

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

activated

Vol 21 • Issue 9

A TEMPERAMENTAL GARDEN

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

SOUL RENOVATION

Oddly enough, whenever I'm at the dentist's office, there always seems to be one of those home makeover shows playing on the TV in the waiting room. The sound is muted, but you can follow along in the closed captioning if you're interested—not that the dialogue is particularly exciting. The plots seem mostly identical from episode to episode: The superstar home renovators are introduced to a drab and miserable house. They come up with a plan and get to work with heaps of enthusiasm and loads of laughter. The astonishing result is revealed to the shocked residents.

In some ways, this show provides a parallel to the tremendous transformation that comes about when we meet Jesus and He begins working in our hearts. The immediate results vary from person to person, but all of us are changed through Christ and become new creations, with the ability to live in a new way. "God has chosen to make known . . . the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."¹

Of course, our personality, our mind, and our emotions don't miraculously and instantly change when we find Jesus. He lives in us, but it is our responsibility to let Him be seen and heard through us. This means learning about God through prayer and reading His Word, and then striving to think, speak, and act in a Christlike manner, so that others can come to know Him too.

I hope this issue of *Activated* will be a blessing to you as you work to become more like the Master and let His light shine through you into a dark world.

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1. Colossians 1:27 NIV

BY CHRIS MIZRANY

FROM PUN TO PRAYER

Stop doing what is easy or popular.
Start doing what is right.

—Roy T. Bennett

Jesus is not looking for fans. He is
looking for followers.

—Tony Evans (b. 1949)

Followers of Jesus don't always
know where they are going, but they
always know who they are with.

—David Platt (b. 1979)

TODAY, while visiting a small town, I learned yet again that when God says “Jump,” I should ask, “How high?” He always knows best.

I walked past a shipping depot and almost bumped into a man struggling to load a large tire into his 4x4 truck. I chuckled and said, “Looks like you’re getting tired!” (Yes, I have a propensity for joking with puns, forgive me.) He laughed back, and I continued walking.

Not more than a few meters farther along the street, I heard a voice clearly in my heart saying, “*Go back and help him!*” I suddenly felt ashamed for doing nothing more than making a joke, without even thinking to help. So, I turned around, went back to him, and my help was gratefully accepted.

As we loaded the tires, we got to talking, and I found out that Koos was from the city I live in and moved away

just a few years ago. I told him that I’m a Christian, and a missionary to boot. He said, “That’s awesome! Well, you know, by helping me you showed what you believe.”

Just like that. Wow. How thankful I was to have listened when God spoke, thereby seizing an opportunity to provide a living example of my faith.¹

We talked for quite some time, and before parting we exchanged contact details, and I said a prayer for him. After the prayer he said, “I wish you were staying closer to here, but let’s stay in touch and hopefully meet up again!”

It reminded me of the saying: “Show me what you do, and I’ll tell you what you believe.” May each of us show by our actions, just like the first disciples, that we have been with Jesus.²

CHRIS MIZRANY IS A WEB DESIGNER, PHOTOGRAPHER, AND MISSIONARY WITH HELPING HAND IN CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA. ■

1. James 3:13

2. See Acts 4:13.

BY MARIA FONTAINE

The Birthday Mix-up



IT WAS MY BIRTHDAY AND I WAS RETURNING A PHONE CALL FROM ONE OF MY RELATIVES, but to my surprise, I didn't recognize the voice that answered. The woman on the other end sounded groggy and weak, as though she was sick or had just woken up, or for some reason seemed to barely have the energy to respond. "No, you must have the wrong number. There's no one here by that name."

I sensed that she was weighed down with some great problem. My first reaction was to not inconvenience her more than I already had, so I was hastening to politely say goodbye. "I'm so very sorry for bothering you." Then suddenly, with a flash of illumination, I realized that this was no accident. It wasn't a coincidence; God had put me in contact with this woman, and He would want me to offer some encouragement or witness.

The day before, I had reread an article that I'd written a few years back where I described how I'd nearly missed my chance to give a witness to someone because I was waiting for a "good opening," which didn't seem to come.

I felt God saying, *Don't risk missing it this time! Do it now! Make the connection!*

My mind raced, trying to think of what to say, but all that came to me besides "God bless you" (which sometimes doesn't seem to mean much to people) was "Jesus really loves you."

