

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

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THE HOBBIT MIRROR

A question of
perspective

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

WINNERS

When I was a kid, I hated with a passion losing at any kind of game. It wasn't easy to accept that I couldn't roll the perfect number, hit the perfect shot, or play the perfect card every single time. These days, I still would much rather win than lose, but I'm not willing to win at all costs, and I'm happy when I know that I gave it my best shot. I see my six-year-old son struggle with things sometimes not going his way, and I pray he'll have an easier time learning that lesson.

Life is about much more than winning at whatever pursuit we engage in, but most people still have an idea of how they would score themselves. We may indeed be winning when we build a happy family life or are successful in our careers or have a tight circle of good friends. And these things are indeed important. It's human nature to seek for a happy, successful life, but as Christians, our primary goal is to live a life in alignment with God's Word and His ways. That's God's definition of winning.

One time, Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment is. His answer gives us insight into how He might define a victorious life: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"¹

That's a simple enough definition, but of course, it's not that easy to live up to, right? Thankfully, we're not on our own. God may not care who wins a tennis match or a card game, but we can count on His help with the things that really matter. He wants us to triumph in the things that matter: "I am grateful that God always makes it possible for Christ to lead us to victory."²

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1. Matthew 22:37–39 NLT

2. 2 Corinthians 2:14 CEV



HOW TO EAT A BISON

BY ESTER MIZRANY

“I JUST CAN’T DO IT; it’s too much work for me!” Robbie cried with despair in his eyes. I’d been helping to homeschool Robbie from first grade, and at the start of second grade, he was overwhelmed by his workload.

“How many lessons will I have every day? And every week? And every month?” More and more tears welled up in his eyes as we reviewed the school year ahead of us.

My colleague Angela, who’d been teaching the higher grades and listening, stepped in. “Did you know that I can eat a whole bison?” Robbie’s eyes grew wide with skepticism. “What? A whole bison? How?” “Yes, I can eat a whole bison. One bite at a time. The trick is, I don’t try to stick all the bison in my mouth at once—the whole bison doesn’t even

fit on my plate! I just take *one* bite, then another, and another until the whole bison is eaten.”

With the bison in mind, Robbie and I made a chart with goals for lessons. If he’d reach his goal for the week or the month, he would get a small reward. It worked really well, and he was done by the end of the school year.

A couple of weeks ago, my husband was talking about all the things he had to get done. Deadlines were coming up, things were piling up on his plate and other people were asking him to do more than he thought he could handle. I was trying to think of ways we could work things out so that they would fall in place, when Angela walked in.

She told my husband to take the bison off his plate. “You may take

a slice and put it on your plate, but you cannot fit the whole bison on it. Don’t take on more than you can handle, and soon enough the entire bison will be consumed.”

Her refreshing words of wisdom put things into perspective for me too. How many times have I tried to fit in too much and ended up overwhelmed at all that needed to get done? Sometimes my day begins with an overwhelming cloud, and I feel like I can’t even start to tackle everything on my to-do list. So I just try to remind myself: “One bite at a time. That’s the way to eat a bison.”

ESTER MIZRANY IS A TEACHER AND FULL-TIME MISSIONARY WITH HELPING HAND IN SOUTH AFRICA. ■



BY PETER AMSTERDAM

REASON TO CELEBRATE

ALL THROUGHOUT HISTORY, people have marked great advances, victories, and momentous occasions with celebration—some of which continue till today, such as birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, promotions, and Easter and Christmas.

For us who are Christians, knowing God brings deep and lasting joy. We have constant and eternal cause for celebration. In fact, we will celebrate eternally in heaven.

Besides the wonderful gift of salvation, life provides many other reasons to celebrate. Even small

things are worthy of celebration, because celebration boosts morale. And besides the fun, there is great value in the *act* of celebrating.

Here are five benefits of celebrating.

1. CELEBRATION ACKNOWLEDGES AND TESTIFIES OF GOD'S GOODNESS.

It's spiritually healthy to think about things that are good, and the Bible instructs us to keep our thoughts centered on the good: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."¹


We live fast-paced lives with numerous challenges, and as we go from one thing to the next, it can be easy to overlook or forget about the good things, the lovely things, the wonderful and notable things that are happening and that can be celebrated. It's easy to get caught up in the many mundane affairs of this world and lose sight of God's goodness.

Someone once told me, "As soon as I cross one thing off my list, three more take its place!" Isn't that the truth? The temptation is to run faster and try to fit more in. But that's not the answer. As the classic quote says, "Life is a marathon, not a sprint."

