

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

activated

Vol 26 • Issue 6

TRUSTING IN GOD'S CARE

We are in His hands

Today

A divine gift

The Power of Believing Prayer

God's promises are
true

Twin Sisters

Faith and peace





PERSONALLY SPEAKING THE LOVE OF OUR FATHER

I was a very insecure child. Once when my family was on vacation, I decided to hide in some bushes by the lake to see if anyone would miss me. Would they care enough about me to even look for me? Evening came and it took a while, but my very worried mom searched until she found her lost boy.

At the time, I did not know that I had a heavenly Father who knew exactly where I was and who understood the desire in my heart to be seen and loved without reservation. Now I'm a grown man, and my parents have passed on, but God is still with me. He is always watching out for me. He is omnipresent and eternal, and His love never fails.

Today Sally and I met a man who told us he had “left the Lord” but now he was “coming back.” We assured him that, although he had strayed from the Lord, God had never strayed from him. Much like the parable of the Good Shepherd who left the flock of 99 sheep secure in the fold and went to rescue the stray lamb that was stuck in the brambles (Matthew 18:10–14), this young man had always been under God’s watchful care. God would eagerly help him in his commitment to a new life of obedience to His Word.

Jesus said He longed to gather the people safely under His protective arms as a mother hen carefully guards her tiny chicks under her wings (Matthew 23:37). He referred to Himself as a shepherd who would lay down his life to protect his sheep (John 10:11). He called us His friends (John 15:15), and promised to light our way (John 8:12) and to always be with us (Matthew 28:20).

He said He would show us the Father (Matthew 11:27) so that we could be one with Him and the Father (John 17:21). Jesus said that if we come to Him when we are weary and heavy laden, we will find rest for our souls (Matthew 11:28–30). He offers us the water of the Spirit and the bread of life so that spiritually we will never be thirsty or hungry (John 4:14; 6:35). With Christ we receive forgiveness for all of our sins and mistakes (1 John 1:9). He gives us the opportunity to start over (2 Corinthians 5:17) and offers us eternal life and promises that we will be with Him forever (John 10:28).

This month’s issue of *Activated* is about God’s care for us and reminds us that with God we will never be “lost in the bushes,” because He always knows where we are.

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TODAY

By VICTORIA OLIVETTA

TODAY I WOKE UP EARLY. The alarm clock interrupted my dreaming, and as much as I would have liked to sleep a little longer, it was time to start my day.

Due to new restrictions in our country, we had to close our business. My husband is now looking for a new job. Our budget is tight, but we haven't missed a meal and the bills are paid. We may need to cut out some luxuries, but we have all our necessities.

So, I dedicate myself to my morning gratitude exercise. Instead of looking at what I lack, I focus on the good things, I focus on the present.

The past is over; I can't return and undo it, although sometimes I wish I could. The future doesn't exist yet. Today is all I have to live my life to the maximum—to love, to care, to succeed.

If I fail, I'll start the process over again tomorrow, but with more wisdom and maybe more courage.

I appreciate the moment; it's like a valuable treasure—shining, gorgeous, golden. It's all I have, it's all that matters.

I have stopped wasting energy worrying about tomorrow. I have stopped filling my agenda with

multiple tasks until there is no more space left to write. Instead, I set my priorities and let God rearrange them as He sees fit.

I set medium- and long-term goals, but I concentrate my energies on today ... and suddenly I relax.

I look at my blessings, and because of God's goodness in my life, I can start my day with gratitude on my lips, a spring in my step, and a song in my heart.

Today, just today, is all I need to do God's will, to work toward my goals, to learn, to give, and most of all, to love.

Today I count on God's grace and His guidance and supply as I have for the last four decades. He has never failed me, so I do not want to fail Him.

Today is a divine gift.

"He has made everything beautiful in its time. To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:11,1 NKJV).

And for me, the season is today!

VICTORIA OLIVETTA IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN ARGENTINA. ■

TRUSTING IN GOD'S CARE

BY PETER AMSTERDAM



IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, JESUS TAUGHT HIS FOLLOWERS FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR TRUSTING IN GOD'S CARE WHEN HE SAID:

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" (Matthew 6:25).