That seemed a little trivial to me. Couldn't I come up with something more profound? But nothing else came, and I had to say something, so I sympathetically told her, "God bless you. Jesus really loves you!" I paused and waited, half expecting to hear the click of the phone being hung up. But all that I heard was silence.

Finally, with a halting, faint voice, the woman said, "You have no idea how much I needed that today," as she started to weep.

This began a conversation that lasted for over half an hour. She told me her name was Shirley and poured out her heart about how her older sister, who was also her closest friend, had just died,

We must broaden the definition of who our neighbors are, and extend the boundaries of our interest and empathy.
—Wendy Kopp (b. 1967)

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.
—Romans 12:15

In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.
—Matthew 7:12 NIV



leaving her life shattered. Shirley was 71 and was experiencing some serious health problems herself. The other two people she shared a house with were moving on, leaving her with no idea of where to go and no finances to do so.

I told her I couldn't offer her any easy solutions to her troubles, but I knew the One who could help her. I encouraged her to look to Jesus, trusting Him to carry her through this dark time. I said, "I know Jesus loves you. That's why you picked up your phone today, because He wants *you* to know that too. He cares about your every need, and He is going to get you through these hard times."

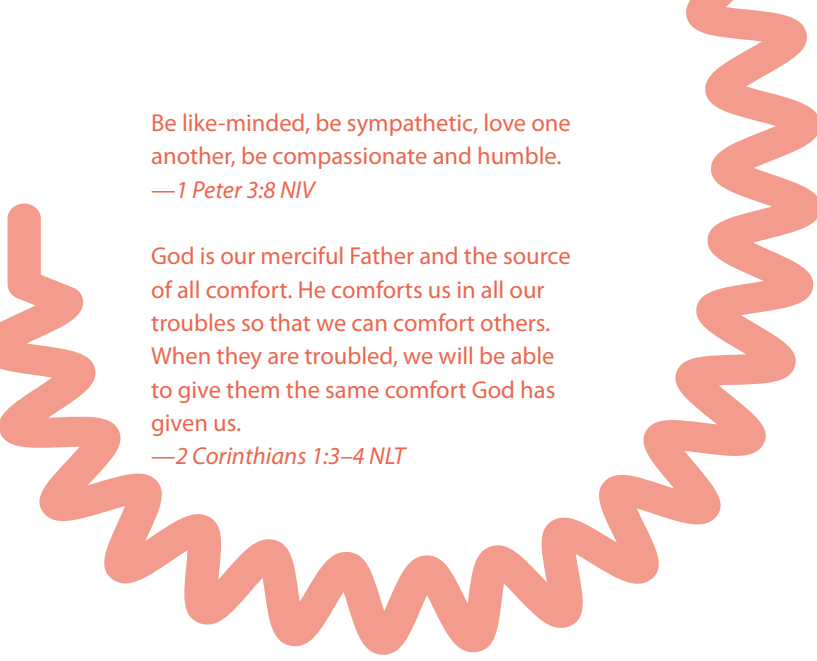
Having learned from Shirley that her sister was a Christian, I spoke about heaven with her. I emphasized that her sister was waiting for her there where they'd never be apart again. Finally, I prayed for her and in the prayer quoted several verses from

John 14 where Jesus comforts His followers and tells them He's going to prepare a place for them. I asked the Lord to

hold on to Shirley during this very difficult time, reminding her of His promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us. I explained that Jesus wanted her to look to Him and trust Him, because He alone has the power to turn even these terrible experiences she's facing at the moment into something good.

By the end of our phone call, Shirley seemed like a new woman. Her voice had become clear and strong, and she seemed to have regained her hope and faith that there was a solution coming to her problems.

What had seemed to me to be such an inadequate and almost clumsy way to give a witness, because it wasn't



Be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.
—1 Peter 3:8 NIV

God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.
—2 Corinthians 1:3–4 NLT

the “smooth” and “professional” approach that I wanted it to be, turned out to be exactly what this dear woman desperately needed to hear.

There are so many who are struggling with hardship, grief, and troubles of all kinds. Sometimes, there seems to be no way out of their dark canyons of sorrow and despair. But even though we in ourselves don’t have the answers to fix their problems, we do have a living, active connection through prayer with the One who knows exactly how to bring His people through the hard times. We just need to have the faith to trust Him and the determination to do whatever He shows us to do.

