

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

activated

Vol 14 • Issue 1

A hand holding a clapperboard against a black background. The clapperboard is tilted and has a black and white striped top bar. The main body of the clapperboard is dark with white lines forming a grid. The hand is visible on the right side, holding the top and bottom edges of the clapperboard.

NEW BEGINNINGS

How to make a fresh start

Through the Fog

Coping with uncertainty

What's the Point?

Measuring success in life



PERSONALLY SPEAKING

The New Year is more than just a marking of time—or at least it can be. Many people see it as an opportunity to make a new start in some area of their lives.

Perhaps it's our new calendars with their fresh images or our new diaries and weekly planners with their unspoiled pages. Perhaps it's the knowledge that some of the people closest to us and millions of others around the world are making New Year's resolutions and setting their sights higher. We don't want to be outdone or left behind. Call it what you will—a personal wake-up call, a jolt to our collective conscience, or peer pressure—it's effective ... at least for a few days. We all know how that goes.

This year can be different. This year, your New Year's resolutions can be the start of wonderful lasting changes, especially if you include God in your plans and work with Him. If your motivation is to please Him most of all, then you can be sure that He is more than happy to help you make any necessary changes.¹ In the process, because He loves you and wants you to be happy, He will also bring other good things your way in answer to your spoken and unspoken prayers. That He has promised! "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart."²

And don't let it stop with you. Find out what changes others you care about would like to make, and get behind them. Now that's rewarding!

From all of us at *Activated*, may God bless you and may the coming year be your happiest and best yet.

Keith Phillips
For *Activated*

1. 1 John 5:14–15
2. Psalm 37:4

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BY ARIANA ANDREASSEN

Happy New Day!

IN MOST COUNTRIES THE NEW YEAR IS CELEBRATED ON THE FIRST DAY OF JANUARY, but in Cambodia, my home for three years, we got to celebrate New Year three times every 365 days.

First comes the international New Year on January 1, best known for late-night parties and morning-after hangovers.

Then there is the Chinese New Year in January or February. The Chinese New Year is a time to light firecrackers, visit relatives, and burn faux paper money to one's ancestors.

The most important New Year, though, is the Cambodian New Year. During the two-week celebrations leading up to New Year, almost everyone returns to their ancestral birthplace to visit with relatives and to pay respect to their forebears. The celebrations span three or four days

1. See Lamentations 3:22–23.

in what is mid-April on the international calendar. This is not only the most important holiday of the year, but also the only time that some people ever take off from work—and everybody does.

The first day of Cambodian New Year, according to tradition, marks the inauguration of the new angels who come to take care of the world for a one-year period. People clean and decorate their houses and prepare fruits and drinks to welcome the angels into every home. Elderly people meditate or pray, children play traditional games, and singles look for that special someone to marry.

The second day is for offering gifts to elders. Many employers also give gifts to their employees, and people donate money or clothes to the poor. In the evening, people visit temples to ask the monks for blessings of happiness and peace.

On the evening of the third day, the New Year festival ends with ceremonial bathing.

One thing that the three New Years have in common is that each is a time to evaluate one's life, set new goals, and resolve to do things better in the coming year.

Actually, every day can be a new beginning because every day is another chance to do things better. We may have some pieces to pick up from the previous days, but we can take heart in a promise found in the Bible: God's love and mercy are renewed every morning.¹ So instead of saying "Happy New Year" once or even three times a year, we should say "Happy New Day" every day, because it's another opportunity to give life our best shot.

ARIANA ANDREASSEN IS A TEACHER AND MOTHER OF TWO IN THAILAND. ■



The Journal ☆

BY IRIS RICHARD

WHEN THE THOUGHT FIRST CROSSED MY MIND THAT I SHOULD MAKE A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION TO KEEP A DAILY JOURNAL, I immediately dismissed it. Too many past resolutions had fallen by the wayside, and I could foresee ending the year with a journal full of empty pages. I also didn't have time for another project, I told myself.

However, I had recently completed a counseling course in which keeping a journal was a requirement. The instructor had emphasized making a habit of recording thoughts, ideas, plans, experiences, worries, fears, and victories. It was an important step toward self-awareness, he explained, and that is crucial to being able to help someone else sort out their problems.

I decided to give it a fair try, and I'm glad I did. I chose a journal that had a thought-provoking quote and Bible verse at the bottom of each day's page, and I committed to spending 15 minutes each day writing in it. Here are some of the benefits I have already experienced:

Keeping a journal helps me to better understand my strengths and to identify self-defeating or negative mindsets and habits.