Celebrating good news, accomplishments, victories, and breakthroughs increases your faith.

1. Philippians 4:8 ESV

2. Romans 12:15. See also 1 Corinthians 12:25–26.



It also serves as a testimony of the wonderful things that God is doing for you and others. Most people are happy to see others doing well, and the Bible tells us to rejoice in the joys and good fortune of others. “Rejoice with those who rejoice.”²

2. CELEBRATION ACKNOWLEDGES THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND MILESTONES THAT YOU OR OTHERS HAVE ATTAINED.

When you’ve achieved a goal in your life, it’s important to have someone to share that with. That can be as simple as telling a friend over the phone or via chat, or posting your good news on social media.

Sometimes I hear about friends or acquaintances of mine who are making a lot of progress, crossing milestones in their lives. I know it’s costing them a lot and that they’ve worked hard to get there, and I hope they’re stopping to take a deep breath and appreciate their success.

Everyone needs recognition and appreciation for their efforts. It’s worth stopping the frantic pace to honor a win in your life or the life of one of your loved ones. It’s worth carving out a little time to acknowledge and appreciate what you or someone has accomplished.

3. CELEBRATION PROVIDES A NATURAL PAUSE BETWEEN PROJECTS IN OUR BUSY LIVES.

Celebration helps you to reflect on how far you’ve come. If you don’t pause to appreciate and celebrate when you’ve come to the end of one project or had a particular win, before you know it, the joy of the win or accomplishment will be buried beneath your new to-do list.

When you work very hard for something, you should stop and bask at least a little while in the knowledge that you completed the task. You made it. You did it! You reached the goal, and by celebrating you are more likely to fully realize that all you expended in the form of time, energy, hard work, finances, etc., was worth it. Your investment paid off.

4. CATALOG YOUR SUCCESSES AND WINS.

When you’re climbing a mountain and you’ve been at it for hours, and you’re tired and achy, it can help to look down the mountain and see how far you’ve come. The same applies to your life goals. Measuring or tracking your progress provides a sense of satisfaction and conclusion. It also bolsters your confidence that you’ll make it to the next marker and eventually reach your goal.


It’s pretty easy to remember what you did last week or last month, but as the months fly by, it can be pretty difficult to recall all the hurdles you had to jump to reach the finish line of your goal. But those very hurdles that you overcame are the wins that deserve celebrating and remembering, and for some of us, the way to remember something is to write it down.

If you jot down those accomplishments, in a few months or a year you’ll probably be surprised to see just how much you’ve actually done. Like counting your blessings, counting your wins or steps of progress will serve as a boost to your faith.

It’s good to revel in a win, even if it’s a small one. And when you acknowledge that something you or someone else did went well and was successful, that boosts your self-confidence and self-esteem for the next thing that you’ll tackle. This tactic is especially important when it comes to children’s accomplishments and progress.

5. CELEBRATION PROVIDES A “CARROT” TO LOOK FORWARD TO WHEN YOU COMPLETE A PROJECT OR REACH A GOAL.

It can be powerful to have something to look forward to. If



you know you're going to celebrate, anticipating the joy or fun you'll have can give you the oomph that you need to get over the finish line. Some people set rewards or perks for themselves ahead of time, things that they particularly enjoy and can look forward to as they slog through a grueling job or part of a project.

God made human beings to celebrate. He instructed us to praise Him, to glorify Him for the wonderful things He has done, to "magnify Him with thanksgiving."³ That's a command to celebrate!

Even God celebrates. When He created the world, it says, "God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. . . . So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in

creation."⁴ If even God can take time to look over His handiwork and rest from His labors, surely we can make time for it too.

You might ask, *What about when things aren't going well?* Even if you don't have anything monumental to celebrate, you can dig a little deeper to seek out that hidden "celebratory jewel," even something that happens on a regular basis that you've never taken the time to specifically celebrate.

I read this story by Mike Robbins a few days ago, and it stood out to me:

I was in a cab in Houston a few years ago, heading back to the airport after speaking at an event for Chevron. The cab driver and I got into an interesting conversation about life, family, and the state of our culture in America. The driver told me he was from Ethiopia originally, but had been living in the United States for about twenty years.

I asked him, "What's your take on American culture, given that you

didn't grow up here." He paused for a long time; then asked me, "Can I be honest with you?" I said, "Of course." He then said, "I think most people in this culture act like spoiled brats."

"Why do you say that?" I asked, a bit surprised by his response.