When we understand that God is our Father, who loves us and will provide for us, this builds a deep trust in Him—a trust which works to counter anxiety or worry about our day-to-day needs and concerns. The Greek word translated as anxious or worry means to *be troubled with cares*, to *be anxious*. Jesus' message is to have faith in the Father, to believe that He is the creator and giver of life, and to trust that He will provide for His children.

Jesus uses simple analogies from nature to make the point that we are to place our trust in God rather than in possessions or sources of income or the things of this world. He addresses our fears and worries about not having what we need today and for the future.

"Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider

the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" (Matthew 6:26–30).

While the birds may not sow or reap, it doesn't mean that God just drops food into their mouths; they do put effort into finding it. Yet He supplies their nourishment. Jesus then uses a "lesser to greater" argument to make His point: If God feeds the birds, will He not feed you, who are of far greater value than the birds?

The understanding that God's human creation is of greater value and importance to Him than the nonhuman creation is first seen in the story of creation, where humans are created in God's image and are given dominion over the earth and all its creatures (Genesis 1:26–28). It is further made evident by the fact that God loved human beings so much "that he gave his only Son" to die for our sins so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

In between the examples of the birds and the flowers, Jesus makes a statement that illustrates just how futile worry truly is: "Which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?" (Matthew 6:27). The answer to this question is of course self-evident: There is no sense in worrying, as it changes nothing.

After pointing out that worry doesn't change things, Jesus asks: "If God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" (Matthew 6:30). Several times in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus used the phrase *you of little faith* when speaking to those who were afraid or anxious instead of trusting God (Matthew 8:26, 16:8). Faith, as used here, means



confidence that God can and will act on His people's behalf.

Having made the point that the God who feeds the animals and clothes the earth is our Father who loves us and will take care of our needs, Jesus again says *therefore* (taking these things into account) we need not be anxious or worry. "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all" (Matthew 6:31–32).

Jesus makes a comparison here between what nonbelievers do and what believers should do. The Greek word translated here as "seek" expresses the concept of intensely searching for, or craving, a particular thing. While others may prioritize the things of this world, Christians are called to seek first God's kingdom: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matthew 6:33–34).

Jesus teaches us to not worry about tomorrow's potential troubles today, but to trust God for today's challenges and leave tomorrow's cares with Him. Each



day will have its troubles, but we have the assurance that by God's grace He will see us through them. Jesus doesn't teach that we won't have any troubles, that our lives will always be smooth sailing, but He calls us to face our troubles with faith in God's care for us.

God is our Father and, as believers, we are His children. As His children who seek Him and His righteousness, we can trust that our Father will "meet all our needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19 NIV). He often gives us much more than the basics, as God "is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us" (Ephesians 3:20).

Most of us are not wealthy, but we are called to have the right priorities regarding money and material things. We are called to provide for our families, to do our best to have financial security to meet their needs, while also being mindful of not letting our financial goals take priority over our relationship with God. As believers, we are responsible to use our finances, time, gifts and resources for God's glory, to care for our loved ones and to help others; to be generous, to give back to God through our tithes and offerings, and to share our financial blessings with those in need.

The message here is not that Christians will never have difficulties or lean times, or that our lives will be trouble free, or that we can expect God to supply for us abundantly at all times and in all places, or that we will not have to work for our sustenance. The message is that, as believers, we shouldn't be anxious or troubled or worried about the things of this life, but rather should

trust in God's care, His knowledge of our needs, and His ability to provide.

We can live with peace of heart and mind, knowing that God is in control, that He has our best interests at heart, and that He loves us and will care for us. As the Apostle Paul wrote: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7 NIV). God's promises hold true whether we are in a season of stability and safety, or in times of loss, financial insecurity, illness, political unrest, or natural disaster.

We are in His hands. He loves us, takes care of us, and is our faithful provider and present help throughout our lives. No matter what situation we find ourselves in or the state of the world around us, we can place our complete trust in Him, knowing that He loves us, we are His children, and we will live with Him for all eternity.

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

TWIN SISTERS

BY ROSANE CORDOBA

WHEN OUR FAITH IS STRONG, WE CAN HAVE PEACE EVEN IN THE MIDST OF A STORM, like Jesus, who slept in the stern of the boat while His disciples were panicking because they were being engulfed by the waves (Mark 4:38–39). When Jesus was called upon for help, He said to the winds: “Peace, be still!” Then there was a great calm, and He said to the disciples, “Do you still have so little faith?”—exhorting them that they should have prayed for God’s help instead of despairing.

Faith and peace are like twin sisters. They go hand in hand.

Faith gives us peace, which alleviates worry about the past and the future. When we know that God loves us unconditionally and is taking care of everything, we can rest and enjoy our daily blessings, pleasures, and work. If we do our part, we know God will do His. We can concentrate on the only thing we really have the power to change, the here and now, and we can live in the present consciously.

Peace is a precious asset. Psychologists tell us that the two great peace stealers are remorse and trauma from the *past* and anxiety and fear of the *future*. In His famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught us not to worry about either one. (See Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7.)

The best way to have fellowship with these blessed twin sisters is to spend time with the Lord, in prayer, thanksgiving, adoration, and reading and meditating on

His Word. The Bible is full of promises of protection, provision, healing, grace, and blessings without number. You can rest assured that “He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

So, meet these delightful twin sisters today! You can start by asking Jesus to come into your heart, forgive your faults and shortcomings, and fill your life with faith and peace. The twin sisters have other brothers and sisters—love, joy, hope, grace, goodness, gentleness, patience, and the list goes on. Such a big happy family! And they can become part of your life through Christ!

ROSANE CORDOBA LIVES IN BRAZIL. SHE IS A FREE-LANCE WRITER, TRANSLATOR, AND PRODUCER OF FAITH-BASED AND CHARACTER-BUILDING CHILDREN’S MATERIAL. ■



You can receive Jesus by praying this simple prayer:

Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God. Thank You for dying on the cross for me so that, through Your sacrifice, I can live forever with You in heaven. I open my heart to You. Please forgive my sins. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and help me to follow You. Amen.

THE POWER OF BELIEVING PRAYER

BY SIMON BISHOP

ALTHOUGH JESUS DIDN'T PROMISE TO KEEP US FROM ALL TROUBLE AND TRIBULATION, HE DID SAY HE WOULD BE THE FINAL VICTOR.

(See John 16:33.) I believe that during especially trying times God can strengthen our faith when we call on Him. Psalm 50:15 says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." Here is a personal experience that shows God's power, love, and care for those in need.

During our relief efforts following the devastating Typhoon Haiyan that caused over 6,000 deaths and widespread destruction across the Philippines in 2013, we worked in the city of Tacloban where most of the deaths occurred and the entire city was severely damaged.

Our first visit there was a shock as there were still dead bodies lying by the roadside, and many hundreds of people were being pulled daily from the rubble. After my return home, I couldn't stop thinking about how needy the situation was. Donations in the form of food and medicine continued to pour in, so I decided to return to Tacloban the next week.

I had been in touch with an airline that had agreed to fly three tons of relief goods to that area for us, but

as I was transporting the goods to the cargo terminal, I received a phone call from the airline telling me that their permission to fly to Tacloban had just been revoked because the entire airport in Tacloban was without electricity and had to limit the number of incoming flights.

Since I was in a large truck that I had borrowed, I decided to continue driving to the terminal. While unloading all the goods, the cargo manager came out to talk with me. He showed me the huge amount of relief goods that were already sitting there. He said it could be weeks or even months before they received permission to fly to Tacloban.

I went into the office to sign some papers and began talking to a few of the staff who were in the office. I told them that I did not believe that it was God's will for their airline to stop flying there, as the need was so great and people were literally without food or drinkable water, as well as almost every other basic necessity. As I





just called to say that we have once again been given permission to fly to Tacloban. So, the day after tomorrow we will resume our flights.” I was smiling by this time, and I said, “You do know that this is a direct answer to prayer, right?” “Yes! Yes, it’s incredible,” he said. I then told him that I hoped that all my goods would be with me on my flight down, to which he agreed.

was speaking, all the staff stopped their work and started listening.

I told them I was going to pray right then for God to reverse the order and allow them to fly again immediately. I invited them to pray with me. They seemed quite uncomfortable about praying with this “eccentric foreigner,” but I said that I would pray and if they wanted to, they could bow their heads and pray with me. After I finished praying, I said that I knew God would answer our prayers and I wanted them to call me once they were allowed to fly again. They smiled and agreed, although I could tell they were mostly just being polite.

The next evening, as I was returning from a Bible study, I received a phone call from an unknown number. I answered and on the other end was a man who sounded very surprised. He said, “I am the one you gave your number to yesterday at the airport. The authorities

Sometimes we look at God’s promises like the simple woman looked at the pretty pictures her son sent her. The story goes like this...

An elderly woman was living in abject poverty, and her church helped her each month with just enough money to get by. One day while speaking with her pastor, she mentioned her son who lived in another country and who had a good career. She said he wrote her weekly and he always included pretty pictures with his letters. The pastor’s curiosity was piqued. He wondered about a son who loved and thought of his mother so often yet failed to support her. He then asked to see the letters, and when the lady showed him the stacks of mail, he discovered that the “pretty pictures” were actually foreign currency worth a huge sum!

God’s Word is true. His promises are real, they are not “pretty pictures.” He wants us to put our trust in His Word. “This is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him” (1 John 5:14–15).

SIMON BISHOP DOES FULL-TIME MISSION AND HUMANITARIAN WORK IN THE PHILIPPINES. ■



INSTRUMENTS OF GOD'S LOVE

BY CURTIS PETER VAN GORDER

WHEN WE PUT OUR FAITH INTO PRACTICE, WE MOVE FROM BEING NOMINAL BELIEVERS TO BEING INSTRUMENTS OF GOD'S LOVE. A pharmacist friend of mine named Jamal told me about one of his recent experiences along this line. It went like this.

One day a young man, who we'll call Alex, handed Jamal his prescription to treat insomnia. Jamal checked the list of medicines he was taking and was shocked. "Are you sure you want to take all of these medicines?" he asked.

"Of course I am!" came the reply. "I can't sleep, and it's ruining my life!"

Jamal took a deep breath. "You realize that some of these medicines have strong side effects, don't you? If you don't mind me asking, why can't a healthy-looking fellow like you sleep?"

Alex looked troubled. "Because from the moment I lay my head on the pillow, I can't stop thinking about my future!"

"What about it?" Jamal asked.

Alex proceeded to explain his problems in detail, and Jamal listened patiently. Then Jamal offered some fatherly advice. "Our future is in God's hands. We can find peace of mind and stop worrying about our future by entrusting it to His care."

Alex nodded in agreement, but his mind was still on his problems. "My doctor also wants to treat me once a week with electric shocks," he said matter-of-factly.

Jamal grimaced. "What?! There has to be a better solution than that!"

"But what?" Alex asked.

Jamal bowed his head in prayer, asking God for a solution for Alex's sleep, and was then inspired with an idea. "I have a friend who works as a trainer in a gym, and I think he might be able to help you. I suggest you go see him."

That seemed like a good idea to Alex, and he headed straight to the gym.

A couple of hours later Jamal phoned the trainer to find out how it had gone.

"I put him on a treadmill as soon as he came in," the trainer said, "and he's still at it. He's got so much pent-up energy, it's no wonder he hasn't been able to sleep!"

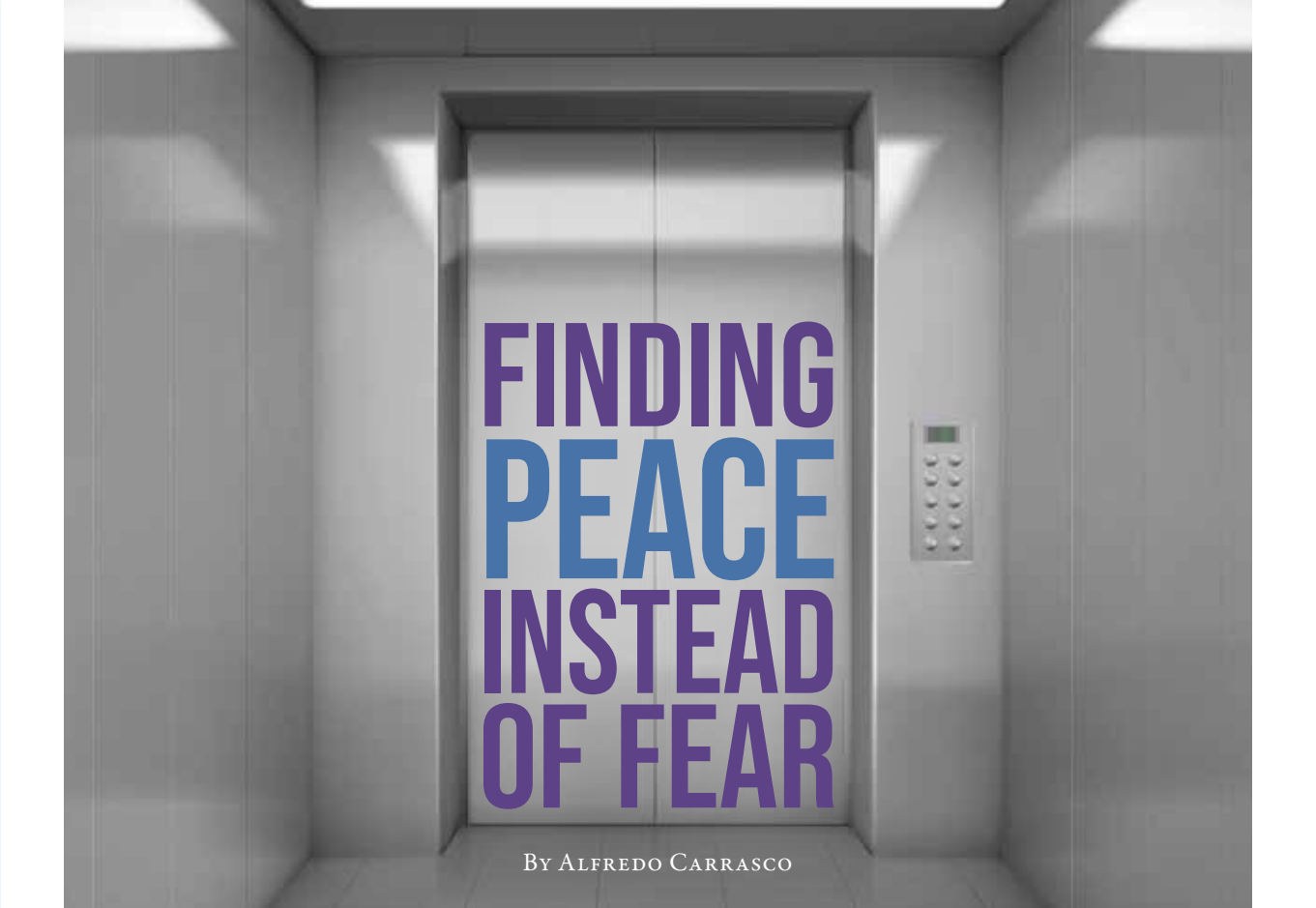
Several days later Alex returned to the pharmacy and excitedly told Jamal, "I've started going to the gym every day, and I've slept soundly every night since!"

"What about your prescription?" Jamal asked.

"I threw it away. And by the way, you were right. God knew exactly what I needed!"

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

CURTIS PETER VAN GORDER IS A FREELANCE WRITER AND MIME ARTIST WHO SPENT 47 YEARS DOING MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN 10 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. HE AND HIS WIFE PAULINE CURRENTLY LIVE IN GERMANY. ■



FINDING PEACE INSTEAD OF FEAR

BY ALFREDO CARRASCO

I WAS TRAPPED IN AN ELEVATOR! I had entered the elevator and was headed up when it stopped between the second and third floors. When I saw what had happened, I said a prayer for my protection. I was trying to stay calm, but suddenly I felt uneasy, and in an instant, I switched from prayer to worry. I asked the Lord for peace, but I was still nervous. In that small space I was bombarded with many thoughts, from the fear of being trapped for a long time, to suddenly being out of breath and suffocating.

I tried to open the elevator manually, because I had heard from someone who'd had a similar experience that if you pulled a lever at the top of the elevator it would open. I looked for that lever, but I couldn't find it. I tried to open the elevator door with all my strength. The inner panel opened but the outer panel remained closed except for a small crack through which I screamed for help. I yelled over and over at the top of my voice, but it was Sunday and there were no people nearby. No security guards. No concierge. No neighbors were home. Everything was silent. To make matters worse, the elevator alarm did not work.

I prayed desperately to the Lord for calm and trust, and little by little the Lord filled me with His peace. I prayed again, then pressed one of the buttons, and miraculously the inner door that had been open closed and the elevator began to work again. It then took me to the corresponding floor. What a relief!

One of the biggest lessons I learned was to remain still and trust in Jesus. In a situation like that, it is very easy to fall into intense worry and nervousness, but it is important not to give place to thoughts of fear or anxiety. When I received that inner calm and peace from the Lord, He sent me His quietness and confidence, and eventually the elevator started working again.

"You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you" (Isaiah 26:3). "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear" (Psalm 46:1–2).

ALFREDO CARRASCO LIVES IN VENEZUELA, WHERE HE IS ENGAGED IN MISSIONARY WORK. ■

BUT IF NOT

By AMY JOY MIZRANY



THERE WERE ONCE THREE MEN WHO WERE OFFICIALS IN THE COURT OF A VERY POWERFUL KING. These men were well respected and considered to be wise among their peers.

One day, the king decided to make a massive golden statue of himself and he wanted everyone to bow down to it and worship him. To add some motivation, he decreed that anyone who did not do so would be thrown alive into a burning furnace.

The three men, however, believed in God and knew that they should not worship anything but Him. So, when the time came to bow down, they refused.

The angry king questioned them: “You do know, don’t you, that if you refuse to bow down, I’m going to have you thrown into the fiery furnace. You will die!”

One of the men spoke up: “We know that you will throw us into the fire. And we know that our God is able to deliver us from that death. *But if not*, even then, we will not worship your golden statue.”

You might recognize this story from Daniel chapter three about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and if so, you probably know the ending. The king had the furnace heated seven times hotter, and the men were thrown into the fire. But then he could see them all walking around in the furnace, along with a fourth person, who he described as “the son of God.” He commanded them to come out and he discovered that no part of their bodies or clothing was burned. They didn’t even smell like smoke!

Then King Nebuchadnezzar said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego” (Daniel 3:28), and he promoted the three men (Daniel 3:30).

THE WILL OF GOD

The will of God will never take you
Where the grace of God cannot keep you,
Where the arms of God cannot support you,
Where the riches of God cannot supply your needs,
Where the power of God cannot endow you.

The will of God will never take you
Where the Spirit of God cannot work through you,
Where the wisdom of God cannot teach you,
Where the army of God cannot protect you,
Where the hands of God cannot mold you.

The will of God will never take you
Where the love of God cannot enfold you,
Where the mercies of God cannot sustain you,
Where the peace of God cannot calm your fears,
Where the authority of God cannot overrule for you.

The will of God will never take you
Where the comfort of God cannot dry your tears,
Where the Word of God cannot feed you,
Where the miracles of God cannot be done for you,
Where the omnipresence of God cannot find you.

—*Author unknown*

That has been a favorite Bible story of Christians for centuries, but the part of this account that I find especially powerful is the phrase *but if not* (Daniel 3:18).

We often lack that absolute trust in God. We expect a lot from Him, and of course we *should* call on Him and place our trust in His promises in the Bible. And when we ask God to do things, we often *do* see the answers to our prayers in the way we hope for. But our faith should not depend on whether He does what we think He should. We don't see the bigger picture.

But if not...

We can tend to put God in a box and then convince ourselves that He's not going to do anything that would disrupt our plans. It's as if God were our personal magician, there to make lovely things happen for us and then go back to wherever He lives. But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

were willing to burn to death if God chose not to save them, accepting that that was God's will! They knew that God *could* save them, He *could* deliver them from being burned alive, but their faith wasn't dependent on God doing that. Their faith was in Him alone, regardless of the circumstances or outcome.

That's what true faith is. We know from the truth of the Bible that God wants to heal us, supply our needs, and give us a full and abundant life. And many times, He'll do just that, and we can count our blessings.

But if not, He is still God, and He has a reason for everything. Trust that He does all things well.

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



“NOT THAT I AM SPEAKING OF BEING IN NEED, FOR I HAVE LEARNED IN WHATEVER SITUATION I AM TO BE CONTENT. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:11–13).

The apostle Paul was very familiar with “living on the edge.” Paul’s world was rife with dramatically changing politics, economic instability, and numerous physical discomforts and inconveniences. He went from a stable life as a Pharisee to an unpredictable, day-by-day adventure as a disciple of Jesus.

I’m not great at dealing with uncertainty. I like things to be stable and predictable. I like safe. When things are easy, I often find myself worrying, wondering when the next difficult thing will happen; and when things are hard, I worry about how long we can deal with things being hard. I’m often not content.

But Paul was different. He said that regardless of how things went, he would be okay. He had learned that God will give us strength for all circumstances. It’s interesting that both abounding and abasing require strength. It’s easy to think that you only need strength when things are

hard, but that’s not true. While in hard times my need for God is more obvious, in easier times I need God’s strength to help me to not get distracted, to remind me that my contentment is not based on my circumstances, and that I don’t need to worry about what will come next.

We all can recognize that the world is moving very fast politically, economically, and culturally. It’s a little destabilizing. It’s easy to focus on circumstances and to let that determine our contentment and peace of mind, but Paul also said:

“Do not be anxious about anything, 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 your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6–7).

I know that this is not a detailed roadmap for navigating the world we live in, but it is a way to position our hearts in alignment with God’s truth. He promises to keep our hearts and minds through Jesus, and when our hearts are right, the next practical steps become clearer.

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. ■

USING GOD'S WORD TO COMBAT WORRY

BY MARIE KNIGHT

EVERY TIME I READ THE NEWS THESE DAYS IT SEEMS LIKE I FIND A NEW REASON TO WORRY. Wars, crime, air pollution, diseases, chemicals in the water and food, and the list goes on. There are times when I think about all that is going on in the world and wonder how I can possibly keep my family healthy and safe when there are so many things that are beyond my control!

But when I stop to think about it, with or without these external circumstances, my life is never under my control. Countless things can happen in an instant. That's why when I find myself feeling encumbered with worries and fears I stop, take a deep breath, and remember who is the anchor of my life. To do this I have certain "go to" verses that help to calm my spirit and give me faith. Here are some of my favorites:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.—*John 14:27*

Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.—*Deuteronomy 31:6*



Even 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.—*Psalms 23:4*

Do not fear, only believe.—*Mark 5:36*

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.—*Isaiah 43:2*


I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.—*John 14:18 KJV*

I will never leave you nor forsake you.—*Hebrews 13:5*

I am with you always, to the end of the age.—*Matthew 28:20*

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.—*John 16:33*

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FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

GOD'S PRESENCE IN EVERY SEASON

Whenever you face times of instability, financial challenges, or troubles in your own life or in the world around you, remember that I am always with you ([Matthew 28:20](#)). No matter what problems or reverses you experience, nothing can separate you from My love—neither death nor life, nor your fears for today, nor your worries about tomorrow—nothing in all creation ([Romans 8:38–39 NLT](#)).

I have told all those who love Me that in this world you will have times of trouble—there will be storms and challenges ([John 16:33](#)). But the good news is that I have promised you My peace and joy that no one can take away from you ([John 16:22](#)). So trust in Me for every stage of life, whether you are abounding or abasing, or somewhere in between. Remember that I have a purpose and plan for your life—plans for your welfare, to give you hope and a future ([Jeremiah 29:11](#)).

Bring every burden and care to Me, and trust that I will work all things together for your good because you love Me and are called according to My purpose ([Romans 8:28](#)). I created you and I know everything about you, and I have a tailor-made plan for your life. Whatever situations and circumstances you experience, you can rejoice in My eternal love for you. Not only will I be with you through every season of your life, but I have promised you a future filled with peace, love, and everlasting joy in the life to come!