphoria.

"In junior high, when all the other girls were interested in makeup and boys, to my horror, I found myself attracted to women, especially older teachers who were strong yet nurturing."

Distressed by her fantasies and set back by the difficulties of getting a sex reassignment surgery, Linda decided to conform to societal expectations for women. This didn't rid her of her mental troubles, however.

"I envied the boys around me whose voices were beginning to change, and I mourned the fact that mine would never change like that," Linda says. "Instead, I had to submit to wearing training bras and being inconvenienced by monthly periods."

During her junior year of high school, Linda gave her life to Christ. But things didn't immediately get better.

"I began doubting my salvation experience because my struggles didn't go away like I thought they would," Linda recounts. "Yet, I knew Jesus had done something in my heart, and I wanted to follow Him."

Linda began to experience a spiritual battle for her heart and mind. She attempted to do everything to fit in with other girls—including dating men in hopes of "curing" herself—but her inner thoughts told her that she was meant to be male. Suicide became a real consideration.

"In college, I got involved with a campus ministry and developed a deeper relationship with God, praying and reading my Bible regularly, even sharing Christ with the lost," Linda says. "I eventually became a student leader despite the fact that I was deeply attracted to women who mentored me and was enslaved to sexual addictions behind closed doors."

Linda begged for God to take away her transgender desires, praying earnestly for healing.

"My senior year in college, I attended a campus ministry talk on overcoming habitual sin," Linda recounts. "The speaker quoted James 5:16, 'Confess your sins one to another and pray for each other so that you may be healed.'"

Linda was convicted by this message and confessed her secret struggle to her campus pastor.

"He responded to me in love, assuring me that he was committed to find-



Linda's outward change reflected a transformation within.

ing me the help I needed," Linda states. "I couldn't believe it. I walked away from that conversation with a fresh revelation of God's grace."

Up until that point, Linda had felt that God hated her for her sin. However, this experience shifted her view of God from a severe judge to a loving father.

"For the first time, I discovered that being completely transparent with another person was very healing," Linda says. "I didn't have to hide anymore."

Linda's campus pastor ended up connecting her with a professional counsellor. The next 10 years were full of turbulence as Linda sought healing.

"It was a slow process, as there were not a multitude of resources at that time to help women struggling with transgender issues," Linda states. "In fact, well-meaning Christian counsellors told me they had seen homosexuals and lesbians set free but never anyone transgender, so I should do my best to cope this side of heaven and know that I will be totally free when I die."

Linda backslid when she entered a relationship with another woman in her church.

Realising that it would not fill the hole in her heart, she broke off the relationship.

"By God's grace, I resolved to tug at the hem of His garment and not let go until I experienced the freedom Jesus died to give me," Linda affirms.

The Lord answered Linda's call and put a mother figure in her life.

"I was deeply attracted to her, yet she wasn't fazed by my struggles and began to invest in me relationally in a wholesome way," Linda recalls. "I found myself wanting to be just like her, so she helped me buy more feminine clothes and gave me advice concerning makeup and mannerisms."

Despite her outward changes, Linda was still fighting female attraction.

"In the fall of 2005, the Lord led me to meet with Mark Sandford, an inner healing prayer counsel-

lor at Elijah House," Linda recounts.

In a matter of a week, Linda prayed with the counsellor, renouncing any past strongholds, effectively cutting off any negative influence in her soul.

"For the first time in my life, I saw a tender, compassionate side to the Father that I wasn't aware existed," Linda says. "It's as if I could literally feel His hands holding my heart."

The powerful experience set Linda free from the mental battles she was having. Finally, she had found the contentment in being a woman she had sought.

"As I continued to walk out my healing, I eventually started experiencing genuine attractions towards men," Linda says. "It was as if I was going through delayed puberty in my mid-thirties, which was both awkward and thrilling to finally experience the mystery of sexuality according to God's design."

God has transformed Linda from the ground up, achieving what seemed to be impossible. However, her testimony would come much later.

"I stayed silent for eight years until the Lord gave me the green light to go public upon my eighth-year anniversary of freedom, a new beginning of sorts. I am finally 'coming out of the closet' so to speak, sharing my story with others to bring hope and restoration."

Linda feels a profound compassion for those who are going through similar struggles and uses her own story to encourage those who are sexually broken.

"If we will hold fast to the truth of God's Word and determine never to give up, we will experience transformation to the point that the sin which once characterized our lives ceases to dominate us," Linda concludes. "God promised: such were some of you."

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6: 9-11 NKJV)

This article first appeared on godreports.com and is used with kind permission. Find more resources at Linda's website lindaseiler.com

Putting pressure on your soul

BY DAN DELZELL (ABRIDGED)

HEALTH issues, relationship tension, and financial struggles place tremendous pressure upon people. But one particular source of pressure is rooted even deeper within us. I am referring to the ever-present problem of sin.

My wife recently underwent surgery when it became necessary

to remove and replace a herniated disc in the lower part of her neck. The C5-C6 disc was putting pressure on the nerve roots next to her spinal cord. Tammy felt this painful pressure for about a year and often held her right arm in the air to relieve the numbness she was feeling. After initial remedies failed to relieve the pain, we were blessed with a terrific surgeon and a successful surgery. The neck pain and pressure are now completely gone.