It helps me uncover discrepancies between what I think and how I

act—wanting to lose weight but finding excuses to not exercise, for instance.

Writing about difficult or sad experiences helps me understand and come to terms with what happened, which is a necessary part of the healing process.

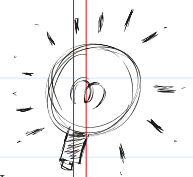
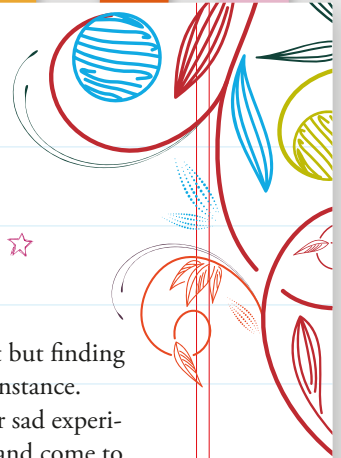
Noting what I've prayed for each day and keeping a record of how those prayers were answered has strengthened my faith.

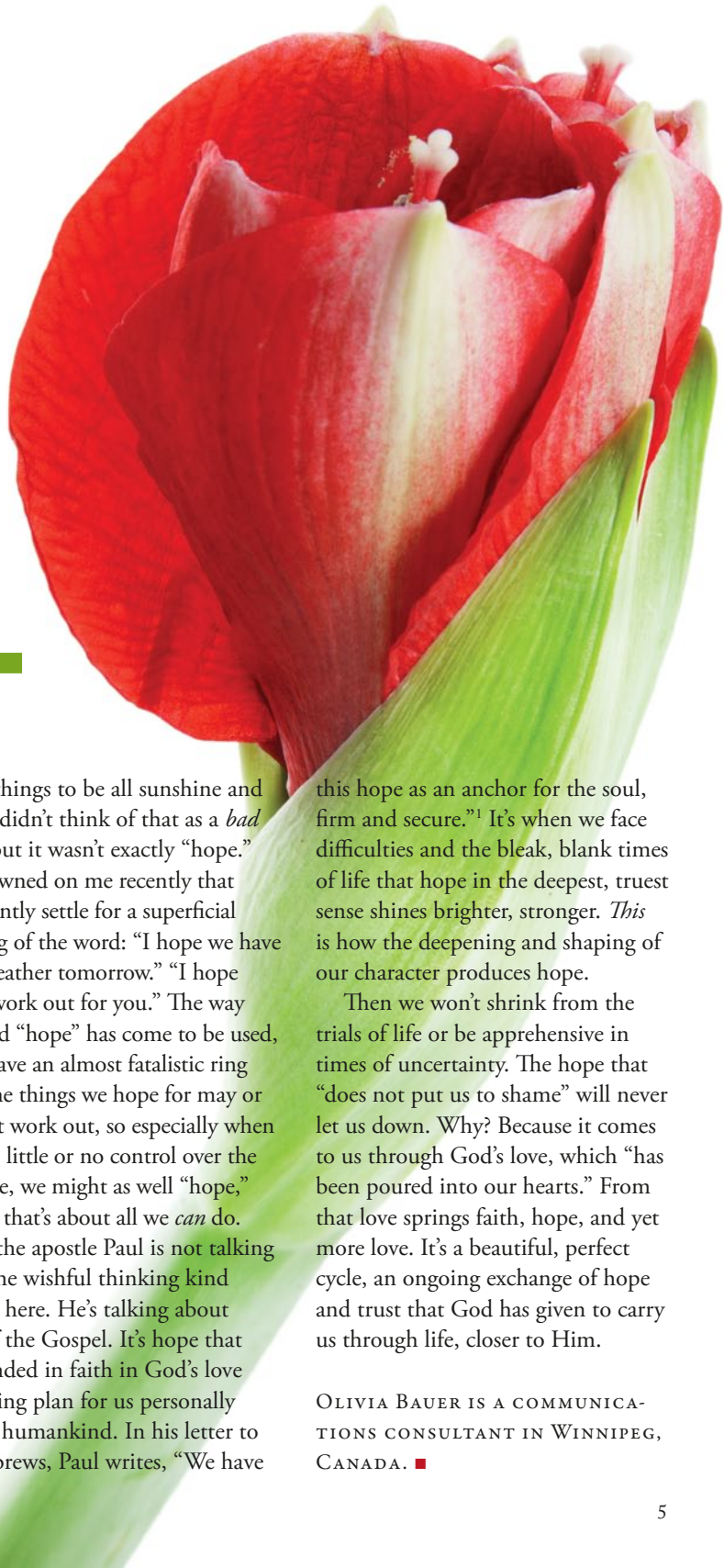
Writing about situations with people I have a hard time getting along with has helped me uncover and avoid the patterns that lead to misunderstandings and bad feelings.

