

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

# ACTIVATED

Vol 15 • Issue 5

## OVER THE PRECIPICE

Mountaintop miracle

## Effective Quiet Time in Five Steps

A spiritual boost

## Quite a Commotion

Downtown ruckus



## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION FINDING GOD

Trying to describe God can be a challenging prospect. There are so many sides to His personality, and He's so much greater and more profound than we'll ever be able to grasp. Besides, each of us is at a different stage in our personal growth, and our relationship with God changes over the years.

For instance, my two-year-old daughter, Audrey, seems to know God as a friendly gentleman with a long white beard who keeps an eye on things from behind some clouds. Jesus usually shows up in her books as a baby in a manger or a shepherd counting sheep.

It's fine that children relate to God in simple ways. Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children."<sup>1</sup> Still, I'm looking forward to Audrey growing in maturity to the point that she can experience many more of God's attributes, such as His wisdom,<sup>2</sup> His power to heal,<sup>3</sup> His comfort,<sup>4</sup> His help in time of trouble,<sup>5</sup> and so on.

Although none of us can ever fully understand God, we can find clues in His Word to help us get to know Him better. Most importantly, the Bible tells us that God loves each of us fervently, even though He knows all the wrong stuff we've done. His love is permanent, unconditional, and complete. "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."<sup>6</sup>

Samuel Keating  
Executive Editor

1. Matthew 19:14 NLT
2. See James 1:5.
3. See James 5:16.
4. See Psalm 147:3.
5. See Psalm 46:1.
6. Romans 8:38-39

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The more we let God take us over, the more truly ourselves we become—because He made us. He invented us. He invented all the different people that you and I were intended to be. It is when I turn to Christ, when I give up myself to His personality, that I first begin to have a real personality of my own.

—C. S. Lewis (1898–1963)

# The Master's Hands

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

**A MOTHER ONCE TOOK HER YOUNG SON**, who was just beginning to learn to play the piano, to hear the world-famous pianist Jan Paderewski in concert.

After an usher showed them to their seats, the mother spotted a friend in the audience and walked down the aisle to greet her. The little boy saw that as his opportunity to explore the wonders of the concert hall, and eventually explored his way through a door marked “NO ADMITTANCE.” When the house lights dimmed and the concert was about to begin, the mother returned to her seat and discovered that her son was missing.

Suddenly, the curtains parted and spotlights focused on the impressive

grand piano on stage. In horror, the mother saw her little boy sitting at the keyboard, innocently picking out “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” At that moment, Paderewski made his entrance, quickly moved to the piano, and whispered in the boy’s ear, “Don’t quit. Keep playing.”

Then Paderewski leaned over, reached down with his left hand and began filling in a bass part. Soon his right arm reached around to the other side of the child and added a third part. Together, the old master and the young novice transformed a frightening situation into a wonderfully creative experience. The audience was mesmerized.

That’s the way it is with our heavenly Father. What we can

accomplish on our own is hardly noteworthy. We try our best, but the results aren’t exactly graceful, flowing music. But with the hands of the Master, our life’s work truly can be beautiful.

Next time you set out to accomplish great feats, listen carefully. You can hear the voice of the Master, whispering in your ear, “Don’t quit. Keep playing.” Feel His loving arms around you. Know that His strong hands are there, helping you turn your feeble attempts into true masterpieces. Remember, God doesn’t call the equipped; He equips the called. As long as you’re trying your best to do what He knows is best, He’ll always be there to love and guide you on to great things. ■



# The Rock

BY PETER AMSTERDAM, ADAPTED

MY WIFE MARIA AND I RECENTLY RETURNED FROM A TRIP TO SWITZERLAND WHERE WE STAYED WITH SOME FRIENDS WHO LIVE BY A LAKE. While there, I would often look out the window at the beautiful lake and surrounding mountains. There was one mountain in particular which stood out to me. It jutted up like a gigantic rock, and each morning when we opened the curtains, I would look at it and marvel at how majestically it towered over the lake.

Whenever I went in and out of the house, I'd pause for a few moments to take in the beautiful view and scenery, and would

invariably end up focusing on the mountain. Some days, the sky was blue and clear, and the mountain seemed close enough to reach out and touch. One day, the top half of the mountain was covered in clouds, and all that could be seen were the trees which reached halfway up, while the rest was obscured. Another morning, because of fog, it wasn't possible to see the mountain at all.

On our last morning in Switzerland, I was thinking about a number of friends and the various experiences and challenges they had been facing. One found himself fighting a severe life-threatening illness virtually from one day to the next, which required months of being in the hospital, uncertain whether he would recover or not.

One couple had plans in place which would help them financially, but at the very last minute these fell through. Another was moving her family to another country without knowing all the details about how things would work out once she arrived. One couple's Christian work, which they'd had for years, was coming to an end, and they didn't yet know what God wanted them to do next. Another man lost his job at the same time as he and his wife were facing some sickness in their family, and he hadn't yet been able to find a new one.

As I thought about these dear friends, and so many others who are faced with uncertainty, I was reminded of what I had observed while looking at the mountain over the previous days—how on some

1. 2 Corinthians 5:7

2. See Hebrews 13:5.



## GOD, AS A ROCK

Who is a rock, except our God?—*Psalm 18:31 ESV*

The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety.—*Psalm 18:2 NLT*

Only God is my rock and my salvation—my stronghold!—I won't be shaken anymore.—*Psalm 62:2 CEB* ■

days the mountain was so clear, so obviously there, while on other days parts of it were obscure, and on the foggy day I couldn't see it at all. And yet, whatever the weather, even when it couldn't be seen, the mountain was there. Fog or clouds or raging storms might make it difficult to see, or even invisible, but it was still there, standing strong and immovable.

I was struck by the courage of these people and of countless others who face the uncertainties of life with deep faith, even when God's presence in their lives is less evident. The Bible verse "we walk by faith, not by sight"<sup>1</sup> came to mind. The fact is that, like the mountain, God, in all His majesty, is always there. Whether we see or feel Him is irrelevant to the fact that He is there.

Through all the storms of our lives; through the times of uncertainty or confusion or weakened faith; through the fears, the questions, the doubts, the loss, He is there.

Sometimes things are bright and sunny in our lives, and God's blessings are very clear to us. At other times, like when the top of the mountain is covered in clouds, it's a bit more difficult to see or feel His presence; and in the dense fog of uncertainty, one can question if He's there at all. But He is like the mountain; nothing has changed on His side. He is there, solid, immovable, ever loving, ever caring, never failing.

Looking at this mountain—this gigantic rock rising above the lake—brought to mind the stability of God, the sureness of His presence

and help, regardless of the circumstances. We may worry or fear; we may doubt or be unsure. The storms that seem to engulf our lives at times can make it seem like He's not there, not listening, or not concerned. But the simple fact is that the storms, the fog, and the winds in life don't affect the presence of God any more than these elements in nature affect that mountain.

God is there, always. He will never leave or forsake us.<sup>2</sup> Our faith may fail, but He isn't dependent on our faith, for He is the Rock, the mountain, the faithful one upon whom we can depend. Always.

PETER AMSTERDAM AND HIS WIFE, MARIA FONTAINE, ARE DIRECTORS OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL, A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF FAITH. ■



# OVER THE PRECIPICE

BY MARCUS VERNIER

OVER FORTY YEARS LATER, this episode from a holiday in Scotland is still vivid in my mind. That morning, my friend Adrian and I set out from the youth hostel in Fort William, intent on climbing Ben Nevis, Britain's highest mountain (1,344 meters [4,409 ft]). We were a pair of adventurous teenagers and brushed off warnings from the locals that it was not a good day to climb.

We took warm clothing, strong boots, ice axes, and Kendal Mint Cake (a peppermint confectionary popular with mountaineers for its high energy content), and started out, even though the pale wintery sun was already becoming clouded over by a thick mist. We'd chosen the harder north ridge ascent, and surrounded by a blanket of white snow and fog, we soon lost all visibility.

We continued climbing mostly in silence. I was holding the compass, map, and illustrated guidebook—though these had limited use under the circumstances. When I thought I recognized a landmark, I paused to try to make out my surroundings... and realized that Adrian was no longer there! I squinted, then jumped back in alarm: the thin gray line just inches in front of my feet was the edge. I realized with horror that my friend must have gone over.

My immediate instinctive reaction was to pray for his safety. Prayer was not a regular habit for me at the time, but I knew how to pray from rare church visits and religious education classes in school.

Then I remembered a mountain hut lower down the slope and turned back to get help. Soon, though, I ran into Adrian, who was also heading

down! It turned out that he had in fact fallen several hundred feet, but he had bounced off the snow-covered outcrops. Remarkably, his only injury was a scratch on his wrist. It seemed I was more shaken by what had happened than he was!

I don't know the exact details of what happened, but I truly believe that my prayer, unpolished but sincere, played a part in saving my friend that day.

MARCUS VERNIER IS A TFI MEMBER LIVING IN TAIWAN. APART FROM HIS MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES, HE IS PURSUING AN INTEREST IN WATER-COLOR PAINTING AND WRITING. ■

Has God come through for you in a special way? Do you have an answer to prayer that you'd like to share? Write to *Activated* at [activated@activated.org](mailto:activated@activated.org).



# Lights Will Guide You Home

BY BETH JORDAN

I WAS DRIVING HOME ONE NIGHT WITH THE WINDOWS ROLLED DOWN, the wind making a mess of my hair. The radio was playing, but I was mostly absorbed in my own thoughts—that is, until the first words from “Fix You” by Coldplay caught my attention.

*When you try your best, but you don't succeed*

*When you get what you want, but not what you need*

*When you feel so tired, but you can't sleep ...*

I began listening to the rest of the song. And I found that it was as if I was listening to a story—my story.

*Lights will guide you home ...*

The song came to a close as I pulled into the driveway. “Lights will guide you home,” I repeated. What a simple yet profound thought. I leaned back and closed my eyes. *Thank You that Your light has always guided me home.*

I remembered the many times when I'd felt lost or alone or confused, but then the light of God's love and care was always there to guide me home, back into His loving arms. This light has come in many forms—a friend who came to see me at just the right time; my mom or dad; a stranger who shed some new perspective on my life and thinking; and, of course, the love of my life, my husband, whose passion for life has many a time been like the sun breaking through the clouds on a stormy day.

I realized that God's light has always shone on my heart. It has never turned off, never run out of power, never dimmed. Whenever I

have stopped and looked, His light has always been there to guide me home.

Jesus told His disciples, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”<sup>1</sup> He is a beacon of hope, a guiding light showing us the way to walk to reach our destination and fulfill our destiny; He is a warm glow that keeps us feeling loved when we may feel unlovely. Whenever we look up and away from what surrounds us, we can feel His light and His brilliance.

Every single time I've stopped and looked up, the light has guided me home. And I know it always will.

BETH JORDAN LIVES IN INDIA WITH HER HUSBAND AND TWO CHILDREN. THEY ARE THE FOUNDERS OF PLACE FOR CHANGE, WHICH COORDINATES VOLUNTEER-ABROAD PROGRAMS IN INDIA, NEPAL, AND THAILAND. ■

1. John 8:12



# Reaching “Pleasant Places”

BY AMANDA WHITE

I LOVE PSALM 23. Perhaps it’s because I especially love the verses about being in calm, beautiful, and peaceful situations: “He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.”<sup>1</sup>

I was meditating on this psalm and realized that it’s somewhat of a snapshot of life. In that short chapter, just six verses, you get a brief picture of the cycles of life—the highs and lows, the good times and bad, the peaceful and chaotic. Yet through it all, one thing remains: God’s presence. The enduring and unchanging truth: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”<sup>2</sup>

I’m a creature of comfort and routine. I like the times in my life when I’m resting in the green pastures and drinking from the beautiful still waters—those periods when everything is going well, when I’m seeing and feeling the blessings, when everything is chugging along pretty seamlessly.

I naturally feel God’s presence more during times of peace and plenty. There’s not as much need, and I feel more confident that He’s there and with me. We don’t usually need to be reminded of God being with us during such times, because we already feel it—we’re in the green pastures and beside the still waters.

Sometimes, though, when things go haywire or not according to plan—the “dark valley” parts of life—I start to feel less like He’s with me. King David was no stranger to times of difficulty, perhaps that’s why he reminds himself of God’s presence in verse four: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”<sup>3</sup>

God is with us, He is comforting us, even if we can’t sense His presence as strongly. He’s there, even if the dark valley portion of our journey is a little bit longer (or maybe even a lot longer) than we had hoped.

I’m going through a dark valley time right now. And unfortunately,

1. Psalm 23:2–3

2. Psalm 23:1

3. Psalm 23:4

4. Tony Snow, “Cancer’s Unexpected Blessings,” *Christianity Today*, July 20, 2007

5. 1 Corinthians 2:9



I'm impatient. I want the challenge over and done with. I want God to supply what I need right away. I want to move from the "dark valley" part to the "green pasture" part as quickly as possible—and when I get there, I know I will want that portion of my life to last as long as possible before I'm interrupted by another dark valley.

I read a quote this morning that clearly expressed my natural inclination and yet reminded me that God's perspective and plan is so much bigger and better than mine. So often I want Him to be "done already," whereas it's going to take that little bit longer for Him to set everything in place as He has planned. Here's the quote:

"God relishes surprise. We want lives of simple, predictable ease—smooth, even trails as far as the eye can see—but God likes to go off-road. He places us in predicaments that seem to defy our endurance and comprehension—and yet don't. By His love and grace, we persevere. The challenges that make our stomachs churn invariably strengthen our

faith and grant measures of wisdom and joy we would not experience otherwise."<sup>4</sup>

I'd like the stomach churning to end, but I also like the thought that God is loving this ride. I know that He's somehow going to work things out for my good. And in the meantime, I hope that I will gain all that He has for me to experience before this off-road journey ends and I reach the green pastures again. I just need to be patient and wait for His timing.

Another personal favorite promise is, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."<sup>5</sup> I know that verse is talking about what God has prepared for us in heaven, but I like to also claim it for the things that I'm sure He has prepared for me here on earth as well. Since I love Him and He loves me, I know that He has good things lined up ahead.

AMANDA WHITE IS AN OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA. ■



Those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing.—*Psalm 34:10*

My future is in your hands.—*Psalm 31:15 NLT*

The godly will flourish like palm trees and grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon. For they are transplanted to the Lord's own house. They flourish in the courts of our God. They will declare, "The Lord is just! He is my rock! There is no evil in him!"—*Psalm 92:12–13, 15 NLT*



# SAVE YOUR SANITY!

BY MARIA FONTAINE, ADAPTED

**RESTING IN THE LORD**<sup>1</sup> is putting your weight down on Jesus and spending time in deep communion and fellowship with Him so that He can infuse you with strength and renew your vision. It's carrying a spirit of peace and faith and putting Jesus first. Resting in the Lord is pleasant because it involves thinking about Jesus and spending time with Him, and in that sense, it's not hard or taxing, although it does take commitment to slow down and stop our other activities in order to do it.

Most of us lead busy lives, so we need the calm and peace and strength that come from resting in the Lord and taking time for meditation. Each of us needs to learn that secret of leaning hard on Him,

committing our work to Him, resting in Him, and looking to Him.<sup>2</sup>

So many people long for peace. When we're resting in the Lord, our spirits and minds are more filled with His Spirit, and we're able to pass this on to others. The more at peace we are, the more faith we manifest, and the more they will want what we have.

As we slow down in order to spend time resting in the Lord, meditating on Him, and getting His take on things, He can show us what our priorities are, and we'll have increased faith to act on them. Resting in the Lord and meditating brings a whole lot more peace and calm to our spirits, and that makes it a sanity saver during busy times.

MARIA FONTAINE AND HER HUSBAND, PETER AMSTERDAM, ARE DIRECTORS OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL, A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF FAITH. ■

## RESTING IN THE LORD

In place of our exhaustion and spiritual fatigue, God will give us rest. All He asks is that we come to Him ... that we spend a while thinking about Him, meditating on Him, talking to Him, listening in silence, occupying ourselves with Him—totally and thoroughly lost in the hiding place of His presence.

—Chuck Swindoll (b. 1934)

Once I knew what it was to rest upon the rock of God's promises, and it was indeed a precious resting place, but now I rest in His grace. He is teaching me that the bosom of His love is a far sweeter resting-place than even the rock of His promises.

—Hannah Whitall Smith (1832–1911) ■

1. See Psalm 37:7.

2. See John 15:5 and Zechariah 4:6.

# EFFECTIVE QUIET TIME IN 5 STEPS

BY DINA ELLENS

I'M SEMI-RETIRED BUT STILL ENJOY AN ACTIVE AND FULL LIFE. Looking back over the past year, I can see the benefits I've gained from spending quiet time with God in the morning, before the busy day begins. Here are five steps that have helped me get a spiritual boost that lasts the whole day. They just might work for you too.

**UNPLUG:** As much as possible, I try to get away from distractions and disturbances such as electronic devices that are constantly popping up reminders, notifications, text and voice messages, and emails. I like to sit on our porch with just my Bible and a notebook and pen.

**RELAX:** I'm someone who is very "task-oriented." If I'm not careful, my quiet time can become just another to-do to check off. I have to consciously choose to relax and enjoy my time with God. He's not in a hurry, so why should I be?

**BE THANKFUL:** I start by writing down five things I'm thankful for from the previous day. This generally provides an instant mood lift. As God's Word says, "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name."<sup>1</sup>

**FOLLOW A READING PLAN:** Having a reading plan so I know what to read helps me get right to it. I also pray before starting, in case God wants to suggest a change. (I've found some helpful reading plans on a variety of subjects at <https://www.youversion.com/reading-plans>.)

**FOCUS:** Because I have a hard time focusing on what I'm reading, I have found the S.O.A.P. method helpful:

**S**cripture: After reading a Bible passage, I look back for a verse that particularly catches my attention and I write it in a notebook.

**O**bservation: I write a brief summary of the passage.

**A**pplication: I write about how my day will be different because of what I've read, lessons to learn, promises to claim, examples to follow, etc.

**P**rayer: I write out a short prayer for myself based on what I just read.

The early morning may not be the best time for everyone, but no matter what slot we use in the day or night, we can all benefit from stepping back and spending time with God. Without it, we'll get stressed and wear thin, but with it, we will be better prepared to tackle whatever challenges life may throw at us.

DINA ELLENS LIVES IN WEST JAVA, INDONESIA, WHERE SHE IS ACTIVE IN VOLUNTEER WORK. ■

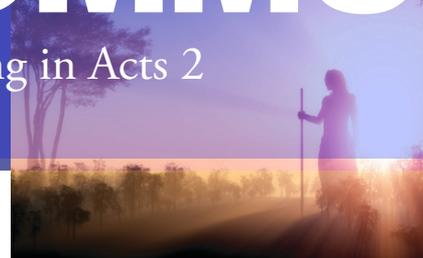
1. Psalm 100:4 NIV



# QUITE A COMMOTION

—An imaginative retelling of events culminating in Acts 2

BY CHRIS HUNT



**“COMMOTION” COMES TO MIND WHEN I THINK OF HIM.** I can't forget the first time I met him.

I was in synagogue for the regular Sabbath service. Judit is an elderly widow who had a terribly deformed back. She went up to this visiting rabbi, pleading for help. Next thing, she was standing up straight for the first time in years! How was that possible?<sup>1</sup>

I saw more of him later, usually at a distance. I'm in good health and moderately successful, so I wasn't following his progress because of any desperate needs of my own. It was more because I loved hearing him talk, loved watching the look on people's faces when he relieved their

pain, brought healing, gave them hope. Everything about him seemed amazing.

I didn't have time or inclination to leave everything behind like his closest followers had done, but I was quite happy to see and hear him when our paths crossed. I expected he'd show up when I went to Jerusalem for Passover, and I wasn't disappointed. There again was the commotion surrounding him as he rode into town. Caught up in the joyful atmosphere, I found myself waving palm branches along with the crowd. Perhaps he really was going to change our world! He was a thoroughly good man, and who knows, maybe he was even more than just another teacher. I'd heard that some were calling him the Messiah, the savior of our people.

But it was the next set of rumors a few days later that made my heart

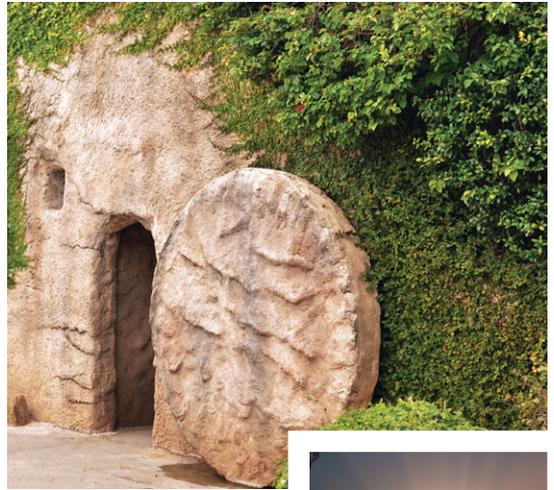
sink—they said he'd been arrested. When I heard he'd been brought before Pilate, I could hardly believe it. Condemned to death as a common criminal? Surely this couldn't be true! What had he done to deserve this? Of course, I knew the temple leaders were jealous of his popularity and success, but that couldn't be a good enough reason to turn him over to the Romans.

I couldn't bear to go anywhere near the execution. It seemed so unjust. The more I thought about it, the less I could understand what had happened. He'd preached a message of love for God and fellow man; he'd gone around helping the helpless. He'd given up everything for the sake of others. When it came down to it,

1. See Luke 13:10–13.

2. Acts 2:38 MSG

3. See John 3:16.



couldn't God have intervened, done some sort of miracle to save him?

I wanted to talk about my confusion with some of his close followers, but I couldn't find them. There was speculation that they were in hiding. And so I returned to my village, still dismayed. I knew there was no chance that Jesus would come wandering around our part of the country again, and I missed him. That wonderful teacher—I guess he *had* been just another teacher—was dead and buried.

Seven weeks later, I was back in Jerusalem for Shavuot—the festival celebrating the giving of the Law to Moses. I still wanted to discuss my questions with his followers, but remembering how they had vanished after his execution, I wasn't hopeful.

Nothing seemed to have changed either in the city or with myself. I

had been gloomy since Passover, and the city itself seemed to be under a shadow, as if feeling guilty that so many of its citizens had supported the execution of an innocent man.

There were crowds of people around, including lots of foreigners. That's when I saw them again—and as could be expected, there was a commotion surrounding them. I was glad to see Jesus' followers safe and sound—glad for their sakes, and also for my own, as it meant I could ask them about what had happened. But before I had a chance to get too close, one of the men began speaking. Loudly, clearly.

I could hardly believe my ears. I knew of course that Jesus had been killed—but according to Peter, he had been raised from the dead! I

listened in wonder as he quoted and explained scriptures. He didn't hold back in his criticism of the way the crowds had stood by when Jesus was crucified, but he offered a way of reconciliation: "Change your life. Turn to God and be baptized ... in the name of Jesus Christ, so your sins are forgiven."<sup>2</sup>

He spoke at length, explaining and pleading with us to receive God's gift. I didn't get to talk with him or any of the others personally, but I didn't need to. I opened my heart in prayer; I committed myself. Best thing I ever did! Now I'm working with the other believers to let others know that God loved us so much that He sent His Son to die for us, so that we could be saved.<sup>3</sup>

Yes, Jesus is still causing a commotion.

CHRIS HUNT LIVES IN GREAT BRITAIN AND HAS BEEN READING *ACTIVATED* SINCE IT WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1999. ■



# SPEED DATE

## QUIET MOMENTS

BY ABI MAY

1. See Deuteronomy 29:29.
2. Isaiah 45:19 NLT
3. Revelation 1:8 MSG
4. Isaiah 57:15 MSG; John 14:23 MSG
5. Isaiah 44:24 NIV; Jeremiah 9:24 MSG and NLV
6. Isaiah 61:8 NLV; Proverbs 12:22 NLT; Psalm 16:3 NLT and MSG
7. Proverbs 6:16–19 NLT
8. Jeremiah 29:11–12 CEB; Deuteronomy 30:9 NLV; Revelation 21:4–5 NLT; Ezekiel 38:23 MSG
9. Jeremiah 31:3 NLV; Isaiah 54:10 NLT; John 15:15 NLT
10. Zechariah 1:3 NET; Isaiah 41:13 NLT
11. John 5:24 CEB

**GOD ISN'T A COMPLETE MYSTERY;** He's told us lots about Himself in His Word. Pull up a chair and hear what He has to say. We won't find out everything,<sup>1</sup> but there's plenty to get started. "I publicly proclaim bold promises. I do not whisper obscurities in some dark corner. I would not have told [you] to seek me if I could not be found."<sup>2</sup>

### *What's Your background?*

I'm A to Z. I'm the God who is, the God who was, and the God about to arrive.<sup>3</sup>

### *Where do You live?*

I live ... with the low-spirited, the spirit-crushed, and what I do is put new spirit in them, get them up and on their feet again. If anyone loves me, he will carefully keep my word and my Father will love him—we'll move right into the neighborhood!<sup>4</sup>

**Tell me a bit about Your work. Do You enjoy it?**

I am ... the Maker of all things. I do what's right and set things right and fair. For I find joy in these things.<sup>5</sup>

### *Do You have any particular likes?*

I ... love what is right and fair. [I delight] in those who tell the truth. The godly people in the land are my true heroes! What splendid friends they make!<sup>6</sup>

### *Dislikes?*

Six things ...—no, seven things ...: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill the innocent, a heart that plots evil, feet that race to do wrong, a false witness who pours out lies, a person who sows discord in a family.<sup>7</sup>

### *How do You see our future together?*

The plans I have in mind for you ... are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope. When you call me and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. [I] will bring much good upon all the



Dear Jesus, through Your sacrifice on the cross, You opened the door for me to have a personal relationship with You and Your Father, an eternal connection that will endure forever in the world to come. Please come into my heart and help me to live a life that pleases You.

work you do. [I] will wipe every tear from [your] eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things [will be] gone forever. ... Look, I am making everything new! I'll show you how great I am, how holy I am. I'll make myself known all over the world.<sup>8</sup>

#### ***What do You think of me?***

I have loved you with a love that lasts forever. The mountains may move and the hills disappear, but even then my faithful love for you will remain. You are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.<sup>9</sup>

#### ***How can I get to know You better?***

Turn to me ... and I will turn to you. Don't be afraid. I am here to help you.<sup>10</sup>

#### ***Anything else You'd like to tell me?***

Whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life.<sup>11</sup> ■

## **A CLOSER WALK**

We need never shout across the spaces to an absent God. He is nearer than our own soul, closer than our most secret thoughts.—*A. W. Tozer (1897–1963)*

It is in silence that God is known, and through mysteries that he declares himself.—*Robert Hugh Benson (1871–1914)*

To have found God is not an end in itself but a beginning.—*Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929)*

Seek in reading and you will find in meditation; knock in prayer and it shall be opened to you in contemplation.—*St. John of the Cross (1542–1591)*

Whenever a person says to me: "My problem is that I do not love the Lord enough," I usually respond: "No ... your problem is that you do not know how much the Lord loves you."—*Selwyn Hughes (1928–2006)*

There come times when I have nothing more to tell God. If I were to continue to pray in words, I would have to repeat what I have already said. At such times it is wonderful to say to God, "May I be in Thy presence, Lord? I have nothing more to say to Thee, but I do love to be in Thy presence."—*Ole Kristian Hallesby (1879–1961)*

God gives hope to those who dream. Gives miracles to those who believe. He never lets down those who trust and never leaves those who walk with Him.—*Nishan Panwar* ■



FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

# GETTING THE MOST OUT OF LIFE

It saddens Me that so many people are content to just let life pass them by. They may be busy keeping up or trying to get ahead, or they may fill every spare moment with relaxing activities, but where is all that busy activity taking them? When do they really live?

The secret to getting the most out of life is living close to Me and remaining faithful to My teaching.<sup>1</sup> I don't mean that you should hide away and give yourself solely to quiet reflection and study, but rather that when you include Me in your daily activities and look to My Word for guidance,<sup>2</sup> I can help life take on new meaning and depth. You will not only be much happier and feel more fulfilled, but you will brighten the lives of those around you as you reflect My love.

It starts by making a habit of taking a few quiet minutes at the start of every day for prayer and time with Me.<sup>3</sup> Then take what I have taught you in the "classroom" and apply it throughout the day. Whether you're on the job, running errands, or relaxing with family and friends, I can make you a greater blessing to others and bless you in the process. You'll find life will be richer and more meaningful as you look to Me.

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1. See John 8:31.

2. See Psalm 119:105.

3. See Proverbs 8:17.