Sin does something similar by placing spiritual pressure upon the "nerves" of our soul. This real pressure can make us numb to God's will for our life. You see, we were not created to live for sin, but for the glory and honour of our Creator.

The Bible teaches that Adam and Eve were perfect when God created them. They made the tragic choice to sin against their Creator, and the spiritual disease of sin has been passed down from parents to children ever since. When writing to Christians in Ephesus, the Apostle Paul described their spiritual condition prior to conversion.

"You were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world..." (Ephesians 2:1-2).

Sin means to "miss the mark" of God's holy standard. We have all sinned in our thoughts, words and actions. And we have all felt the guilt and the pressure that sin produces within us.

"There is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked" (Isaiah 48:22).

This inner restlessness applies to believers as well whenever they choose to engage in sin. It interrupts God's peace in our souls and places considerable pressure upon our heart and mind. For example, David felt miserable after sinning against God by committing adultery and murder.

"When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer" (Psalm 32:3-4).

It was only when David turned away from his sin and confessed it to the Lord that the pressure was lifted from his soul.

Edwin Louis Cole wrote: "Temptation can be tormenting, but remember: The torment of temptation to sin is nothing to compare with the torment of the consequences of sin."

The Holy Spirit [invisible person of God] convicts us of our sin. Without this much-needed conviction, we would never confess our sins to God and turn away from them.

Jesus said, *"When He (the Holy Spirit) comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment"* (John 16:8).

Apart from the Holy Spirit's conviction, each one of us would remain lost in our sin. We would ultimately receive a sentence of eternal punishment for our sins. (Matthew 25:41,46; Mark 9:44-48) *"It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27).

Thankfully, Jesus came to pay for our sins by His death on the cross and to deliver us from the guilt, power, and eternal penalty of sin.

"Christ died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Corinthians 5:15).

"Jesus is the atoning sacrifice (paid the price) for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2).

What particular sins are placing pressure on your life today? God is willing to perform surgery on your soul and address those areas with His grace and power.

There is only one way to have your sins washed away. Turn to the Lord today in genuine sorrow and faith, as you pray:

"Forgive me Lord for my sins. I turn away from them. Wash me, Jesus, with your precious blood. Empower me to live for you, and help me to stand strong and not open the door when temptation comes knocking. Amen."

This article first appeared in The Christian Post.

"People often talk about an epidemic of suicide, but the real epidemic is the increasing rejection of a robust belief in an afterlife. That's what is miring more and more people in hopelessness." - Clay Jones



Linda Seiler

Ben-Hur and herbicides

Don Batten interviews fellow agricultural scientist Kee Fui Kon

It's not often that you can credit a movie for your personal spiritual awakening. Yet this is exactly what happened to agricultural scientist Kee Fui Kon.

Kon, as he likes to be called, grew up in Malaysia but settled in Singapore. His parents' marriage, which ended in separation, was "dysfunctional" and traumatised the young boy.

He found comfort in nature - plant life in particular spoke to him of God through its amazing beauty, intricacy and variety.

A Christian neighbour shared the gospel (the good news of how Jesus Christ came to Earth to save mankind from its sins) with Kon, but he remained unsure.

Then he watched the movie *Ben-Hur*.

The 1959 production tells the story of Jewish prince Ben-Hur, who witnesses the events leading to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and becomes a Christian.

"Watching *Ben-Hur* was the turning point," Kon shares. "The film's parallel plot about Jesus was compelling. My friend and I concluded that Christianity was the most tenable of the major religions in the multi-religious society of Malaysia."

He saw that other religions allowed for infidelity in marriage, or their gods were impersonal, or there were tedious rituals trying to please ancestors, or there was no Creator, just a fluffy philosophy.

In Kon's final school year, the biology teacher dealt with two advanced topics — evolution and Mendelian genetics.

Kon says: "For evolution, I could not connect the many dots from the single-celled organism to multi-celled organism, to ape, and finally to man. But I was blown away by Mendel's detective work on heritable traits in peas. That inspired my career in agriculture.

"While everything was still mushy in my mind, I went to New Zealand to escape the family problems."

In 1976 Kon studied agriculture at Massey University, "to help feed a hungry world". By Easter that year, "the seed of faith in my heart had ripened, and I committed to Jesus as Saviour and Lord."

In the 1980s he and the family moved to Perth, where Kon pursued a PhD in weed ecology and control "with a special focus on the prediction of weed resistance to herbicides."

After their second son was born in Perth, the family moved back to Malaysia where Kon worked as Weed Control Group Leader at Rembau Field Station. His team conducted

over 100 trials per year to evaluate new agrichemicals, testing them on oil palm, rubber, rice, corn, and vegetables.

Kon says that believing the authority of the Bible about the events of early Genesis "has allowed me to live without contradictions."

"I spent two years learning the essentials of science from molecular biology to cosmology; I found it fundamental to differentiate experimental science from historical science."

"Experimental science is observable through the scientific method based on hypothesis testing. It must be repeatable over time and reproducible by others.



Dr Kee Fui Kon

"Historical science deals with unique events that happened in the past. While pieces of evidence are collected from a crime scene to recreate an historical narrative, the most crucial evidence concerns eyewitness accounts.

"Both evolution and creation are historical science. Evolution is not supported by any eyewitness account. Biblical creation relies on the Chief Eyewitness, the Creator God, who conceived creation before the foundation of the world."