At the end of each month I review and summarize the highlights, which gives me a better idea of how things are going, what challenges or obstacles came up and how they were resolved, which prayers were answered, what progress was made toward my goals, which decisions or plans I followed through on, etc.

Looking back I can wholeheartedly say that journaling was worth the effort. The filled-out pages of my 2011 journal are now a treasure chest of ideas, thoughts, lessons, revelations, achieved goals, and answered prayers.

IRIS RICHARD IS A COUNSELOR AND LIVES IN KENYA, WHERE SHE HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEER WORK SINCE 1994. SHE IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL. ■





HOPE ETERNAL

BY OLIVIA BAUER

“WE REJOICE IN OUR SUFFERINGS, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:3–5 ESV).

This is one of my favorite Bible passages, but for the longest time I had difficulty understanding how “character produces hope.” I followed up to the “endurance produces character” part, but how do the difficult experiences that forge character make us more hopeful?

The cynic in me felt that it was more likely to be the other way around. I realized that life was going to throw me some curveballs. I didn’t

expect things to be all sunshine and roses. I didn’t think of that as a *bad* thing, but it wasn’t exactly “hope.”

It dawned on me recently that I frequently settle for a superficial meaning of the word: “I hope we have good weather tomorrow.” “I hope things work out for you.” The way the word “hope” has come to be used, it can have an almost fatalistic ring to it. The things we hope for may or may not work out, so especially when we have little or no control over the outcome, we might as well “hope,” because that’s about all we *can* do.

But the apostle Paul is not talking about the wishful thinking kind of hope here. He’s talking about hope of the Gospel. It’s hope that is grounded in faith in God’s love and loving plan for us personally and for humankind. In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul writes, “We have

this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.”¹ It’s when we face difficulties and the bleak, blank times of life that hope in the deepest, truest sense shines brighter, stronger. *This* is how the deepening and shaping of our character produces hope.

Then we won’t shrink from the trials of life or be apprehensive in times of uncertainty. The hope that “does not put us to shame” will never let us down. Why? Because it comes to us through God’s love, which “has been poured into our hearts.” From that love springs faith, hope, and yet more love. It’s a beautiful, perfect cycle, an ongoing exchange of hope and trust that God has given to carry us through life, closer to Him.

OLIVIA BAUER IS A COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT IN WINNIPEG, CANADA. ■

1. Hebrews 6:19 NIV

WHAT'S THE POINT?

BY PHILLIP LYNCH

WHEN I TURNED 60 LAST YEAR, I did some soul searching. I clearly hadn't achieved all I could or should have in my life so far. Was I therefore a failure? Give me a minute before I answer that.

I'd gone through some changes recently and was now at a place both geographically and career-wise that was not what I had had in mind. I wasn't unhappy, but I wasn't entirely pleased with my circumstances either. I felt like I was becalmed at sea, no wind in my sails, monotonous stretches of ocean in all directions. The horizon was in sight, but that didn't help. I couldn't decide which point on the horizon to aim for, and even if I could, I had no means to propel myself towards it. What and where was my purpose in life?

For all my adult life, I had dedicated myself to varying degrees

to achieving what I understood to be God's purpose for me. I had thought I had a fairly good idea of what this was, but now all bets were off. I had primed myself for great things, but now great things seemed a pipe dream.

As I reflected on my own life and the lives of others, I realized that there are some people who most of us can agree were great—not necessarily because we approve of everything they said and did, but because they had an impact; in some objective way their lives and achievements *were* great. But were these relative few the only ones who had fulfilled their destinies? For that matter, is there any such thing as destiny? Are our lives supposed to be fulfilling in themselves? Are we supposed to be satisfied at the end of it all? Is that the point? Or is there something else at work here?