Following this phone call I was curious to understand how this whole mysterious set of events could have happened. Had I dialed the wrong number?

Shirley had told me that she almost didn’t answer the phone because she saw that it was an unknown number, which she would normally never answer. On top of that, she was feeling so hopeless that she couldn’t stand the thought of talking to anyone. But for some reason she went ahead and answered.

Later, I called my relative’s husband and got through to her that way. I discovered that she’d changed her number recently and had forgotten to tell me.

So somehow, out of the millions of phone numbers and people who could have ended up with that number, God saw to it that it was given to one of His children who He knew would need the connection that it would provide. It was at the perfect moment when God knew it would meet Shirley’s need to be reminded of His love for her.

This experience motivates me to look for any opportunity that comes along to be faithful to my calling as an ambassador of Jesus—to be His instrument to reach out and touch lives. One thing I’m sure of: He will use each of us in unexpected ways if we’re open to His directions. Whatever approach He chooses to use, it’s a chance to leave others’ lives strengthened and our own lives more fulfilled and blessed.

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



BY MARIE ALVERO

BACK TO BASICS

I WAS STANDING IN THE CHECK-OUT LINE AT ONE OF OUR LOCAL STORES AND NOTICED THE LADY AHEAD OF ME WAS WEARING A BRIGHTLY COLORED T-SHIRT WITH A BIBLE VERSE ON IT. Then when she thanked the cashier, she said, “Dear, I hope you know Jesus loves you!”

I can't help admiring people who can share Jesus' love like that, so candidly. But there's another part of me that wonders if that method is the most effective way for *me*. One of my biggest challenges in following Jesus is learning how and when to share Him with others.

I want to be “the light of the world,”¹ but I don't want it to feel awkward, or be something that I do out of guilt or some other negative feeling. I need practical, actionable answers. I need concepts that can turn into habits

1. Matthew 5:14
2. John 13:35 CEV

that can turn into results. I'm sharing a few points below that are helping me grow in the area of sharing my faith.

LOVE YOUR PEOPLE.

Jesus said, “If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples.”² That means that the thing that calls us out as Jesus' followers is not only how we treat strangers, but specifically how we treat *other Christians*. I daresay Jesus knew that anyone can put up a good front and be kind to a stranger for a moment, but what really shows your heart is how you treat those within your own house, church, or faith.

DON'T BE A HYPOCRITE.

If you're often grouchy, moody, gossipy, or mean, it's kind of hard to slip in a “Jesus loves you” to the cashier and have any hope of anyone believing you. Most of our relationships are with the people we see regularly at work, school, in our

neighborhoods—and consistently showing up cheerful, caring, and ready to serve can make an impact.

BE NATURAL.

The other day, I was talking with one of my workmates, a young guy who has a very secular worldview. In the course of the conversation, I mentioned that I usually volunteer at my church on Sundays. I could tell he was surprised. “You don't look or talk like a church person,” he said. Not every witness needs to be intense, and this type of casual conversation can plant seeds of interest.

These are pretty basic pointers, but sharing Jesus—in one way or another—*should* be a pretty basic, regular part of our everyday lives.

MARIE ALVERO IS A FORMER MISSIONARY TO AFRICA AND MEXICO. SHE CURRENTLY LIVES A HAPPY, BUSY LIFE WITH HER HUSBAND AND CHILDREN IN CENTRAL TEXAS, USA. ■

A TEMPERAMENTAL GARDEN

BY TINA KAPP

MY SMALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HAD THE MOST AMAZING GARDENER WE ALL CALLED “UNCLE SILAS.” He could make one of those “picture-book gardens” with tomatoes, beans, cabbage, and lettuce bursting out everywhere. The flowerbeds in front of the school were always an amazing range of colors, and he knew exactly which plants and flowers worked best for the different times of the year. He had years of experience, and he knew all the tricks of the trade.

Not every gardening story is like that, though.

I read an article from a mother named Koriane, who decided to start a vegetable garden with her kids. Mental images of a cornucopia of luscious fruit and tasty vegetables inspired them through the digging, planting, watering, and nurturing process. However, this garden seemed to do anything but produce.