Promoters of evolution often claim that without evolution, science would not have progressed to give us the many innovations on which modern living depends.

However, after 33 years working as a scientist, Kon says with all confidence that his agricultural research did not depend on evolution.

"Evolution supposedly creates new features, leading to new types of organisms, by means of mutations, which are random changes to existing genetic information in the DNA," says Kon.

"That is, mutations must create new complex features. We see no such mutations in herbicide resistance. All mechanisms involve modifications to existing features.

"For instance, the repeated use of a single mode of action herbicide like glyphosate results in the selection of resistant weeds. This then greatly complicates the weed management program, especially in soybean or corn that have been genetically modified to tolerate the herbicide."

"Natural selection in herbicide resistance is observable and reproducible, but it simply eliminates the susceptible and selects the resistant. It creates nothing. It is not 'evolution', although I find many evolutionists today speaking of examples of natural selection as if it is the same thing as evolution. It isn't."

"Biblical creation involved the supernatural power of God. Thus, it involves faith. But so does evolution, which is founded on the magic of matter coming from nothing and stupendously complex life arising from that matter.

"I'm thankful that God calls us to a reasonable faith (Matthew 22:37, 1 Peter 3:15)," Kon concludes.

References and notes

1. Leading evolutionist (Ernst Mayr): evolution is a historical science, in contrast to observational science; creation.com/mayr.
2. Ian Heap I. and O'Duke, S., Overview of glyphosate-resistant weeds worldwide, Pest Manag Sci 74(5):1040-1049, 2018.

“Natural selection isn't the same thing as evolution.”

Dar and Winny

Richard Gunther

11



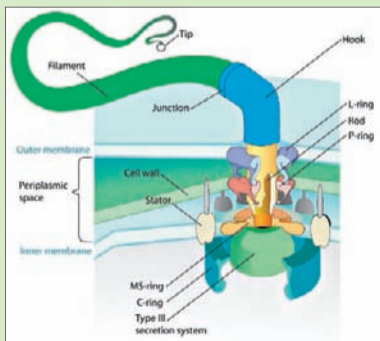
AN EXTRAORDINARY TAIL

PETER'S CORNER

I READ an article posted on the ABC website: "Evolution or intelligent design? The story of the bacterial flagellar motor." Bacteria are tiny single-cell creatures, and many types of bacteria have a tail called a "flagellum" that pushes them along. An amazing nano-scale motor rotates the tail up to 100,000 times per second. That is fast! (An aircraft jet engine gets up to 250 times per second for comparison.) The flagellum motor is really cool: it builds itself when needed out of protein parts, and repairs itself while it is working! It changes what it does, or spins in reverse, in response to the chemistry of the environment outside the bacteria.

The interviewed scientists argue that the motor came about through a "change of function." They claim that in living creatures, we find many similar structures but with different functions. In this case, something called a "bacterial injectisome" has a different function to the flagellar motor, but they both contain nine proteins that are very similar. The scientists claim that the similarity makes it likely that they evolved from common ancestors. The same proteins adapted to do different jobs.

Can you spot what's wrong with that claim? Similarity does not mean evolution. For example a rotating wheel is a good design, so it is used in cars, bicycles and



skateboards. Use of good design is an obvious reason for similarity.

The scientists go on to say that in the laboratory, they can "re-run evolution" to find out what conditions force the flagellar motor to adapt, or change. They end by saying they want people to understand "how it evolved and how it will continue to adapt in the future."

Can you spot what's wrong with that claim? Creatures do adapt, but that is not evolution. Adaptations happen all the time everywhere, and creatures have built-in ability to adapt but within limits. It is incorrect to write about evolution and adaptation as if they were the same.

There are more questions not covered in the article: How did the flagellum motor come to be? What made the proteins exist? What told the proteins how to build and run the motor, when to build it, and how to repair it while it was still running at 100,000 times per second? Who wrote the instructions for all this?

I think evolution has no answers for us. But God certainly knows, and all the glory to Him! I hope these words help you, as they have me, in your journey to confidently trust the Bible and the Creator.

Evolution or intelligent design? The story of the bacterial flagellar motor. By Dr Matt AB Baker and Dr Nicholas J Matzke, ABC Science, 7/11/2019

Peter Mikula is a mining engineer in Kalgoorlie who loves stargazing and talking with others about Jesus.

Blood is baffling

BY CHARLES GARDNER

WHEN people attend university, often their eyes are opened to new ideas and concepts: for Aaron Eime it changed the direction of his life and continues to impact lives to this day.

Aaron studied psychology and social work in Brisbane where he heard a presentation by microbiologist Dr Michael Behe, which was part of a debate about the origins of the earth.

Dr Behe explained the amazing process of blood-clotting.

He said blood-clotting requires a sequential chain reaction of enzymes to bind up a wound when the skin is cut. Each one has a special duty but, if just one is removed, healing will not work. And yet it clots only the wounded area, rather than the heart or brain, which would be fatal.

Aaron was brought up in a Christian home believing God created the Earth in six days but those beliefs had been eroded by what he had been learning at university. However, after hearing Dr Behe's explanation, he realised then that there was no way the clotting process could have come about through evolution.