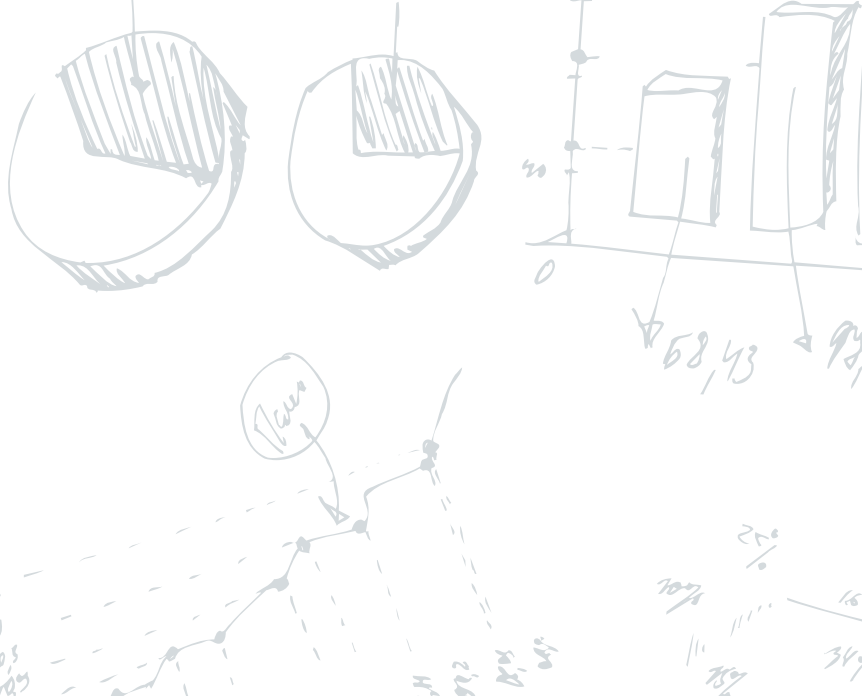
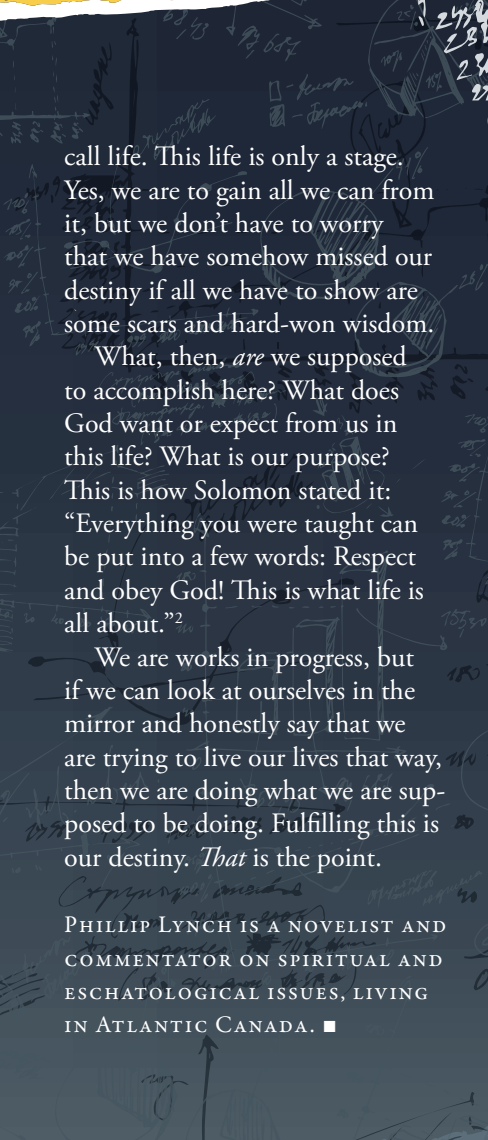
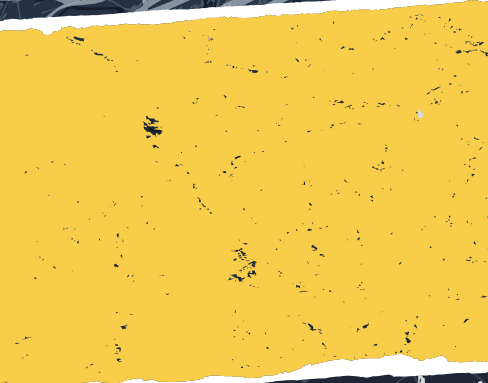
Saint Paul wrote, "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be

pitied."¹ When I meditated on this verse in the past, I had looked at it from Paul's first-century perspective. We all know that there were copious amounts of persecution directed at the first Christians, to whom Paul was writing. He meant to encourage them that their brief lives here were not the final word or the whole story.