Koriane got discouraged and felt like giving up many times. Then the sun would come out and she'd feel motivated to try again, hoping this time something better would come

of it. She didn't understand why the seeds she planted took so much effort and tender care to do their thing, while the weeds were bountiful and grew, well, like weeds.

After preparing the ground and planting ten types of vegetables in neat little rows, Koriane wondered why she and her kids even bothered. Even though the plants had grown quickly, the actual fruit or vegetables the plants bore hardly grew. No matter how hard they tried or how long they waited, nearly all they got in return were the plants' inedible leaves. By and by, they ended up with a few strawberries and beets, and carrots the size of acorns, so they went ahead and had fun cooking the tiny vegetables into a small side dish for dinner. But it wasn't really what they'd hoped for!

So Koriane decided to read more about gardening, and she discovered that there are many factors involved in growing a perfect vegetable or fruit tree. For instance, you need enough of the right bees around to pollinate the flowers. If the wrong kind of pest control is used in the area and there are few or no bees, the flowers won't be properly pollinated and the amount of fruit or vegetables

can be affected. Also, it's important to know the traits of each plant or tree. Some trees simply alternate years, bearing a lot of fruit one year and nothing the following year.

Rather than discouraging them further, this news actually helped Koriane and her kids not feel too bad about their struggling garden. They were better informed about the challenges they faced, and it made them want to learn more, to try new things, and most of all, to enjoy the process without stressing too much about the results.

Koriane said that this experience brought to mind how life works. You try to do the right thing and be a good example of a Christian. You share your faith with others, help those in need, take time to study the Bible and pray. Sometimes you see and feel the returns from keeping these principles, while other times you don't. Sometimes it's easy to see how your participation made a difference in someone's life, while other times you're still doing what you can when you can, but see little in the way of results. The cool thing is that God doesn't judge you by your *results*, but by your *faithfulness*.

1. Matthew 25:21 NIV



I found this reflection very encouraging. We all go through dry spells in our lives, and knowing that God looks at our hearts and doesn't judge us by our successes but by our faithfulness lifts a lot of the pressure. This doesn't mean we shouldn't take the time to seek Him about how we can do the job better, or see if there's anything we can learn or do to improve, but these are things we can do while we're trusting Him for the outcome.

Remember, the commendation we want at the end of the day is "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"¹

In the meantime, let's enjoy the little blessings and successes that come our way, knowing we're all part of God's great master plan.

TINA KAPP IS A DANCER, PRESENTER, AND FREELANCE WRITER IN SOUTH AFRICA. SHE RUNS AN ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY THAT HELPS RAISE FUNDS FOR CHARITY AND MISSIONARY PROJECTS. ■

The Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. For we are co-workers in God's service.

—1 Corinthians 3:5–9 NIV



MY CAREER COACH

BY ELSA SICHROVSKY

WHEN I GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE, I had my heart set on becoming a professional full-time translator. For four years, I'd devoted every bit of spare time to studying my language pair and taking translation courses. I loved the challenge of transposing meaning from one language to another, and I had already been a volunteer translator for a few years. Before I even had my diploma in hand, I'd already applied to over 30 translation agencies and had done dozens of sample translations. When I heard back from several translation agencies, I was thrilled. "We'll contact you when we have work for your language set and field of expertise," they said. I knew that in no time I'd be spending my days doing what I loved.

But after a month went by without any word from those translation agencies, a sinking feeling began

creeping into my heart. The dream that had seemed to be within my grasp was slipping away. As a young, inexperienced translator with a language set and field of expertise that was not in high commercial demand, regular clients were hard to come by.

Reluctantly, I started looking into other job options, all the while struggling under a cloud of gloom. An elementary school advertised a vacancy for an English teacher, and frustrated from sitting at home waiting for work, I set my shattered dream aside and prepared my teaching demonstration. To my surprise—and slight horror—I was hired!

Teaching elementary school had never been on my list of dream jobs, because I had convinced myself that I wasn't patient enough to work with young children. As expected, the cacophony of high-pitched yelling drowned out my voice, and my lively young students were experts at bouncing and wiggling their way out of listening to me explain about

nouns and grammar. Yet as I took time to understand the personalities behind the bright, eager faces, I was receiving lessons in patience, love, and compassion that I never would've learned as a full-time translator. Each day brought stressful situations that drove me to my knees in prayer, but being pushed out of my comfort zone on a daily basis strengthened my flexibility and resilience.

I'm grateful that Jesus did not immediately open an opportunity for me to pursue my heart's desire, or I would have missed out on the fulfillment and personal growth that is part of a teacher's challenging job. I've learned anew that Jesus, my career coach, will lead me to where I can learn the most, even if that's not what I originally had in mind. "The Lord works out everything to its proper end."¹

ELSA SICHROVSKY IS A FREELANCE WRITER. SHE LIVES WITH HER FAMILY IN TAIWAN. ■

1. Proverbs 16:4 NIV

THE MAKING OF A VIOLIN

BY AMY MIZRANY

ONE MORNING, I walked into my music teacher's classroom to start my violin lesson and noticed two violins on the desk. My eye was immediately drawn to the first one, which looked new. A brand-new violin is something to behold, with gorgeous curves, a glossy, unscratched surface that shines in the light, and an engagingly twisting scroll fitted with squeaky tuning pegs.

Next to this beautiful violin freshly out of the hands of some expert violin maker was another violin. Its curves were still gorgeous, but in some places the outline was disturbed by a crack or scuff in the wood; its surface was dull and scratched; its scroll still twirled, but the pegs were surrounded by chips, and the neck was worn where years of hands had held it.

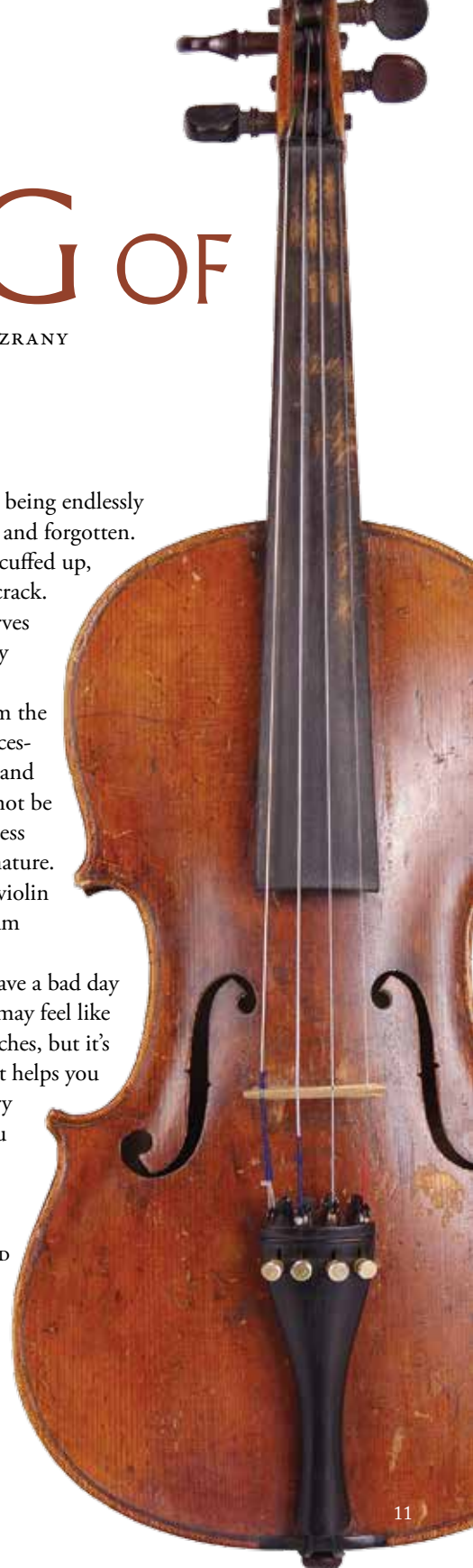
Yuck! one might think. *That's about as messed up as a violin can get without falling apart!* But as my teacher told me, while new violins *look* perfect, it's the old violins that *sound* beautiful. They've been bumped, clanged, dropped, forgotten. And they sound all the sweeter because of it.

A violin needs time to find its tone, to fully grow into its voice. To reach its full potential, a violin must be played for hours on end. It must be tuned and re-tuned. Its strings will snap, its bridge might slip, its pegs might come undone. But it's all part of the process.

Sometimes I feel like I'm being endlessly bumped, clanged, dropped, and forgotten. Sometimes it feels like I'm scuffed up, chipped, and beginning to crack. There are days when my nerves snap, just like a string on my violin, and I most assuredly don't feel beautiful. But from the seemingly never-ending succession of days, from each slip and bang, I learn. While I may not be able to compare to the flawless and beautiful, I grow and mature. And just like a century-old violin is beautiful to a violinist, I am beautiful to Jesus.

So don't feel bad if you have a bad day or you slip up and fall. You may feel like you're full of chips and scratches, but it's just a part of the process that helps you to stretch and improve. Every clang and dent will leave you wiser, and your life's melody will be the sweeter for it.

AMY MIZRANY WAS BORN AND LIVES IN SOUTH AFRICA AND IS A FULL-TIME MISSIONARY WITH HELPING HAND AND A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL. IN HER SPARE TIME, SHE PLAYS THE VIOLIN. ■





BY LI LIAN

THE BABY OTHER INC

CHARITY, an *Activated* reader for many years, had a well-paying job in the banking industry. She had recently finished her second master's degree from a prestigious international university. She had then given birth to a set of twins, a boy and a girl. But rather than being elated, Charity was gazing tearfully through the glass of the incubator, gazing at the little form of her sleeping son.

While her daughter was fine, the doctor had noticed some abnormalities in her son and had whisked him away to the incubator not long after the delivery. Although they could not pinpoint the cause of his problem, they decided it was best to keep him under observation.

During the next few days, Charity faithfully visited her little boy in his glass case—praying, worrying, wondering when she would finally be able to take him home with her and how much longer this ordeal would last.

The sound of sobbing from the corner of the room interrupted her troubled thoughts. She turned to see another mother leaning on the side of an incubator, crying uncontrollably.

Poor thing, thought Charity, momentarily distracted from her own worries by the sound of another woman's distress. *Her baby must really not be doing well.*

As Charity approached, the woman looked up. Her appearance

was disheveled and the dark circles under her eyes indicated that she hadn't slept in the past few days. Charity also couldn't help but notice from the small rip in her handbag and her worn shoes that the woman was probably from a lower-income family.

"I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do..." the woman quietly sobbed.

"What do you mean?" Charity asked.

Through her tears, the woman explained that she had given birth a week earlier, and complications had required her baby to remain in the incubator. She confessed that her family was struggling financially. They had no health insurance,



IN THE CUBATOR

her husband had lost his job a few months earlier, and although they had managed to save some money for the delivery, they had never anticipated the baby's complications. Each day, the fee for the use of the incubator continued to mount, but they had no finances left. Now the hospital staff was threatening that if they wouldn't pay by the next day, they would remove her baby from the incubator.

"We've asked everyone we know for help—family, friends, neighbors, anyone I could think of. We were able to collect some, but it's not even half of what they're asking for."

Charity was quiet. She thought about her own baby in the incubator and knew what she had to do.

Without another word, Charity walked back to the other side of the room, picked up her purse, and retrieved her checkbook.

Back at the woman's side, she asked, "How much do you need?"

The woman stared at her for a moment. Then she burst out with, "God bless you. You are an answer to my prayer. May God bless you!"

Once Charity had calmed the woman down, she proceeded to write the check for the remaining amount and then handed it to the speechless woman, who hugged her in response.

The next morning, the doctor announced that Charity's baby could be released from the incubator. Her joy at being able to go home with

her baby was only amplified by the happiness she felt at having helped the life of another little one.

It's so easy to get wrapped up in our own personal problems and not realize how others around us are suffering, sometimes from much worse things than what we are experiencing.

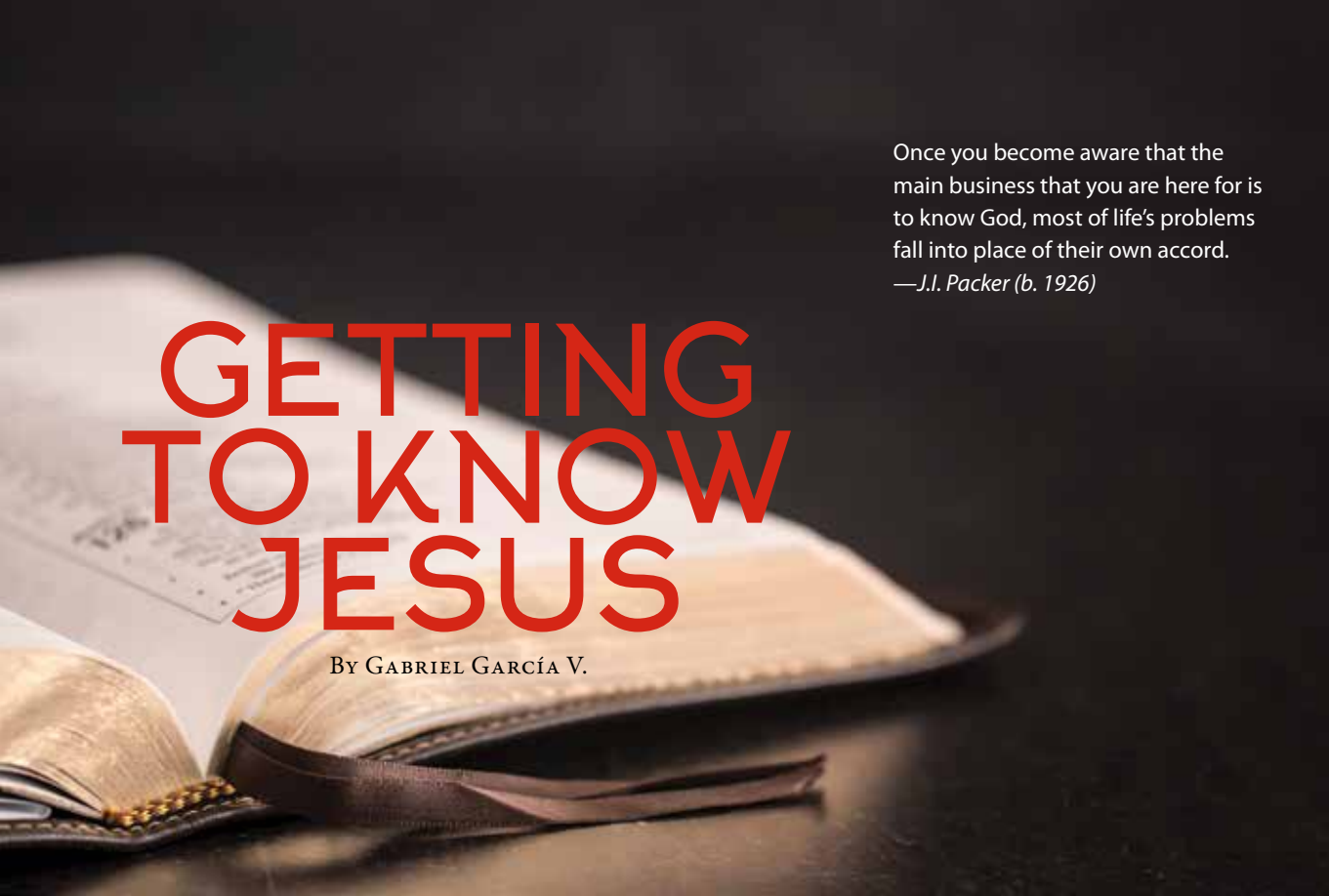
For Charity, her prayer for her son's healing was answered as she answered the prayer of another person in need of help.

LI LIAN IS A COMPTIA CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL AND WORKS AS AN OFFICE AND SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR FOR A HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION IN AFRICA. ■

Let us more and more insist on raising funds of love, of kindness, of understanding, of peace. Money will come if we seek first the Kingdom of God—the rest will be given.—*Mother Teresa (1910–1997)*

Love and kindness are never wasted. They always make a difference. They bless the one who receives them, and they bless you, the giver.—*Barbara de Angelis (b. 1951)*

Don't just count your blessings. Be the blessing other people count on.—*Author unknown*



GETTING TO KNOW JESUS

BY GABRIEL GARCÍA V.

Once you become aware that the main business that you are here for is to know God, most of life's problems fall into place of their own accord.

—J.I. Packer (b. 1926)

IN MY QUEST TO KNOW JESUS BETTER, I have come to the simple conclusion that reading the Gospels regularly and trying to put His teachings and example into practice is the easiest and most accessible way to do that. So for the last few years, I've been reading a devotional that features a text from the Gospels for every day of the year. If I thought I already knew the Gospels well, this exercise completely ousted that idea! Almost every day, I am surprised, unsettled, convicted, inspired, and moved by the words and deeds of the Master.

The parables Jesus told and the episodes of His life reveal that He

is surprising, He is comforting, He shakes our preconceived ideas, He doesn't pull His punches, and He continually defies our set positions. Jesus speaks the truth in love, He doesn't show favoritism, He is compassionate—but at the same time, He upholds the highest standards. Jesus is tough, but at the same time His yoke is easy and His burden is light.¹

Pausing to reflect on how the passages from the Gospel can be related to my own life has been a key. As my wife says, "Within the teachings of Jesus you can find the basis of all ethics. Following them is just good sense." I find that as I prayerfully read the Gospels, I tend to find Him more in my daily dealings. And as I know Him better, I certainly want to talk more about Him to others.

The last page of each issue of *Activated* features the "From Jesus with love" section, which is a favorite of many readers. I've found that reading these also helps me to draw closer to Jesus and listen to His voice on topics that are relevant to our day and age.

In knowing Jesus better, I draw closer to God the Father, because through Jesus, we have access to God and share the same intimacy that Christ has with His Father. "Then you will know that I am one with the Father. You will know that you are one with me, and I am one with you."²

GABRIEL GARCÍA V. IS THE EDITOR OF THE SPANISH EDITION OF *ACTIVATED* AND A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN CHILE. ■

1. See Matthew 11:28–30.

2. John 14:20 CEV

BY MILA NATALIYA A. GOVORUKHA

OPEN DOORS



A FEW MONTHS AGO, I started to teach “English through the Bible” classes to a small group of teenagers. It’s not always easy, and it demands time for preparation, but it’s always worth it. For example, when we were studying the very first Christmas, there always seemed to be some kind of obstacle: the students would be late, they would have forgotten their workbooks, or sometimes they’d simply skip a session without any reason. There were times when I really wondered if I should continue or not. But then, when a Christmas quiz was held at a celebration for a mixed group of Christians, to my surprise and delight my students answered the majority of the questions correctly. So I knew that I had to continue.

I’m also studying for a PhD at the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. One of the professors there is a philosophy teacher who has been teaching since Ukraine was part of

the Soviet Union. During one of her lectures, she asked for an example of a system that was created from scratch. I started explaining the role of the Creator and the beauty and complexity of His creation, but the professor got frustrated, saying that this kind of talk had no place at a university. Then to my surprise, my classmates began saying that believers have the right to be taken seriously by the scientific world. That was an interesting way, place, and situation to bring my faith into the picture.

It doesn’t matter how big or how small we are, how diverse may be the problems we face, God can make ways for us to meet new people, to talk about our faith, to teach biblical principles, and to bring light to the world and change it for the better.

MILA NATALIYA A. GOVORUKHA IS A YOUTH COUNSELOR AND VOLUNTEER IN UKRAINE. ■

THE CHOICE

Jesus wants to enter into a personal relationship with you and become a very real part of your life both here and now and forever in eternity, but He can’t do either unless you want Him to. He stands meekly and patiently at your heart’s door—perhaps He has been standing there for years—waiting for you to hear Him knocking and open the door.¹

You can do so right now by sincerely praying this prayer:

Jesus, please forgive me for all my sins. I believe that You died for me. I open the door to my heart and I invite You into my life. Please fill me with Your love and Holy Spirit, help me get to know You, and guide me in the way of truth. Amen.

1. See Revelation 3:20.



FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

UNFAILING LOVE

When you are troubled, when you are perplexed or confused, come to Me. Lay your head on My shoulder. Find your comfort in My eternal promises. Listen to the words that I will speak to your heart and mind. Find your strength and peace in Me.

Don't be afraid to trust Me with your whole heart and with your life and future. Know that I do all things well. Put your hand in Mine, and I will lead you down a pleasant path with abundant blessings. I will lead you through every challenge you face in life, and bring you to places of peace, overcoming, and victory.

Learn to love others with the same kind of love that has brought you through many tight places—the love that has given you strength to go on, to forgive, and to keep on showing My loving kindness to others. This unconditional love will cast a veil over your and others' faults and will shine a light on the path before you.¹

1. See James 5:20.