"Evolution is the gradual increase of genetic information over time," Aaron explains. "But if all the enzymes are not present from day one, the blood cannot function and life cannot exist. Evolutionary theory provides no satisfactory evidence for how blood came about. It cannot possibly have evolved, so must have been created by a super-intelligent mind. This is why the Bible says that "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev 17:11).

"Behe's argument totally floored me, and that was the precise moment I knew God was real," Aaron said. "I knew then that a super mind (i.e. God) had created the world, and that He was intimately involved, even at the microbiological level, with His creation. And ever since then, I have been a firm defender of the faith against the lie of evolution."

GET ANSWERS FOR YOUR FAMILY

Young people struggle to find purpose in life, believing that 'science' has made God irrelevant. CREATION MAGAZINE provides answers for your family.



- Affirms the complete reliability of the Bible
- Refutes evolution with real-world evidence
- Helps Christians share and defend their faith

Subscribe at CREATION.COM/MAG



YOUTH TRUTH

I'm no longer alone



Matthew Wilson

New life on New Year's Day

BY MATTHEW WILSON

As a teenager, I cursed all of the time and had a few common and destructive addictions. I was insanely selfish and angry; I was filled with so much hate. Things got really dark in 2018. Something in me shifted and I lost all sense of worth. I remember staring at the ceiling wondering why I was still alive. I tried to use fleshly pleasure to cope, but the euphoria was always fleeting.

This darkness lasted until the very first day of 2019. I was lying awake on a friend's couch, unable to quiet my brain. For reasons I can't explain, I began reflecting on the Christian youth retreats I'd attended and all of the sermons I'd heard growing up going to church. Suddenly, the gospel clicked in my mind. Jesus died for the sins of humanity; to know and be saved by Him, all I had to do was believe, repent (turn away from sin), and give Him my life. This was all true and, suddenly, I was sure of it. I surrendered. I confessed my sins, resolved to turn away from them, and asked for forgiveness.

In that moment, a fiery warmth sprung up in my heart. The Holy Spirit. I felt like I'd been covered in mud, shivering in the dark for so long. When the Holy Spirit entered, it was as if the sun had finally come out, along with a pouring rain that washed me clean.

Finally, I knew that I had worth and a purpose. Not only that, but I knew what my purpose was: to live out God's will for my life and proclaim His name. My friends remarked that I seemed so happy — and I was. I was filled with a burning joy, which I carry with me to this day. I dive into God's Word daily and, because of this, that initial fire has not faded.

The Lord has been faithful in "creating in me a pure heart" (Psalms 51:10). He released me from so many of my old chains. Some took a while to get off, but by His grace, I am now free. I am truly a "new creature" (2 Corinthians 5). This has come with a cost; at first, my friends were super unsupportive. "We miss the old Matthew," they'd say. But, fortunately, the old Matthew has passed away. I pray for them often.

Each day, I aim to love the Lord with all my heart, mind, soul, spirit, and strength. Despite the costs, I will never turn from Him. Man is fallen, but God is perfect! He is loving — so loving that He took the sin of the world upon Himself.

As told to and edited by Adira Polite and originally published on Then God Moved

Ruby Sneed's happy childhood swiftly became heartbreaking when her parents divorced when she was a young child. Looking back at her life now, she sees the massive impact it had on the decisions she made and relationships she entered into. That is until a chance encounter with a stranger in a park set her on a new path.

Ruby shares her story on her YouTube channel, and describes the pain she felt when her parents split up when she was about nine or 10.

Not long after that, in grade seven, she had her first boyfriend and she says she became almost addicted to the feeling it gave her.

"For me it wasn't about the butterflies but it was the feeling of being secure and feeling loved and less alone," she explains. "I just kept on having boyfriend after boyfriend. Even though the relationships would last a week or two it didn't matter — I just went on to the next one."

The following year, when she was just 13, Ruby started partying and drinking alcohol. By high school she was going to house parties every weekend. "And then I was also introduced to homosexuality so I kind of experimented with that. I always had an open mind to a lot of things... I always tried to fit in and I think that's why I was open to everyone and anything because I just wanted to belong.

"Deep inside I never was satisfied with everything I tried and I never felt like I belonged."

At 16 Ruby was in a serious relationship with a boy. When she discovered he was cheating on her, she was heartbroken.

"I was just devastated [but] at the same time I couldn't let go of him," Ruby recalls. "It didn't even cross my mind to break up with him because I was never used to being single. I'd always had a boyfriend since seventh grade and so I tried everything in my power to keep this relationship."

Ruby started having panic attacks and felt physically, mentally and emotionally overwhelmed. But she continued with the relationship into the following year.

One day they were having an argument in her boyfriend's car, which he had pulled up at a park.

"I was just so done with everything," Ruby remembers. "I didn't have the energy anymore to speak or to fight or to do anything. I was just done. I got out of his car and as I'm walking away I say out loud, 'God, where are you?' and I went and sat down on a bench."

Her boyfriend followed and sat on the bench beside her. About 10 minutes later, a couple approached them.

"They ask if they can speak to us and we agree and they start talking about God. I was blown away! Then the girl asks me if we can step aside and talk alone, so I agreed.

"She tells me, 'I don't know what you're going through but I'm here to tell you that God loves you and He wants to heal your heart.' When



Ruby Sneed

she said that I wanted to cry. Those words brought so much hope and I just couldn't believe it."