Life is often compared with school. I can remember grumbling along with many of my classmates about being stuck in school when we wanted nothing more than to get on with our lives. It seemed as though we would be stuck there forever, while teachers kept trying to cram more lessons into us. But school wasn't meant to be the culmination of our lives. It wasn't our destiny. It was merely a training ground, an opportunity to garner knowledge and skills that we could apply later.

I now believe that we are not supposed to peak in this school we

1. 1 Corinthians 15:19 NIV
2. Ecclesiastes 12:13 CEV



call life. This life is only a stage. Yes, we are to gain all we can from it, but we don't have to worry that we have somehow missed our destiny if all we have to show are some scars and hard-won wisdom.

What, then, *are* we supposed to accomplish here? What does God want or expect from us in this life? What is our purpose? This is how Solomon stated it: "Everything you were taught can be put into a few words: Respect and obey God! This is what life is all about."²

We are works in progress, but if we can look at ourselves in the mirror and honestly say that we are trying to live our lives that way, then we are doing what we are supposed to be doing. Fulfilling this is our destiny. *That* is the point.

PHILLIP LYNCH IS A NOVELIST AND COMMENTATOR ON SPIRITUAL AND ESCHATOLOGICAL ISSUES, LIVING IN ATLANTIC CANADA. ■

FAILURE?

POINTS TO PONDER

I have missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I have lost almost 300 games. On 26 occasions I have been entrusted to take the game-winning shot . . . and missed. And I have failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why . . . I succeed.—*Michael Jordan* (b. 1963), *American basketball player*

Failure is only the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.—*Henry Ford* (1863–1947), *founder of the Ford Motor Company*

Failure is success if we learn from it.—*Malcom S. Forbes* (1919–1990), *publisher of Forbes magazine*

When defeat comes, accept it as a signal that your plans are not sound, rebuild those plans, and set sail once more toward your coveted goal.—*Napoleon Hill* (1883–1970), *American author and pioneer of the personal-success genre*

Failure is the foundation of success, and the means by which it is achieved.—*Lao Tzu* (sixth-century BC), *Chinese philosopher*

I've come to believe that all my past failure and frustration were actually laying the foundation for the understandings that have created the new level of living I now enjoy.—*Tony Robbins* (b. 1960), *American author and speaker* ■



NEW BEGINNINGS

A NEW YEAR'S CHALLENGE

BY VIRGINIA BRANDT BERG

AS WE STAND BEFORE THE NEW YEAR, we don't know what's in store for us. But there's one thing we do know, and that is that we can leave the past, with all of its cares, pains, heartaches, and mistakes, behind. We can't undo one single act or unsay one single word, but if we will give our grief and regrets to God, He can make this New Year a fresh start.

Every day of the past year is beyond our reach, and we should leave it there. God has the past in His keeping, and we should not go back and be tormented with regrets.

1. See Isaiah 43:25.
2. Romans 8:1 NLT
3. Isaiah 1:18
4. Philippians 3:13–14 NLT
5. 1 John 1:9

It's sad how some people say they're trusting God, yet they worry about the blots and stains on the pages of their past.

Once we have turned to God and confessed our mistakes and wrongdoings and asked for forgiveness, then there's no need to go picking around in the past and bringing up those things again. God says of your past sins, "I will blot out your sins and will never think of them again."¹ If God doesn't even remember them, why should we?

The Bible also tells us, "There is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus."² Rather than going back into the past and regretting this and that and weeping over things that we can't change, we should remember God's comforting promise, "Though your sins are like

scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be [white] as wool."³

I once read a poem that went something like this: "If I could find the road to yesterday, I'd write the page with cleaner pen and wipe out yesterdays." Well, I don't want to find the path to yesterday, because I can't wipe out anything! Only God can cover those mistakes of the past. Thankfully it isn't God's way to make us relive the past. Who would want to when the future is as bright as the wonderful promises of God?

When I think about the year before us, I think about all of the promises in God's Word and about the wonderful things that can happen because those promises are unfailing, unchanging, and meant for each of us personally. With all of



those promises, why would anyone want to go back and retrace the past, to walk the road to yesterday?

Because Jesus has already paid the penalty for our wrongdoing, we can say with the apostle Paul, “I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.”⁴

Forget those things which are behind. Press onward and upward toward the goal and the prize. What a pity if we carry the burden of the past when the Lord paid such a price to lift that burden and set us free!