"Mike," he said, "I'm from Ethiopia! Every day here is a good day! I don't understand why people just don't walk around here with their hands in the air saying 'THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!'"⁵

Isn't that true? Especially for those of us who know God, we should be walking around with our hands in the air, saying "thank you" to Him over and over again, because we're so blessed.

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

3. Psalm 69:30

4. Genesis 1:31; 2:3 ESV

5. Mike Robbins is a motivational speaker and life coach.

THE HOBBIT MIRROR

BY JOYCE SUTTIN

I FINALLY GOT AROUND TO CHANGING SOMETHING THAT HAD DISCOURAGED ME FOR YEARS.

We had put a rather cheap, full-length mirror on the back of our bedroom door some years ago. The funny thing about this mirror was that it was almost like a funhouse mirror. The farther away you stood from it, the shorter and wider you looked. Some of my friends jokingly called it “the Hobbit mirror,” because when you stood across the room, it almost made you look like a Hobbit.

It was something I had gotten used to over the years. I would try on some article of clothing, stand in front of the mirror, and think to myself, *I really don't look as bad as that makes me look*. But as time went on, the mirror began to affect me. I would take a look and tell myself I looked awful.

So this morning I tried on a beautiful dress and stood in front of the mirror, and it was the last straw. The Hobbit mirror told me it looked terrible and I simply refused to believe it. I got a screwdriver and removed a few screws and took down the mirror and moved a mirror from another bedroom to put in its place.

My new mirror doesn't do miracles. It simply tells it like it is. It doesn't make me look tall and lanky, but it gives me its honest opinion of myself and is so much healthier for me. I can get a realistic appraisal of how I look and I don't have to constantly decide if it is telling me the truth or not.

This whole issue with the Hobbit mirror made me think—how many Hobbit mirrors do I have in my life? How many things have I hung onto that don't give me honest opinions? Are there people who refuse to see me



as I really am and try to reflect something different back at me? Are there possessions or pictures that aren't an accurate reflection of who I am? Am I truly portraying the person God created me to be? Am I taking an honest look at things in my life or am I allowing them to be distorted? Am I being influenced by things stretched out of proportion?

The only way to see things as they really are is to have a reflection that is honest and straightforward. The only way to find that reflection is to look intently for the truth in the Word of God, then change what needs to be changed, without exaggerating minor flaws or stretching things out of proportion.

JOYCE SUTTIN IS A TEACHER AND WRITER AND LIVES IN SAN ANTONIO, USA. ■

BY MISTY KAY

THE REWARD OF FAITH

“OH, MY LORD, what shall we do?” Elisha’s servant asked.

The king of Aram (present-day Syria) was at war with ancient Israel and had sent an entire army to the city of Dothan to capture the prophet Elisha. They came by night, so when Elisha’s servant woke and went out early in the morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city.

“Don’t be afraid,” the prophet said. “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” And Elisha prayed, “O Lord, open his eyes so he may see.”

Then the Lord opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (These events are recorded in the Bible, 2 Kings 6:8–17. Read the rest of the chapter to find the amazing outcome!)

1. Psalm 91:11
2. John 20:29
3. See Hebrews 11:6.
4. See 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:7–8.
5. Hebrews 12:1



In this story, the angelic army was already there, but Elisha’s servant was afraid because he hadn’t yet seen them. Why must we always see in order to believe? We have the Bible promise, “[God] shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.”¹ Is it not enough to believe because God’s Word says so?

Seeing is the reward of believing, not the other way around.

Why does it have to be this way?

Why does God sometimes hide things from us? Why do we need to take everything by faith? The answer lies in that last word—“faith.” It wouldn’t be faith if we could see. Jesus said to Thomas, “Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”²



This principle of faith is something on which God places a great deal of importance. It's also something that He gives us credit for,³ because it is a sign of our love and trust in Him, that we believe Him and His spiritual power and the principles He lays out for us in His Word.

We walk life's hot, hard, dusty roads battle-weary and scarred, but we arrive in heaven triumphant. The angels blow their trumpets to herald our victory. We held on and didn't sink when the storms of life rocked our ships. Satan attacked us on every side. He threw his worst at us, but we survived. We held on. We did our best. We believed! We won the war of faith. Henceforth is laid up for us a crown of righteousness.⁴

The story of Elisha and his servant reminds me that several years ago when I was very ill, recovering from a bout with cancer, Jesus told me that He had given me an "angel of comfort" to be with me during those difficult times. This gave me such a blessed feeling of peace, like a soft, warm aura that enveloped me. In spite of the pain, I found my heart filled with wonder and thankfulness for that special touch from heaven.

The Bible tells us that we are "surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses."⁵ On that glorious day, I will want to meet my angel of comfort and thank them face to face.

MISTY KAY IS A CANCER AND FIBROMYALGIA SURVIVOR AND AUTHOR. TOGETHER WITH HER HUSBAND AND FOUR CHILDREN, SHE HAS SPENT MANY YEARS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN VOLUNTEER WORK ACROSS ASIA. ■

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.—*Philippians 4:6–7*

Our lives are full of supposes. Suppose this should happen, or suppose that should happen; what could we do; how could we bear it? But, if we are living in the high tower of the dwelling place of God, all these supposes will drop out of our lives. We shall be quiet from the fear of evil, for no threatenings of evil can penetrate into the high tower of God.—*Hannah Whitall Smith (1832–1911)*

PERFECT PEACE

When you truly trust God, you can have peace in the midst of storm and calm in the eye of the hurricane. Like the story of an art contest in which the artists were asked to illustrate peace. Most of the contestants handed in paintings of quiet, calm scenes of the countryside—absolute tranquility. That's a form of peace. But the hardest kind of peace to have was illustrated in the picture that won the award. It depicted the roaring, raging, foaming rapids of a storm-swollen waterfall, and on a little tree branch overhanging the torrent was a nest where a tiny bird sat peacefully singing in spite of the raging river. That's when your faith gets tested, in the midst of turmoil.

BY IRENA ŽABIČKOVÁ



CLIMBING MOUNT DINARA

IT HAD BEEN A LONG, busy summer with many projects and activities focused around keeping our Croatian volunteer center functioning smoothly, and my husband Paolo and I were looking forward to a relaxing vacation on the Croatian coast. It was still warm, so we decided to combine some beach time with some hiking.

We wanted to climb Mount Dinara, the highest mountain in Croatia, so we began gathering maps, information, tips from the locals, anything that would help prepare us for the day of the climb. And then it happened. The day before our big hike, Paolo bent down to pick up an empty plastic water bottle when

1. <http://www.perunmondomigliore.org>

he felt a strange pull in his back. He didn't think too much of it at the time, but within a couple of hours, he could barely move due to the pain in his back. It was quickly clear that instead of climbing Dinara, the next few days were going to be focused on this medical situation.

At one point, Paolo looked at me and said, "We were going to climb Dinara, and now we're climbing a different type of Dinara. It's a tough climb, but we will make it to the top. We must keep reminding ourselves that as long as we keep moving our feet forward, eventually we will see and reach the top."

This parallel was with us as we struggled through the next days, through the flurry of calling an ambulance, receiving

anti-inflammatory injections, and figuring out how to return home. It was a challenging time, full of surprises, but God came through as He always does. His presence was constant and His guidance was impeccable, just as it is every time.

That doesn't sound like a very happy vacation! you might think. But it was what it was supposed to be. We went with the intention to swim and climb mountains. And that's what we did! We climbed a different type of mountain, and with God's help we reached the top.

Everyone faces mountains in their lives at one time or another. It might be health issues, possibly much more serious or long-lasting than we experienced. Perhaps it's your relationships, your job situation, or financial problems. Maybe you feel alone and depressed. No matter what type of mountain it is, as you start climbing, remember that you might not know how high it is or how long it will take to get to the top. But if you put your hand in the hand of God and let Him be your mountain guide, He will get you there.

IRENA ŽABIČKOVÁ IS A FULL-TIME VOLUNTEER FOR PER UN MONDO MIGLIORE¹ IN CROATIA AND ITALY. ■



BY MARIE ALVERO

OVERCOMING TODAY

I SPENT A LOT OF MY YOUTH TRAVELING ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT. The buses in Poland were often so crowded that you could literally be held up by the crowd without putting any weight on your legs or holding on. But we lived at the end of the line, so the bus would gradually empty out, and as the bus emptied, you had to be either sitting or holding on if you didn't want to fall over.

That reminds me of the world we live in. There was a time, not too long ago actually, when the expectations and norms of society in much of the western world upheld morals and values that were based on Christianity. Even those who followed other religions or who didn't have any faith were mostly still committed to "generally Christian values." But many of those same countries are now truly post-Christian.

Unfortunately, some people look at faith as antiquated, oppressive, and irrelevant to the issues facing the modern world, which can be disheartening. Sometimes I feel like David is being clobbered by Goliath, and sometimes it feels like the most I can do to change things in society is to persevere and stay true to my own faith, and pray for God to do the rest.

We are not at the point where the crowd in the bus will hold you up, and as a result, you might feel like you're mostly alone in your journey. Making a difference for good might look like enduring, resisting, and fighting, and that can be hard. We may face opposition. And we won't get to choose the outcome. But this is our time to hold the line and discover how worthy God's Word and truths are. If we are faithful, then we have already overcome, because He who is in us is greater than any obstacle!¹

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. ■

1. See 1 John 4:4.

If you haven't met the Man who has the power not only to help you make the changes you want but to heal, protect, and grant eternal life, you can meet Him right now by inviting Jesus into your life. Simply pray this short prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank You for coming to earth and dying for me so I can be forgiven of my sins, experience Your love and care here and now, and have the promise of eternal life in heaven. I open my heart and invite You to come in. Please fill me with Your Holy Spirit and help me get to know You better through reading Your Word in the Bible. Amen.

BY IRIS RICHARD

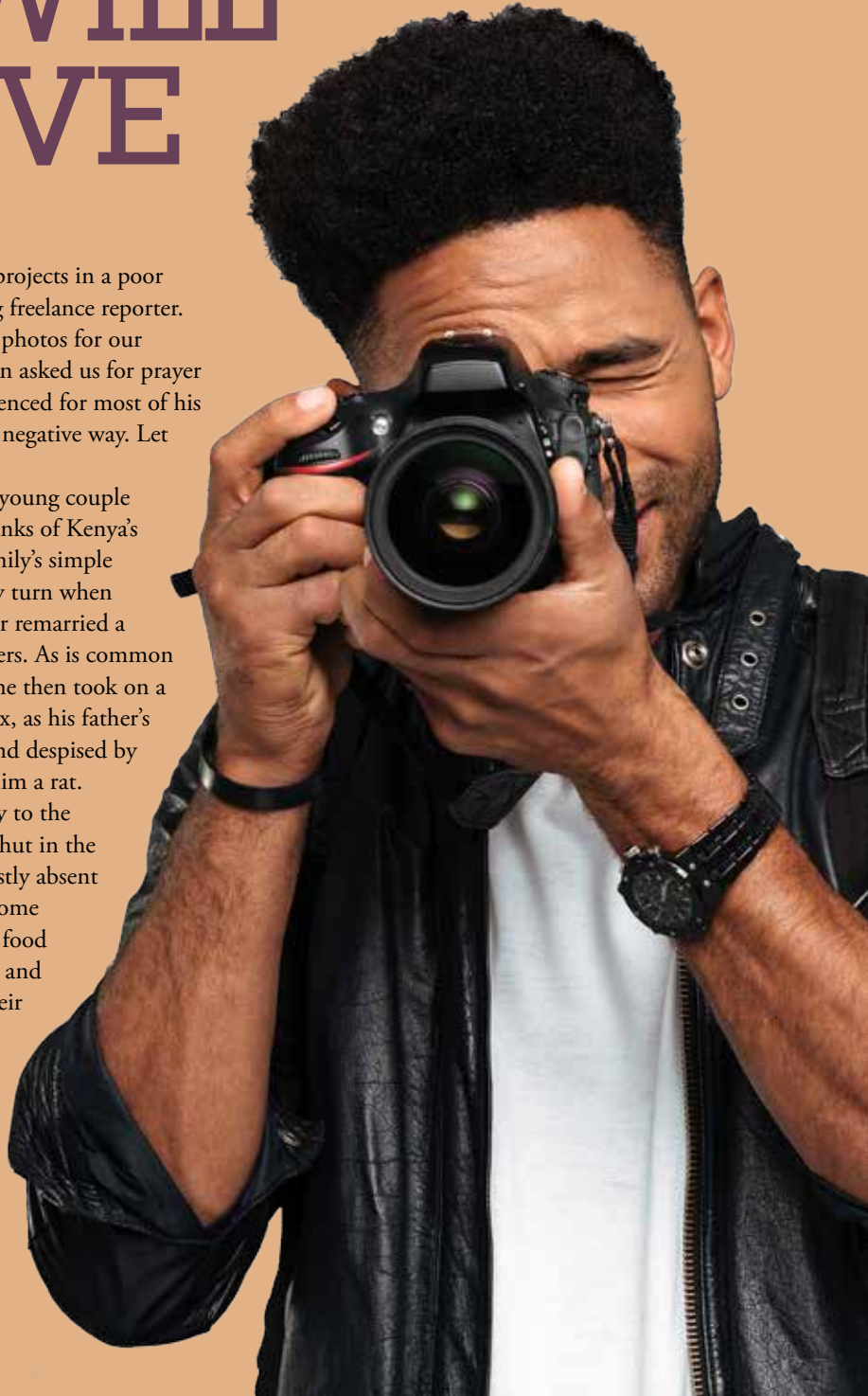
THE WILL TO LIVE

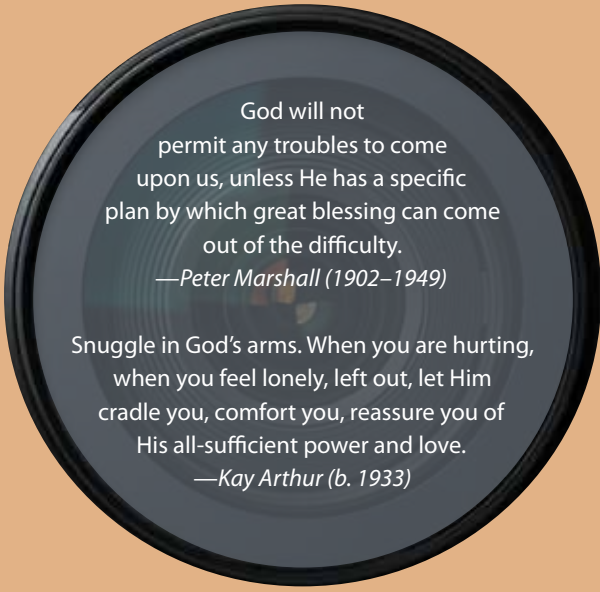
LAST YEAR, during one of our aid projects in a poor community, we met Benson, a young freelance reporter. He offered to take some professional photos for our website. On another occasion, Benson asked us for prayer regarding the hardship he had experienced for most of his life, and which still affected him in a negative way. Let me tell you his story.

Benson was the firstborn son of a young couple who lived in a small village on the banks of Kenya's Lake Victoria. Unfortunately, the family's simple and happy life soon took an unhappy turn when his mother died of malaria. His father remarried a woman who already had two daughters. As is common in some rural African communities, he then took on a second wife. Although he was only six, as his father's firstborn son, Benson was resented and despised by his jealous stepmothers, who called him a rat.

A failing harvest drove their family to the capital, and they moved into a small hut in the Kibera slum. Benson's father was mostly absent in desperate search of work, and at home Benson was the last in line to receive food and care. The women often beat him and kept him home from school to do their chores. When Benson was ten years old, he ran away.

He became part of a gang of roaming street children and was forced into begging by the ringleaders. He lived the life of a castaway subjected to hunger, rudeness, and rejection, and took to sniffing glue to escape the despair.





God will not
permit any troubles to come
upon us, unless He has a specific
plan by which great blessing can come
out of the difficulty.

—Peter Marshall (1902–1949)

Snuggle in God's arms. When you are hurting,
when you feel lonely, left out, let Him
cradle you, comfort you, reassure you of
His all-sufficient power and love.

—Kay Arthur (b. 1933)

After three terrible years, malnourished and addicted to the substance, he almost lost hope. However, a small spark of faith and the feeling that God still had a plan for his life flickered deep inside.

Luckily, when his father regained steady employment, he came searching for his son and brought him home. Even though by then he was thin and sickly, he had a will to live and soon recovered. At school, a kind teacher took him under her wing and gave him extra hours of tutoring for free, which enabled him to make up the years he had missed. In fact, his outstanding performance drew the attention of a well-wisher who sponsored him for high school. It looked like Benson's life was finally looking up.

However, by this time his father's other wives had 11 younger children, and their attitudes toward him hadn't improved. Benson's home life felt unbearable, and when he was 15, he ran away again.

He joined a dance troupe, which paid for his food and rent of a small room, while he finished high school. His love for soccer and willingness to practice hard paved his way into the national soccer team, when another setback entered his life. He broke his

leg, and the multiple fracture crumbled his dream of a promising future.

Angry with God and frustrated with life, he joined a group of jobless, disillusioned youths who got into petty thefts. During months of insecurity, thoughts of suicide often crossed his mind, but a tiny glimmer of hope still remained in his heart.

After leading some foreign photographers on a tour through the slums, he received a cheap camera as a gift. It was then that he discovered his love for photography and began to portray various aspects of the harsh lives in his neighbourhood. Still trapped in the vicious cycle of worry, anxiety, and self-reproach, he was desperate for a way out.

God again threw him a lifesaver when his talent drew the attention of a charity that agreed to sponsor him for college, where he obtained a degree in film/photography and journalism. With a chance to travel and gather further education, he became a freelance journalist. Having produced various documentaries aired by several renowned TV channels, he found a platform to raise awareness, depicting the plight of marginalized people, which gave him a new purpose for life.

Most of us may not have endured the setbacks and trials that Benson has, but we can still testify to experiencing the manifestation of God's love, care and protection in our lives, perhaps in the form of a kind-hearted stranger reaching out to us or some other type of godly intervention. Even though hard times cloud our vision and faith, God never abandons us and will never fail to support us through life's difficulties.

IRIS RICHARD IS A COUNSELOR IN KENYA, WHERE SHE HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEER WORK SINCE 1995. ■

A SOUND MIND

BY MARIE STORY



I AM BY NATURE SOMETHING OF A WORRYWART, almost constantly preoccupied with one worry or another.

I am also a multitasker. I can do just about anything and worry at the same time. For example, this morning I was trying to take my daily quiet time, reading a few pages of devotional material and reflecting on it (I say “trying,” because at the same time I was worrying about the week’s work ahead of me, ongoing health problems, and an upcoming trip) when this sentence jumped off of the page: “In the Bible, the admonition to ‘fear not’ is used more than 100 times.” I guess God knew our inclination to worry and fear.

As kids we are afraid of the dark, the boogeyman under the bed, and the dentist.

A few years later we learn that the boogeyman doesn’t exist and the dentist knows what he’s doing, so then we’re afraid of bullies at school, being embarrassed in front of our friends, and making a poor grade on the Tuesday math quiz.

A few more years later and we’re afraid of pimples and braces and not being popular enough.

Soon enough we fear that first job and worry about the future and what we’ll become. We fear failing academically and failing in relationships. We fear disappointing family and friends. We fear economic failure, we fear for our children’s happiness and well-being, and we fear sickness and death.

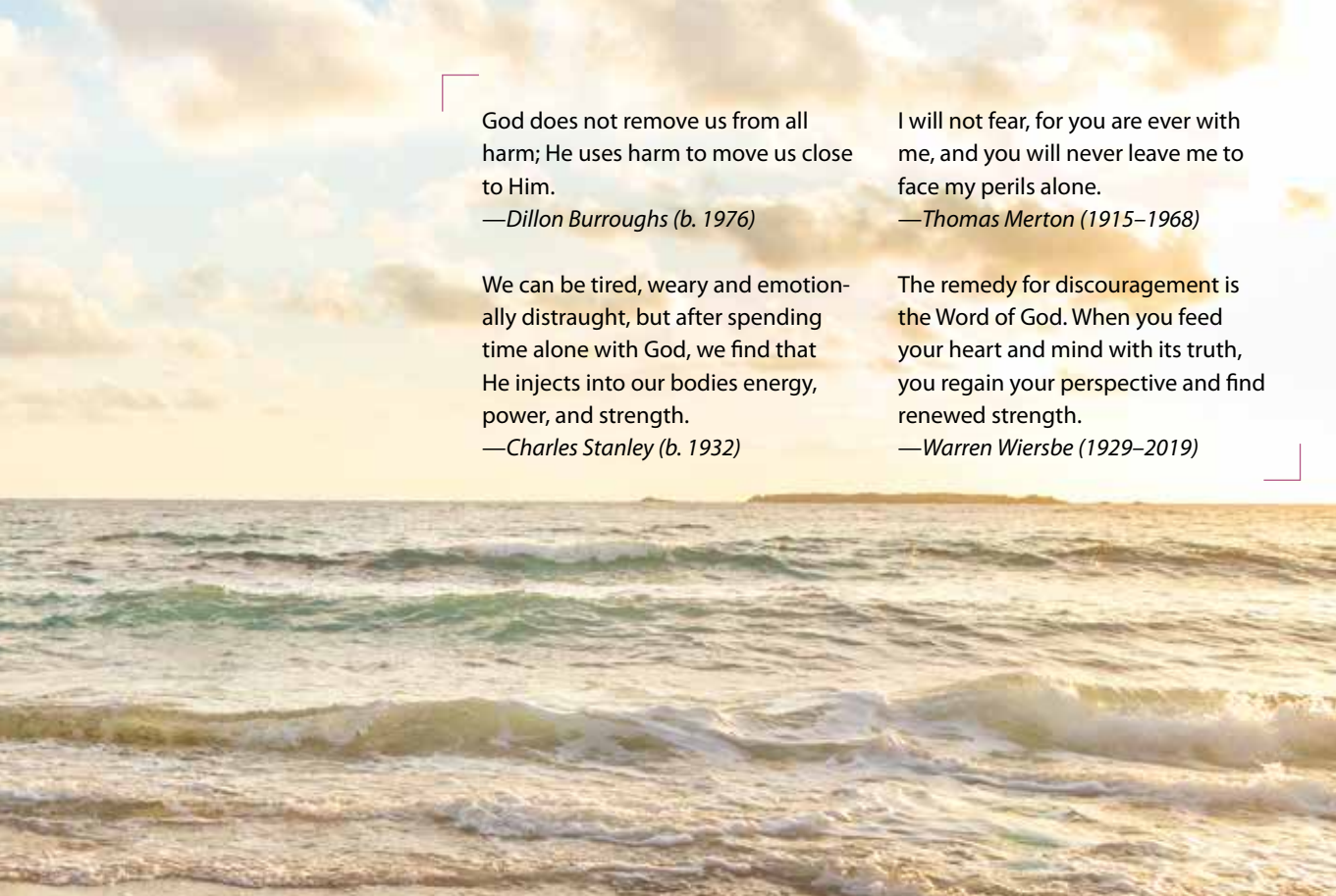
We outgrow fears, but we never seem to outgrow fearing.

It also doesn’t help that these days there seems to be more and more to be afraid of. Just read or watch the news and you’ll see what I’m talking about—war, crime, terrorism, new strains of deadly diseases, natural and manmade disasters, and of course the state of the world economy and the ramifications that brings with it.

In the Bible, God has an answer for each of those fears:

“Trouble at work? Nasty coworkers threatening to cause trouble for you? Don’t worry! Put your will on My side and I’ll take care of the problem!”¹

“Worried about war and terrorism? Don’t fear! Entrust your life and your family to Me, and I’ll take care of you.”²



God does not remove us from all harm; He uses harm to move us close to Him.

—Dillon Burroughs (b. 1976)

I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

—Thomas Merton (1915–1968)

We can be tired, weary and emotionally distraught, but after spending time alone with God, we find that He injects into our bodies energy, power, and strength.

—Charles Stanley (b. 1932)

The remedy for discouragement is the Word of God. When you feed your heart and mind with its truth, you regain your perspective and find renewed strength.

—Warren Wiersbe (1929–2019)

“Afraid of natural disasters? Worried about earthquakes, tsunamis, or hurricanes? Don’t be! I’ve got you covered. That’s the best insurance policy you could ask for!”³

“Are you suffering physically—perhaps even battling a life-threatening sickness? Don’t be afraid. I will be with you through it all, to comfort you and hold your hand.”⁴

1. See Deuteronomy 31:6.

2. See Isaiah 54:14.

3. See Psalm 46:2.

4. See Psalm 23:4.

5. See Isaiah 51:7.

6. See Luke 12:7.

7. See Luke 12:32.

8. See 1 Peter 5:7.

9. 2 Timothy 1:7

“Have you been wrongly accused and therefore worry about saving your reputation and future? Don’t worry. I know the truth, and I’ll make sure it comes out in the end.”⁵

“It can be a scary world out there!

Maybe you live in a dangerous area and that worries you sometimes. Don’t be afraid. If I take care of the birds and the flowers, what makes you think I won’t take care of you?”⁶

“I see you’ve been worried about how to provide for your family. It’s been difficult to make ends meet, and the bills are piling up. Don’t be afraid. The world and all that is in it are Mine, and it is My pleasure to meet your needs. Just ask.”⁷

As I thought about it more, I realized that God has a contingency plan for every possible calamity.

For every worry, He has a solution at His fingertips. What’s more, it’s His pleasure to take care of us! He doesn’t consider us an annoyance when we come to Him with our fears and worries. Rather, like the loving Father He is, He picks us up and gently says, “I understand. Why don’t you leave that fear with Me, and let Me handle it for you?”⁸

“God has not given us a spirit of fear,” the apostle Paul wrote, “but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”⁹

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FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

THE CLIMB TO VICTORY

The rugged climb doesn't dissuade the determined mountain climber; he revels in the challenge. Nothing can stop him from pressing on until he reaches his goal. No adversity can cause him to turn back. When he looks at the steep cliffs ahead, he doesn't focus on the danger but on the toeholds and narrow rock ledges that will take him to the peak. He isn't held back by the harshness of his surroundings or the toll the climb is taking on his body; he is propelled onward and upward by the thought of triumph.

There are many obstacles to surmount in life, but each one you conquer is another one behind you. When the going gets tough, lean on Me. Let Me lead the way and guide you up the rugged cliffs. I know all the danger spots and how to get past them. Together we will surmount each obstacle, together we will reach the summit, and together we will plant the flag of victory!