The stranger then explained the gospel to Ruby — that God had sent Jesus to die on the cross for her sins and that she could spend eternity with Him if she placed her trust in Him. She then gave Ruby her phone number and invited her to church.

The non-denominational church sounded very different to the Catholic churches Ruby had attended growing up. But a couple of weeks later she couldn't stop thinking about the experience, so she and her boyfriend attended a Wednesday night service.

"I was confused," Ruby admits. "I was like, is this like a rave party? Where am I? There were colourful lights, there was music playing, everyone was joyful and it was just a different atmosphere."

The girl Ruby had met in the park approached her and asked if she could pray for her.

"She tells me, 'God is showing me that the reason why you've been looking for love in men is because your father left you.' When she said that, I started sobbing ... She goes on and tells me, 'But God is the Father you've always wanted. You're His princess and He loves you.'"

Ruby says she felt a burden lift from her shoulders.

"I felt so much peace. I felt like God came and hugged me and held me

and I felt secure for the first time. I felt protected."

Ruby was astonished that the girl knew so much about her.

"She didn't know anything about my parents divorcing — only God knew that. So when she told me that I was just overwhelmed. I ended up giving my life to Christ that day."

Ruby let go of the relationship she had been holding onto and focused instead on learning more about God.

"God started revealing so much to me. He started showing me why I was doing the things that I was doing. He started giving me all the things that I had been longing for — security, love, satisfaction."

Ruby says although she had looked into many things and people for acceptance in the past, she never truly fitted in anywhere until she found God. "I never fitted in with homosexuality. I didn't fit in with drugs or with the rave lifestyle. I just fitted in with God. I fitted in with Christ. The more I learned about Him, the more I wanted Him and the more I began to change as well. [Psalm 34:8 says] 'Taste and see that the Lord is good.' The more I would experience His love and His kindness, how gentle He is, how loving and forgiving He is, I just couldn't go back to my old habits."

Ruby is now married but admits life has not always been easy in the 10 years since she became a Christian.

"As a Christian, your life doesn't [necessarily] get better but instead of doing life alone you're doing it with God."

"When people encounter the true God, they experience a selfquake. That's one way you can tell if you've met Israel's God or simply a figment of your imagination. A made-up God will leave your world undisturbed, conveniently aligning with your priorities without displacing anything, because ultimately you are more glorious than it is. The real God, however, will land in the middle of your life like an elephant crashing through the ceiling, displacing your sin, changing all your priorities, and forcing you to reorient yourself around the weight of glory."

— Andrew Wilson, from *The God of All Things*

Contact Challenge!

Do you have a story to tell, a tricky question to ask or want to let us know how Challenge has impacted you?
Email harriet@challengenews.org

Challenge
THE GOOD NEWS PAPER

AU.CHALLENGE.NEWS

• Testimonies • Children's pages
• Lifestyle articles • Sports

Published 11 months of the year by Challenge Literature Fellowship (ABN 98 206 125 814).
Editor: Carl Carmody.

Staff writers: Jody Bennett, Janice Teo, Harriet Coombe

PRICING: au.challenge.news/pricing/

Challenge Literature Fellowship, PO Box 978 Cloverdale WA 6985
08 9453 3311 Email: accounts@challengenews.org

YOUTH TRUTH



I found lasting freedom

BY KEVEN RAFAEL

When I was seven, my mum died in a plane crash.

I was supposed to be on the flight, but my parents had recently separated and it was my dad's weekend. Had God not orchestrated for me to stay with my dad, I would be dead.

In the aftermath, I mourned the loss; but because of the many issues in our family, I couldn't grieve in a healthy way.

Then, God entered.

I'd never been exposed to any sort of faith at home, but in middle school, I met a woman who was on fire for Jesus.

Her passion showed me that there was more to Christianity than the rules and doctrine I'd heard at school. She had a deep love for God — and I wanted that for myself.

Alone in my bedroom, I Googled "How can I be saved?"

I then got down on my knees and asked Jesus to be my Lord and Saviour.

After that, I just kept seeking Him.

I slowly developed my own

passion and hunger for God, but because I relied on my own strength, I kept falling into sin. Especially porn.

I was a "perfect" Christian on the surface, but behind closed doors, I was in chains.

Things worsened in high school, when I developed obsessive-compulsive disorder.

I doubted my salvation on a daily basis and completed all sorts of weird rituals to "get God's approval."

On my worst days, I tried to "get saved" up to five times a day. I eventually also developed depression and severe anxiety. I was a mess...but God stayed with me.

When I finally looked for help, God brought healing.

He forced me to confront the pain of my mother's death and for first time, I truly grieved.

I realised that I'd been desperately trying to get rid of the symptoms of my trauma, but God was trying to tend to the root. He didn't want to deal with my mask — He wanted to heal me!

Nothing could save me but Christ alone and He was more than enough. When I realised

this and finally surrendered, I found lasting freedom.

Though temptations still come, I'm stronger than I was. But even when I fall, I turn right back to Him.

It's tempting to get so discouraged and distracted by sin that we take our eyes off Jesus, but that only pulls us down deeper.

No matter what we do, the Lord is there. Our God is faithful!