A young man once came up to me after I’d spoken to a large group about this subject. He was a former criminal, just out of prison, and he

couldn’t believe that it was so easy. He couldn’t believe that God would cleanse his past if only he would ask Jesus to come into his life and be his Savior. It was just too much for him to believe that God could forgive such an awful past, but that night he gave his heart to Jesus, and Jesus lifted that load. Jesus forgave that man and gave him freedom he had never known. After that, the man never stopped talking about the mercy of God and how God had rid him of the torment of the past. He would often repeat the words of a hymn that he fell in love with: “My yesterdays so filled with guilt and shame, my yesterdays are gone, oh praise His name!”

Is there anything more wonderful than the miracle of forgiveness and the assurance of having our mistakes forgiven? This wonderful forgiveness

is for all of us. Jesus died for all of us. All we have to do is accept His forgiveness and receive Him as our Savior. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”⁵ That’s His unqualified, unbreakable promise to you.

If you haven’t met the One who can lift the burdens of your past and give you a bright future now and eternal life in the world to come, you can today. He stands meekly at your heart’s door, waiting for you to invite Him in. Simply pray, “Jesus, please come into my life, forgive my sins, fill me with Your love, and give me Your gift of eternal life.”

VIRGINIA BRANDT BERG
(1886–1968) WAS AN AMERICAN
EVANGELIST AND PASTOR. ■



LITTLE

GREEN

STEPS OF

PROGRESS

BY JOE JOHNSTON

ONE DAY JOE BROKE HIS ARM.

They said it was par for the parkour he practiced. Joe was a traceur. He lived in a world that consisted of one giant obstacle course, climbing and leaping, escaping and reaching, vaulting and rolling across his busy cityscape. Joe pushed himself on his runs, sometimes over cars or walls, sometimes across rooftops. Sometimes too far. Destiny watched him from afar, eyeing his toothpick arm and waiting for her chance.

On the morning when he broke his arm, Joe had gone with a couple of friends on a practice run for a home video they were making. A few warm-up moves gave Destiny her chance.

Joe ran up a small wall, perched on the top for an instant, then leaped out into space. His fingers closed around a horizontal metal bar in front of him, a bar that was supposed to stop his fall.

A bar supported by rotting wood. The wood gave way, and Joe fell backwards.

The dusty ground broke more than his fall. He scrambled to his feet clutching his left wrist, which was bent down and then up in a sharp “Z.” Someone called the paramedics.

Joe woke up in the hospital, eyelids still heavy from the sedatives they’d given him. A white plaster cast from his wrist to his elbow sheathed his badly dislocated wrist and the two fractures in the radius.

For four weeks, Joe struggled with his disability. He learned to type with one hand, to live without daily showers, to let other people button his shirts and tie his shoes and wash his dishes.

After a month, the cast came off. Finally Joe was free. He spent ten minutes scratching and an hour and a half in the bathtub.

But all was not back to normal. After 29 days of disuse, the muscles in his left arm had shrunk and atrophied. His arm was now half its original thickness, and the skin hung like plastic wrap over his mended bone. The slightest attempt to turn or straighten the arm sent shockwaves of pain through his body.

Heat therapy helped to loosen the shriveled muscles, and he was able to pivot the wrist a little more each day. Soon it was time to start strength therapy. After a month of stockpiling cobwebs in the darkness under Joe’s bed, his old 35-pound dumbbell again found itself in the center of the room, squinting at the light. He grabbed at the handle enthusiastically with his left hand and heaved. Nothing. He strained. He sweated. He gritted his teeth and chewed into his tongue. He breathed muffled threats at the stubborn iron mass.



The weight just sat there grinning. Tactics would have to change.

Joe borrowed a small expandable dumbbell from his sister (for a paperweight, he told her). It was tiny and covered in green plastic. Joe made sure no one saw him as he snuck it into his room.

As he struggled with his little green “paperweight,” he could hear his friends grunting under the weight of giant barbells, heaving and thrusting as they exerted themselves silly. He ignored the distant manliness.

It was hard work at first—even with such a ridiculously small plaything—and every lift pained him. But as the days went by and he ignored the ache in his wrist, it began to go away. Soon Joe had mastered the little green toy.

What pride he felt when he added two more little green disks. He still wasn't strong, but he was *getting*

strong. The solution would not be to crush himself with unrealistic expectations. It would be to start small and work up.

Soon he had added *all* of the little green disks to the dumbbell and was flinging it around like a house in a tornado. The iron dumbbell under the bed surrendered eventually as well, subjugated by determination and a few little green steps of progress.

Joe still has a ways to go before his arm is completely back to normal, but he knows that it won't help to grizzle about the things he could once do with his arm. Instead, he looks back at how far he has come and ahead to complete recovery one day.

And when that day comes, well, I might just go out for another run.