As told to and edited by Adira Polite and originally published on Then God Moved

nudge
WITH KARL FASEE

Being bullied

LIKE many people, I can remember being bullied in high school. I was a skinny kid who was often the target of those who wanted to throw their weight around.

Bullying continues in our schools and community today but it is radically changing.

In surveys held, 42% of kids say that they have been bullied, not in the playground but online.

This harassment now occurs via social media, SMS, email and more.

The intriguing part of the new cyber-bullying is that it is no longer "big boob-head boys" but rather it is often those smaller in stature than their victims.

As a newspaper article says, "The thug waiting behind the bike shed has been replaced by the anonymous bully who can reach his or her victim 24 hours a day from just about any location."

The mode may change, but the attitude is just the same.

Bullying online or by physical threat is another example of our brokenness and need for the love and grace of God.

WHAT HAPPENS THEN?

TODAY is today. But what about tomorrow?

You graduate from high school, then maybe university. You get a job. You get married. You have children. You go through a few more jobs. You buy a house. Okay, THEN what?

You go to soccer games for your kids. You try to be a good parent and spouse. You watch your children go to the prom. You do and say the things your parents did and said, even though you vowed you never would.

You have a mid-life crisis or two. Your children graduate from college. You become a grandparent. Someone calls you grandma or grandpa. You live out your life in leisure, drawing income from a retirement fund. You take walks in the morning. You work in the garden. You read the newspaper. You watch TV. You talk to your children and grandchildren on the phone. You travel.

Okay, THEN what?

Well, then, someday, you die. If you are fortunate, you live a relatively long life. Seventy to 90 years. If you don't get taken away prematurely by cancer or a car accident. But always, eventually, you die. Death is the tomorrow that awaits us all, the inevitable THEN that none of us can escape.

But is that it? Is there anything more?

Someday you'll be just a corpse. They'll bury your body in the ground. Or burn your

body and put your ashes in an urn. The big question is: Will I cease after that? Will there still be a conscious ME somewhere? Is there really life after death?

In truth, we probably all hope there is something that

comes after. Maybe in the smallest recesses of our minds, we are planning on it.

What are we planning on? A life after death of some sort. Some call it paradise. Some call it heaven. Some also talk of hell.

Another thought that many people possess throughout life, often subconsciously, is: I'm a basically good person. Therefore, I will get to go to heaven someday.

Is that how it works?

Many people think they are "good enough" for heaven. It's an assumption we make. If we haven't robbed a bank, murdered anyone, or cheated on our taxes, we think we're just the kind of folk God is looking for to populate his home. By golly, we are good enough.

At heaven's box office, we bought our tickets by being basically good people throughout our lives.

But what if that thinking is incorrect? THEN what? What a thing to have been wrong about! What a misfire!

If you think you're good enough for heaven, there are two things to consider:

1. If heaven is a place of perfection, how can anyone be good enough?

Most of us would say we have a "skeleton in the closet." At least one. Something we hope no one ever finds out about us. A mistake in our past. A poor decision. A moment of weakness or stupidity that we'd rather not think about.

That's the extreme. But there are many other more common things we don't really want others to know or notice about us. It might be the "little white lies" we tell. Or how we talk behind someone's back. Or how we copy other people's homework. Or the unkind words we say to people. Or the unkind thoughts we have

about people.

Much more than a one-time regrettable event, our lives, if we closely scrutinize them, show a pattern of wrongdoing. We often don't do what we believe to be right. And we often do what we believe is wrong.

All of us, even people whom we would call basically good, are also basically selfish and basically very imperfect.

Everything we do is seen by God. So that means there's no fooling Him. He's perfectly aware of all the good we haven't done (and yet could have), as well as all the bad we've done. He even knows all of our thoughts and all of our motives.

2. Here's the second thing to consider if we think we're "good enough" for heaven: Is it possible to be a basically good person and still have rejected God?

Consider Ralph. He's a "good" person. He was ethical in his job. He never stole even a paper clip. He was a faithful father and husband. He provided for his children. He made sacrifices for them and for his wife (whom he never cheated on). He even gave money to many charities throughout his life.

But Ralph, though good in some sense, never "let God in." Many times in his life, Ralph sensed God's desire to come into his life. It was as if God was knocking on the door of Ralph's

heart. But Ralph never opened that door. He always came up with some excuse not to. Ironically, one of the recurring excuses was, "I've been a good person all my life. I will go to heaven."

Ralph wanted to go to heaven.

Everyone does. But in reality, Ralph didn't want to know God. And he didn't stop to analyse the huge implications of that decision (the decision to keep God out).

Think about it. Heaven is God's home. If Ralph didn't want to know God during his life on Earth, why would Ralph want to know God in an afterlife? In other words, what Ralph didn't calculate is how much he would LOATHE heaven.

Heaven is a place where God is very present. It's likely that every aspect of heaven will remind one of God, constantly. What a horrible place for Ralph!

Ralph always assumed heaven would be a place of ultimate comfort. But he never considered how ultimately uncomfortable it would be for him, since he didn't want to know God or have a relationship with God. For Ralph, heaven would not be heaven, but rather a type of hell.

Would you let someone into your home even if you knew they didn't want to have anything to do with you? If you knew that everywhere they turned, they'd be reminded of you?

Many people are like Ralph. They want heaven, but they don't want God. And they don't realise that, under those circumstances, heaven would be an awful place to be.

Maybe the truth of the matter is that heaven is for people who know they're not good enough to be there — but who nonetheless want to be there solely because God is there. They want to know God and be with Him forever.

The life-after-death prize isn't heaven, but rather its Primary Occupant.

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





Let PSSM introduce you to God through FREE Bible lessons!
pssm.com.au

Complete your details below and PSSM will send you your first lesson or visit our website for online lessons!

Name _____

DOB / / Male Female

Street _____ Suburb _____

State _____ Postcode _____

Parent/Guardian Signature (if under 18 years) _____

Delivery Address:
PSSM Mailbox Club
PO Box 357
Morayfield 4506
Queensland

We are looking forward to hearing from you!
0483 326 522
info@pssm.com.au
pssm.com.au



BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

Drop anchor and stop drifting off course

BY ROB FURLONG

I recently conducted the funeral of a dear man whom I have known for over 30 years — for 20 years I had been pastor to him, and his wife.

It's interesting what you learn about people after they have died.

My friend had a difficult upbringing — his father was an alcoholic. At the age of 10, his father asked him to refill and light their paraffin heater. My friend had spilled some of the oil on his arm, and his father accidentally set his arm on fire with the cigarette he was smoking. My friend bore the scars on his arm of that awful experience for the rest of his life, as well as the wound it left in his heart.

But as my friend's son recounted this story to us, he was able to say that his Dad never mistreated him or the rest of his family ever — he treated each of them with sincere love and patience. On the day of his funeral, he was remembered by his family as a man of genuine humility, courage,

and deep faith in Jesus.

What my friend has left his family is a legacy. Because of his faith in Jesus, he was able to break the chains of his upbringing and with God's help, forge out a new chain of healing and grace for his wife and children.

Many years ago, I read a book by Steve Farrar titled *Anchor Man* that spoke of this type of legacy. Farrar's message is very simple: a father either anchors his family in God and His principles for life, or he doesn't. Farrar describes it like this:

"Generally speaking, if a father anchors his family in Christ, then the odds go up dramatically that his sons will anchor their families. But when



he decides he knows better than God and starts living to please himself, that's when families begin to drift. (The Western world) has millions of families that are drifting. Why are they drifting? They are drifting because they have no anchor."

Farrar goes on to explain that when a man steps up and anchors his family in God, he potentially influences his family for good, for the next 100 years!

How is this possible? Farrar puts it this way:

"How do you affect your family for the next 100 years? By being obedient today. And then by doing something tomorrow. And one day those small deposits will begin to add up. Every time you love your wife as Christ loved the church ... live with your wife in an understanding way, grant (her) honour ... every time you take

the time to listen to one of your kids, bow your head and ask God to lead you and your family that day, every time you refuse to alter your expense account to pick up a few extra dollars, every time you pray for the guy who stabbed you in the back in order to get a job promotion that should have gone to you, God sees those actions. And He will reward those actions."

Farrar's point is that every small decision we make which honours God is like compound interest — it slowly builds over time, profoundly influencing our family for several generations.

The important thing to remember is that this is not something we do because of our own strengths and abilities. My friend became the anchor man of his family because he had put his trust in Jesus as Lord and Saviour. That decision changed the direction of his life forever, as well as his family's.

It's the same for you and me. If we're going to become anchors for our families, then we must place our trust in Jesus, the "anchor of our souls."

Break the chains of your past. Forge a new link in the chain. Anchor your family in God.

Happy Father's Day!



Want to explore more?

Here are some **free**, helpful, Christian online 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, serials and kids' 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	

HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

What? Salvation is an eternal relationship with God — now on Earth and, after we die, in Heaven.

The Lord Jesus says: "I tell you the truth. Everyone who believes in Me has eternal life." John 6:47

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Who? Anyone can gain the eternal life offered through Jesus Christ, regardless of how you have previously lived or what you have previously believed.

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

Why? Because sin separates us from a holy God. Sin is all the wrong things we do, say and think, as well as our desire to be our own boss.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

How? The Bible says you become a Christian by confessing with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. Romans 10:8b-10

Ready to change your life forever? Here is a prayer you can pray, but you can also use your own words. The words are not as important as the heart attitude — which only God can see.

Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth,

I acknowledge that I am a sinner. Please forgive me for all the ways I have disobeyed and defied You.

Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to earth to live the perfect life I couldn't, and die on the cross for my sins. Thank You that His blood was sufficient to pay my debt to You, and His resurrection proves that there is life beyond death. I accept that His sacrifice is all I need to get right with You — I bring nothing I have done but I give you everything I am. Help me to live for You. Please be my Saviour and my Master. Amen.

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. Find a Bible-teaching church to attend.

AS A NEXT STEP:

I have prayed this prayer. Please send me: Bible Some 'starting off' literature Information on a helpful church

** Please tick and write clearly **

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Email address _____

Challenge Literature Fellowship, PO Box 978, Cloverdale WA 6985
info@challengenews.org

All overseas enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

What does the Bible say about reincarnation?

GREAT question. The Bible never mentions reincarnation, and in fact states the contrary: *"It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27).

If the Bible is correct, then why doesn't God allow for reincarnation? Reincarnation is the theory that with enough lives, a person can somehow finally get it right and then be allowed into paradise/nirvana. Many people think they are good enough already for heaven (they haven't robbed banks or killed anyone).