JOE JOHNSTON IS A WRITER AND LIVES IN MEXICO. ■

A traceur is a participant of parkour, a physical discipline—also considered an art form—that focuses on uninterrupted, efficient, forward motion over, under, around, and through man-made and natural obstacles in one's environment. Such movement may come in the form of running, jumping, climbing, and other more complex techniques. The goal of practicing parkour is to be able to adapt one's movement to any given scenario so that any obstacle can be overcome with the human body's abilities.¹

1. Source: Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parkour>

THROUGH THE FOG

BY MARIE STORY

CHANGES ARE AWFULLY UNSETTLING FOR ME. I like my little nest, where everything is just so and nothing jostles me too much. I like routines and schedules, the comfort of knowing what's going on—both immediately and in the future. Change can be exciting sometimes, but mostly it's really tough. It's tough leaving behind stuff I know and love, and it's tough not knowing what's ahead.

Not long ago, my husband and I found ourselves moving away from family and friends. We had good reasons for the move, and we knew where we were going, but of course much of the future was still a big blank. And that was scary.

Our trip took us through mountain roads at night, and as we drove, thick fog set in. There were no lights or houses lining this stretch of road, and to make things worse, it soon seemed that we may have taken a wrong turn. *Great.*

I squinted into the fog, leaning forward against my seat belt, trying to see where we were going. I couldn't see any signs, and I got more and more worried that we were going the wrong way. As I said, I don't like uncertainty.

My imagination went hyperactive, creating all kinds of awful scenarios, like being lost in the mountains or sliding off the edge of a steep cliff. Each scenario was worse than the last.

Finally I quit trying to see through the fog and settled back in my seat. I looked over at my husband, and


he was confidently driving on, not worried about the fog but just slowly following the road immediately in front of us. I sat back and willed myself to relax—and sure enough, we eventually got safely through the fog and back on to clear roads, and we made it safely to our destination.

My life at the time was like that dark and fog-clouded road. All I could see was what was immediately before us, like headlights only illuminate one patch of road at a time. But God is my driver, and I can trust Him. He has a perfect driving record, and He's always gotten me safely to my destination before. Even though I have sometimes thought we were lost, He always knew exactly where we were.

When God led the children of Israel through the desert,¹ they didn't have a map or a compass or

1. See Exodus 12–40.

2. NIV



a smartphone with built-in GPS telling them when to turn. They didn't even know where they were going. All they knew was that they were supposed to leave Egypt.

While it could not have been fun being slaves in Egypt, maybe it was tough for some of the Israelites to leave the only life they knew. Maybe some of them had friends in Goshen, and at least they had had food to eat and a place to live.

But as they obeyed and followed God, He took care of them. When they ran into a dead end at the Red Sea, He opened a road for them right through the water. When they were hungry, He dropped food from the sky. When they were thirsty, He poured water from a rock. When they didn't know which way to go, He put a cloud in front of them to lead the way.

Yet even after all that, they still doubted God. I never understood why; it was obvious that God had been with them all along. Why would they question His abundance and care after He showed them again and again what He was capable of? But then, I do the same thing. God has never failed to provide for me and guide my life, and yet I still end up fretting when the future isn't clearly mapped out.

Proverbs 3:5–6 tells us to “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.” Even if everything is dark ahead, if you feel like you're in a fog and you don't know which way to go, if you acknowledge God, if you turn to Him, He will guide you. He will keep you on the right track and

bring you through to your personal Promised Land.

As I was getting ready to make this big move, I came across a Bible verse that I couldn't remember ever having read before—Jeremiah 29:11: “I know the plans I have for you,” the Lord says, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”² Now *that's* a promise! He has plans for each of us. He is going to prosper us. He wants to give us hope and a future. Isn't that great?

The future still isn't totally clear, and I know it may never be. I'm not sure how everything is going to turn out in the end, but that's okay. I know who is in control, and I know His plan is perfect.

MARIE STORY IS A FREELANCE ILLUSTRATOR AND DESIGNER, AND A MEMBER OF TFI IN THE U.S. ■

AIM HIGH, FINISH STRONG

BY DAVID BOLICK

I READ AN ARTICLE IN A RUNNING MAGAZINE THAT EXPLAINED HOW CAFFEINE COULD ENHANCE A RUNNER'S PERFORMANCE IN A RACE BY DIMINISHING THE PERCEPTION OF FATIGUE. I tried it in a marathon, and sure enough, not only did I set an all-time personal best, but I did so after expending precious energy conversing with a fellow runner during the entire first half of the race. Had I realized that my tongue would be stimulated along with my legs and had I focused more on the race, I'm sure I could have finished even faster.

In that instance and in others since, caffeine provided a boost that translated into a few minutes' difference in my race time. I don't take in extra caffeine during my normal training. If I did, it wouldn't have the same effect during a race. Also, without a solid base of fitness upon which to apply it, no amount of caffeine would set any records. In order to benefit from that extra

boost, I had to put in many miles of training week after week, adhere to a healthy lifestyle day in and day out, and really enjoy running.

I didn't start my running career that way. At first my motivation was rather shortsighted. I had recently recovered from a very bad cough and didn't want to get that sick again. Over time I discovered the following principles, which are motivational experts' bread and butter because they can be applied to almost any area of life:

1. SET SMALL, REACHABLE, SHORT-TERM GOALS. When I first began running, my goal was to put on my

running shoes, get outside, and run a little every day.

2. DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP WHEN YOU FALL SHORT. You will have bad days and bad spells; everyone does. Negative self-talk about a disappointing performance is more damaging than the "failure" itself.

3. BE FLEXIBLE. Adapt to changing circumstances. Expect surprises and flow with them.

4. AIM HIGH. Small, achievable, short-term goals are necessary, but so are large long-term ones. Dare to dream an impossible dream.

5. NOURISH YOUR DREAM. Why is this goal important to you? Why do you believe it can be done? Why do you believe you are the person to do it? Write down your answers, collect inspirational and motivational quotes and anecdotes that support your answers, and review them in times of crisis and self-doubt.

6. HAVE PATIENCE. When clocking your progress, watch the hour hand, not the second hand.

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YOU HAVE TRUSTED [GOD] IN A FEW THINGS, AND HE HAS NOT FAILED YOU. TRUST HIM NOW FOR EVERYTHING. YOU FIND NO DIFFICULTY IN TRUSTING HIM WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF THE UNIVERSE AND ALL THE OUTWARD CREATION, AND CAN YOUR CASE BE ANY MORE COMPLEX OR DIFFICULT THAN THESE, THAT YOU NEED TO BE ANXIOUS OR TROUBLED ABOUT HIS MANAGEMENT OF IT?

—HANNAH WHITALL SMITH (1832–1911)



A Spiritual Exercise

BY ABI F. MAY

Day By Day

LIFE IS OFTEN PICTURED AS A JOURNEY. Step by step, day by day, we travel along a road that is uniquely ours. Although we sometimes share our joys and griefs with others we meet along the way, nobody else's journey is exactly the same. The one thing that we do have in common, however, is the possibility of a life companion and counselor who will be with us each moment. God says, "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know" and "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go."¹

If you look back at your journey through the past year, particularly

times when you struggled, you can probably recognize situations that could have played out better had you prayed for guidance and followed the path that God indicated. But don't worry! It's a new year, fresh with new possibilities.

Take a few minutes to think about your daily routine. Perhaps you could start a prayer diary, or make a plan to read through the book of Psalms or the Gospels, or take five minutes when you wake up or before you go to sleep to think about the good things in your life and thank God for them. Whatever you decide, make it a resolution and stick with it, for you have "a friend who sticks closer than a brother."²

Day by day, and with each passing moment,
Strength I find to meet my trials here;
Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment,
I've no cause for worry or for fear.
He, whose heart is kind beyond all measure,
Gives unto each day what He deems best,
Lovingly its part of pain and pleasure,
Mingling toil with peace and rest.

—*Lina Sandell (1832–1903), translated from Swedish to English by A. L. Skoog*

1. Jeremiah 33:3 NIV; Psalm 32:8

2. Proverbs 18:24

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FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

You and I, Together

You need Me. You need what I have to give you. You need My strength, My love, My supply, My protection. I have all this for you and more. I am your life source, and because I am, your life can be wonderful, beautiful, rich, and filled with what I know will prove most important in the long run.

I will never leave you alone or comfortless. I will never leave you without guidance and direction. I will never leave you without grace and strength to fight life's battles. I will never leave you without rest and renewal after those battles. I will always

provide your needs. You don't need to fear or be anxious because I, the One who loves you like no other can, have special plans for you.

Follow the path on which I set your feet. It is a path that leads to the best life that you could possibly have. There is no greater security than is found when you invite Me to go with you day by day and involve Me choice by choice. Together, we can make more of your future than you ever could on your own. Watch as I unfold the mysterious and beautiful canvas of your life.