With reincarnation, the idea is very similar. The only difference is that it suggests that you'll be good enough ... eventually.

But such a scheme is flawed. It doesn't take into account the sinfulness of man. The Bible says that all people have sinned and fall short of God's glory (Romans 3:23), that all have turned from God and gone their own way (Isaiah 53:6), that there is not even one person who does good (Psalm 53:3), and that there is no one who doesn't sin (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

Therefore, what good would it do to come back to earth in a different body?

The degree of change would not be enough to make a difference. You live your first life as a sinner who has turned from God, then you come back as a different person who nonetheless is a sinner who turns from God. This endless cycle would give no benefit to anyone.

Since we are sinners, we need forgiveness. Since we all turn away from God, we need to turn back to Him (repentance). This is the consistent message of the Bible.

God tells us to turn to Him for forgiveness and seek Him in order to know Him. If we do that, then heaven begins in this life and can merely carry on into the next life. For He Himself — not a different place to live — is what it's really all about.

Even though the Bible refutes reincarnation, it does speak of a resurrection of all people...

"An hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil to a resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28-29).

Here is more Scripture regarding that judgment: *"And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it.... And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened....and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds....And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire"* (Revelation 20:11-15).

Want to know how to have your name written in the book of life? Sincerely ask God now for His forgiveness. Jesus died for your sins so that you could be forgiven. But to receive God's forgiveness means turning to Him in sincerity and with a commitment of your life. See how in the box on this page.

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

THE ULTIMATE HIGH



Rosie Woodbridge playing Ultimate.



Rosie Woodbridge with a trophy she won playing Ultimate in 2014.
Photo: Facebook

UK ultimate frisbee player Rosie Woodbridge first started making changes to her diet and training in order to adapt to being a professional, elite athlete. At some point however, her self-discipline became unhealthy and she got into a cycle of bingeing and purging, over-training and maintaining excessively strict eating rules.

Ultimate Frisbee (now just called Ultimate) is a little known non-contact, team sport, played on a full-sized field with seven players in each team. It is very physical and requires great fitness, and Rosie says her performance did initially improve due to her dietary changes – until sport broke her heart, and her control over her body became a fixation.

Rosie was an active child who began running seriously in high school at a club and county level. She intended to continue with it into university, but then discovered Ultimate.

"I played for uni, then club and country later on down the line as well. In 2015 and 16, I was able to play



for the senior women's team," she explains in an interview on YouTube.

From a young age Rosie had committed her life to God and was aware of the danger of putting her sport before her faith.

"I was well-versed in the idea that sport can be worship, and the dangers of idolatry. I genuinely prayed that I would do it all for the glory of God.

"But my heart was more attached to it than I knew. When things in life got tough, my performance in sport became even more important – it became a source of satisfaction and worth which I should have sought in God. Then – as so often happens – sport broke my heart. Every year there seemed to be a major disappointment."

This made her want to have control over something. "But what did I turn to? What did I still have? I still have my body. I still have my fitness and my physique. Keep training, keep my diet in check. That's something that I can control."

Rosie kept justifying her harmful behaviour, even as her physical and mental health, and relationships, suffered. Then she went to a church service where they talked about depression and she realised that she had most of the symptoms. The next day her vicar's wife, who was a doctor, asked her how she was and whether she was depressed. At that point the penny dropped and Rosie acknowledged that the guilt

and shame were destroying her.

"I felt so ashamed of this situation. It was hard to come to God. I knew I had sinned. I knew I had messed up. I knew I had not guarded my heart (Proverbs 4:23). I knew I had looked to other things for my worth and satisfaction rather than God. I knew I had harmed the body He had given me to take care of," she wrote on a blog.

"But deep down I knew He is a Father, who sees His prodigal child coming and runs out to meet and embrace them, welcoming them home. I knew that it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). I was reminded of the words of Jesus: "a bruised reed He will not break, and a smouldering wick He will not snuff out" (Matthew 12:20). God knew me in my weakness and called me into His arms, inviting me to cry out to Him with all I was feeling.

"I received some Christian counselling. It wasn't always easy and certainly not straightforward, but I was able to locate some of the idols of my heart, and be reminded of the infinitely better story of the Gospel [good news about Jesus], which can transform every area of life.

"I saw the consequences of finding my worth in my sporting performance. It is a shaky foundation. Body image is no better. It sets before you an ever-changing, unreachable goal ... It is an unkind master. And it will perish. It will spoil. And it will fade.

"Approval fails us as well. The need for external validation drives

us to push our bodies beyond their limits to meet the expectations of others. We live or die on the basis of others' opinion of us.

"But with God? No, it's not like that. He tells us we are of infinite value. We are human beings made in the very image of God. What greater worth could be bestowed on us!

"He tells us that we are loved. Loved unconditionally. Loved by the Creator of the universe. Loved even in our failures, our weakness, our brokenness. Loved not on the basis of our performance or our looks. We are MORE than our bodies. We are MORE than our performance.

"That is security. That is a strong foundation. And in that security we are free...

"Free to see sport as a gift from God which we can use to glorify Him, rather than to justify our existence.

"Free to use our bodies to do the good works He has prepared for us to do, rather than to work ourselves

“**Body image ... is an unkind master.**”

DISTRIBUTED BY: