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# activated

Vol 14 • Issue 8

## THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE

A Song in a Storm

## Lessons From The Medley

The four strokes to success

## The Faith Package

Unwrapping the Gift





## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION ALWAYS FAITHFUL

A while ago, my dad was doing some research into our family's history and origins, which he then passed on to my siblings and me. He added an image of our surname's coat of arms, which includes the motto "Fidelissimus semper"—Latin for "always faithful."

I like the sound of that. I wonder where that motto originated, and whose story inspired it. God's Word has a lot of good to say about faithfulness, "A faithful man will abound with blessings,"<sup>1</sup> to start with.

It would be nice to be thought of as "always faithful," and of course, to "abound with blessings"—but unfortunately, when the going gets tough, adversity sets in, doubts arise, or results don't materialize as quickly as we would like, it's sometimes easier to be fickle than faithful. Being someone whose love or loyalty can truly be counted on does not come as naturally as we'd like. As King Solomon observed, "Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man?"<sup>2</sup>

Thankfully, however, although we all will sometimes fail to be faithful, we can always count on God. Psalm 100:5<sup>3</sup> says, "The Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations," while Deuteronomy 32:4<sup>4</sup> gives a beautiful description of God's timeless constancy: "He is the Rock; his deeds are perfect. Everything he does is just and fair. He is a faithful God who does no wrong!"

Even though we may fail and lose faith in Him or others or ourselves, He never gives up, and He never wavers from the promises He's made. "I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the Lord; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope."<sup>5</sup>

He is truly "always faithful."

Samuel Keating  
Executive Editor

1. Proverbs 28:20
2. Proverbs 20:6
3. NIV
4. NLT
5. Jeremiah 29:11 CEB

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BY CHARLES SPURGEON, ADAPTED

# GET UP INTO THE HIGH MOUNTAIN<sup>1</sup>

**OUR KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST IS SOMEWHAT LIKE CLIMBING ONE OF THE WELSH MOUNTAINS.** When you are at the base, you see but little: the mountain itself appears to be but one-half as high as it really is.

Climb the first rising knoll, and the valley lengthens and widens beneath your feet.

Go higher, and you see the country for four or five miles round, and you are delighted with the widening prospect.

Mount still, and the scene enlarges; till at last, when you are on the summit, and look east, west, north, and south, you see almost all England lying before you. Yonder is a forest in some distant county, perhaps two hundred miles away, and here the sea, and there

a shining river and the smoking chimneys of a manufacturing town, or the masts of the ships in a busy port.

When we first believe in Christ, we see but little of Him. The higher we climb, the more we discover of His beauties. Paul, when grown old, sitting grey-haired and shivering in a dungeon in Rome, could say with greater emphasis than we can, “I know the one in whom I trust,”<sup>2</sup> for each experience had been like the climbing of a hill, each trial had been like ascending another summit, and his death seemed like gaining the top of the mountain, from which he could see the whole of God’s faithfulness and love.

CHARLES SPURGEON (1834–1892) WAS ENGLAND’S BEST-KNOWN PREACHER FOR MOST OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. ■

1. Isaiah 40:9

2. 2 Timothy 1:12 NLT

I know of nothing which so stimulates my faith in my Heavenly Father as to look back and reflect on His faithfulness to me in every crisis and every chilling circumstance of life. Over and over He has proved His care and concern for my welfare. Again and again I have been conscious of the Good Shepherd’s guidance through dark days and deep valleys.—*Phillip Keller (1920–1997)*

God’s faithfulness means that because He is the truth, everything He says and does is certain. That means He is 100% reliable 100% of the time. He does not fail, forget, falter, change or disappoint. In the words of Lewis Sperry Chafer: “He not only advances and confirms that which is true, but in faithfulness abides by His promises. He says what He means and means what He says and therefore does everything He says He will do.”—*Dr. Ray Pritchard, Great Is Thy Faithfulness*



# THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE

BY DINA ELLENS

**I DIDN'T APPRECIATE IT MUCH WHEN I WAS YOUNGER**, but looking back now, I realize the influence my father's faith in God has had on me. I have fond memories of standing next to his (at the time) towering 6-foot frame, listening to him wholeheartedly singing hymns in church.

My family was from Holland, and my father's favorite songs were in Dutch. After leaving home and striking out on my own, one particular song would come back to me, especially when I was feeling discouraged or worried. Roughly translated, it goes like this:

*A little ship under Jesus' care  
With the emblem of the cross  
flying there.  
It rescues all in need,*

*Even though the sea stands tall and high  
And the storms do threaten nigh.  
We have God's Son on board,  
And safety in His ward.*

This song connects to memories of an adventure from my childhood:

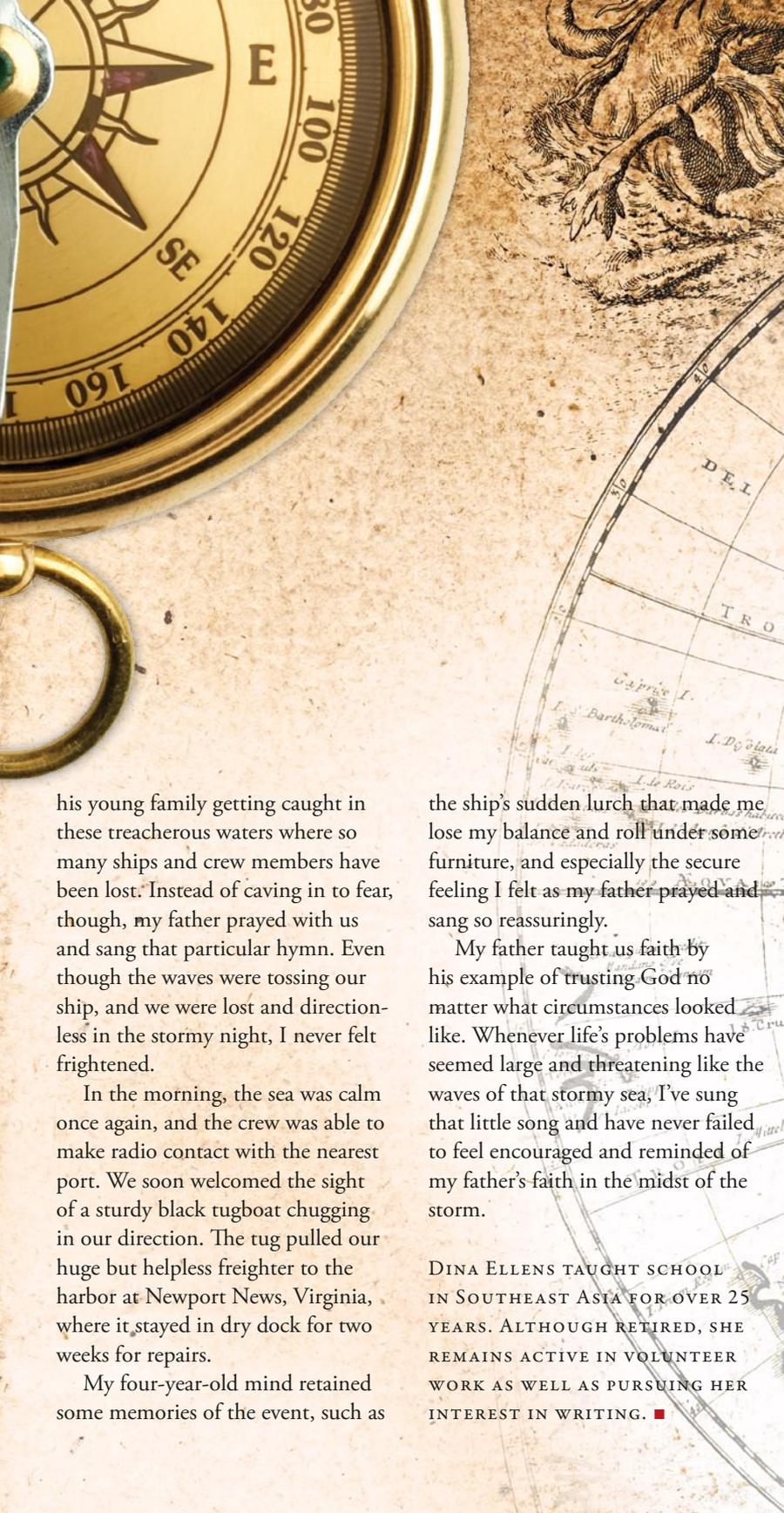
It was 1953, and my parents had decided to emigrate from the Netherlands to the United States. We crossed the Atlantic on an old ocean freighter that had been converted to carry passengers.

My two brothers and I loved the thrill of being on board a big ship. We spent our days exploring and in no time made friends with all the crew members. I was only four years old, but I can remember the ship's smell of oil and tar mixed with a sea breeze, and it still fills me with the same feelings of adventure and excitement

I felt the day we boarded the freighter in Rotterdam.

Just how much of an adventure we were in for, we had no idea. After several days, our ship was caught in a storm near the Sargasso Sea, at the center of the infamous Bermuda Triangle. The stormy turbulence churned up the abundant floating mats of an alga called sargassum, which then got tangled around our ship's propellers. The ship suddenly lurched to one side, knocking over passengers and furniture. Thankfully, no one in my family was injured, but with the propellers rendered useless, our ship bobbed helplessly in the stormy ocean.

My father took the three of us children to our cabin and tucked us into bed. I can better understand now what thoughts must have been going through his mind, as he thought of



his young family getting caught in these treacherous waters where so many ships and crew members have been lost. Instead of caving in to fear, though, my father prayed with us and sang that particular hymn. Even though the waves were tossing our ship, and we were lost and directionless in the stormy night, I never felt frightened.

In the morning, the sea was calm once again, and the crew was able to make radio contact with the nearest port. We soon welcomed the sight of a sturdy black tugboat chugging in our direction. The tug pulled our huge but helpless freighter to the harbor at Newport News, Virginia, where it stayed in dry dock for two weeks for repairs.

My four-year-old mind retained some memories of the event, such as

the ship's sudden lurch that made me lose my balance and roll under some furniture, and especially the secure feeling I felt as my father prayed and sang so reassuringly.

My father taught us faith by his example of trusting God no matter what circumstances looked like. Whenever life's problems have seemed large and threatening like the waves of that stormy sea, I've sung that little song and have never failed to feel encouraged and reminded of my father's faith in the midst of the storm.

DINA ELLENS TAUGHT SCHOOL IN SOUTHEAST ASIA FOR OVER 25 YEARS. ALTHOUGH RETIRED, SHE REMAINS ACTIVE IN VOLUNTEER WORK AS WELL AS PURSUING HER INTEREST IN WRITING. ■

## A CHILD'S FAITH

"Jesus loves me, this I know  
For the Bible tells me so."  
Little children ask no more,  
For love is all they're looking for,  
And in a small child's shining eyes  
The Faith of all the ages lies.

And tiny hands and tousled heads  
That kneel in prayer by little beds  
Are closer to the dear Lord's heart  
And of His kingdom more a part  
Than we who search, and never find  
The answer to our questioning mind.

For Faith in things we cannot see  
Requires a child's simplicity  
For, lost in life's complexities,  
We drift upon uncharted seas  
And slowly Faith disintegrates  
While wealth and power accumulate.

And the more man learns, the less  
he knows,  
And the more involved his  
thinking grows  
And, in his arrogance and pride,  
No longer is man satisfied  
To place his confidence and love  
With childlike Faith in God above.

Oh, Father grant once more to men  
A simple childlike Faith again.  
And, with a small child's trusting  
eyes  
May all men come to realize  
That Faith alone can save man's soul  
And lead him to a Higher Goal.  
—Helen Steiner Rice (1900–1981) ■



# BEYO

BY STEVE HEARTS

LIFE IS FULL OF CHALLENGES OF MANY KINDS. For some, the most monumental ones present themselves a good ways down the road. In my case, life's main challenge made itself known shortly after I was born and remains with me to this day. I am blind.

Doctors were never able to determine the exact cause for my blindness, and could do nothing to remedy it, but the impact of this disability was especially painful during childhood. One occasion stands out. I was seven. My family would read to me from the Bible, and I was accustomed to sometimes holding the book in my hands. Then my parents ordered a Braille Bible. Rather than a single volume, my fingers now touched a pile of 18 huge volumes. What's more, each page had line after line of dots across it. I couldn't comprehend how these seemingly meaningless dots could in any way be associated with the verses I listened to as my parents read to me from their Bible.

There were many other moments that brought home the reality of my situation, such as the inability to participate in many of the recreational activities of my peers, or being unable to fully understand conversations that were centered around color, fashion, and other things that require vision. There was also my greater need for assistance from others in day-to-day life ... and the list goes on. The realization that I lacked a physical sense possessed by everyone else around me was a painful one.

Around the same time, my parents received a letter from some missionaries who had heard about me

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1. 2 Corinthians 5:7

# ND SIGHT

and had been praying for me. They had asked God for insight into my situation, and He had spoken to them. He told them it was certainly within His power to give me sight, but He planned to use me just as I was. He likened my situation to that of the apostle Paul, with his "thorn in the flesh," described in 2 Corinthians 12:7–10, and encouraged me to "walk by faith, not by sight."<sup>1</sup>

This gave me a new perspective. My mother, the determined soul that she was, found a book about the Braille system and studied it until she was able to read Braille by sight. She then set to work on teaching me to read it with my fingers. It was a tedious task, but in a little over three months, I was reading.

The years that followed saw many other challenges and victories. I learned to play various musical instruments and have since used this gift to bring people into God's kingdom.

When I was 20, my mother passed away and I found myself at the bottom of a deep valley. Although with time I managed to pull myself out of it, I failed to fully accept what had happened. Later, God drew my attention to the need to exercise more gratitude toward Him—not just when things were turning out right, but even regarding my losses.

When I did, through my tears, He in turn washed away my resentment, pain, and hurt in a flood of joy that cannot be explained in earthly terms. That was when the message contained in 2 Corinthians 5:7, "We live by faith, not by sight," took on a new meaning. Only after I "walked by faith," through giving thanks for those things that I had previously not been able to thank God for, could I be rewarded with the marvelous

gift of "seeing" with the soul, that would propel me into a deeper relationship with the One who knows, loves, and cares like no one else.

I am of the opinion that we all face a universal challenge: learning to look beyond what we perceive in the physical through eyesight or logic, and instead to see with the eyes of faith. The question isn't whether or not we are capable of this, but rather whether or not we are willing to take it on. If we choose to allow the Creator to open the eyes of our soul and enhance our vision, we will find ourselves in a new and limitless world with endless possibilities.

STEVE HEARTS HAS BEEN BLIND SINCE BIRTH. HE IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL. ■

When outward strength is broken, faith rests on the promises. In the midst of sorrow, faith draws the sting out of trouble and takes out the bitterness from every affliction.—*Richard Cecil (1748–1810), English Anglican clergyman*

Build this day on a foundation of pleasant thoughts. Never fret at any imperfections that you fear may impede your progress. Remind yourself, as often as necessary, that you are a creature of God and have the power to achieve any dream by lifting up your thoughts. You can fly when you decide that you can. Never consider yourself defeated again. Let the vision in your heart be in your life's blueprint. —*Og Mandino (1923–1996), American author and psychologist*



# FAITHFULNESS—THE ONE-DAY-AT-A-TIME FRUIT

BY RAFAEL HOLDING

FAITHFUL PEOPLE ARE DEPENDABLE AND TRUE. They're faithful to God, faithful to the work He has called them to, whatever that may be, and faithful to keep their word and fulfill their obligations to others. All of these things are part of their Christian duty.

Faithful people are that way because they are full of faith. Their faith is what gives them the strength to be responsible. They're full of God's Word, which is the source of faith,<sup>1</sup> so it comes naturally for them to do what it says. Theirs is a living faith, and it shows.<sup>2</sup> Faithful people keep going through thick and thin because they know Him in whom they believe, and are persuaded that He will work everything out for their good in the end.<sup>3</sup>

How can you remain faithful? Stay close to Jesus, and take life one day at a time! Forget the past, and don't worry about tomorrow. "Don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries."<sup>4</sup> If you read God's Word and do your best to be faithful today, you'll stay faithful, and that will be a testimony to others.

RAFAEL HOLDING IS A WRITER IN AUSTRALIA. "FAITHFULNESS—THE ONE-DAY-AT-A-TIME FRUIT" IS ADAPTED FROM THE *GET ACTIVATED* BOOK *GOD'S GIFTS*, AVAILABLE FROM AURORA'S ONLINE STORE ([HTTP://SHOP.AURORAPRODUCTION.COM/](http://shop.auroraproduction.com/)). ■

1. See Romans 10:17.

2. See James 2:18, 21–26.

3. See 2 Timothy 1:12; Romans 8:28.

4. Matthew 6:34. See also Philippians 3:13–14.

5. See Mark 14:3–9.

6. See Romans 14:10.

7. Matthew 25:21

## SHE HAS DONE WHAT SHE COULD!

Jesus said about the dear woman who anointed Him before His death, "She has done what she could."<sup>5</sup>

Maybe you feel you can't do very much, but at least you can do what you can. If you are faithful to do your best at the job that God has given you to do for Him, however great or small that may be, He will greatly reward you one of these days.<sup>6</sup>

You'll reap eternal rewards and everlasting glory and have a feeling of genuine permanent accomplishment from your investment in His work. "Well done, good and faithful servant," you will hear Him say. "Because you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord."<sup>7</sup>

—*David Brandt Berg (1919–1994)*

The reward of being "faithful over a few things" is just the same as being "faithful over many things"; for the emphasis falls upon the same word; it is the "faithful" who will enter "into the joy of [their] Lord."

—*Charles S. Robinson (1829–1899)*



POINTS TO PONDER

# FAITHFULNESS

When prayer is less sweet and easy; when love is less animated and tender; when the presence of God is less evident and less consoling; when even outward duties are fulfilled with less facility and enjoyment; then faithfulness is greater when maintained under these painful circumstances, and that is all that God requires.

—*François Fénelon (1651–1715)*

Watch where Jesus went. The one dominant note in his life was to do his Father's will. His is not the way of wisdom or of success, but the way of faithfulness.

—*Oswald Chambers (1874–1917)*

He does most in God's great world who does his best in his own little world.

—*Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)*

Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.

—*Martin Luther (1483–1546)*

Remember, God does not pay us for results, but for effort.

—*Giovanni "Don" Bosco (1815–1888)*

Here is the great secret of success: Work with all your might, but never trust in your work. Pray with all your might for the blessing in God, but work at the same time with all diligence, with all patience, with all perseverance. Pray and work. Work and pray.

—*George Müller (1805–1898)*

All that I have accomplished, or expect or hope to accomplish, has been and will be by that plodding, patient, persevering process of accumulation that builds the ant-heap, particle by particle, thought by thought, fact by fact.

—*Elihu Burritt (1810–1879)*

Being faithful in the smallest things is the way to gain, maintain, and demonstrate the strength needed to accomplish something great.

—*Alex Harris (1975–2009)*

God knows our situation; He will not judge us as if we had no difficulties to overcome. What matters is the sincerity and perseverance of our will to overcome them.

—*C.S. Lewis (1898–1963)*

Battles are fought in our minds every day. When we begin to feel the battle is just too difficult and want to give up, we must choose to resist negative thoughts and be determined to rise above our problems. We must decide that we're not going to quit. When we're bombarded with doubts and fears, we must take a stand and say: "I'll never give up! God's on my side. He loves me, and He's helping me! I'm going to make it!"

—*Joyce Meyer (b. 1943)*

Like the star that shines afar,  
Without haste and without rest,  
Let each man wheel with steady sway  
Round the task that rules the day,  
And do his best.

—*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832)* ■



# Faith Fortifiers

BY MARIA FONTAINE, ADAPTED

CHRISTIANS AREN'T IMMUNE TO DIFFICULTY—family problems, fears, uncertainty, too much to do, financial pressures, and so much more. Having faith doesn't keep us from difficulties, but we who know the Lord can avail ourselves of His promises, which can get us through those difficulties.

I want to share a few of the things that help me to keep going when things are rough. These are part of my personal survival list.

First, I remind myself that I'm not alone in going through difficult times. It's been said that "adversity builds character" is the A-B-C of spiritual growth. All those who have done great things for God and mankind have experienced difficulties and had to overcome all manner of obstacles. It's through

their struggles that they became strong.

Think of the example of Joseph, one of those whose character and potential were forged in the furnace.<sup>1</sup> As William Secker put it, "If Joseph had not been Egypt's prisoner, he would have never been Egypt's governor. The iron chains around his feet ushered in the golden chains around his neck."<sup>2</sup>

Something else that helps me to carry on is to pray for greater faith. There are scriptural examples of praying for faith, and I know God always answers the hungry heart. "Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, 'Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!'"<sup>3</sup> In another instance, the apostles asked Jesus to increase their faith.<sup>4</sup>

When I feel too weak to pray for myself, I ask others to pray for me. When I'm having a tough time, I'm thankful that I have people who can support me in prayer, people who I can go to, knowing that they will give me the gift of their time and concern by asking God for strength and faith on my behalf.

Next, I review past experiences of how God has come through for me. Never once has He failed to bring me out of the storm and into a peaceful place in His time. Focusing on all that God has done in the past helps me believe Him for more good things to come. I know from personal experience that no matter how bleak the situation, God is able to do miracles. He's not limited by circumstances.

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1. See Genesis 37–46.
  2. William Secker (died c. 1681) was a Church of England clergyman and religious writer.
  3. Mark 9:24
  4. See Luke 17:5.



GREAT FAITH IS NOT THE FAITH THAT WALKS ALWAYS IN THE LIGHT AND KNOWS NO DARKNESS, BUT THE FAITH THAT PERSEVERES IN SPITE OF GOD'S SEEMING SILENCES, AND THAT FAITH WILL MOST CERTAINLY AND SURELY GET ITS REWARD.  
—FATHER ANDREW (1869–1946)

Additionally, reading or listening to testimonies of how He has never failed others is also a tremendous inspiration and strengthens my faith. Learning about the wonderful things He has done for fellow believers throughout history gives me the assurance and peace that He will do wonders for me as well.

Another thing that helps me a lot is to look beyond the present difficult circumstances and try to believe that things will get better, because I know that God cares, that He's going to bring me through, and that He honors me for having that trust in Him.

This reminds me of the story about a father and his little daughter who came to him one day asking for a dollhouse. The father nodded and promised to build her one, then returned to his book. Soon he

glanced out the window and saw her, arms filled with dishes and dolls, making trip after trip until she had a huge pile of her toys in the yard. He asked his wife what the little girl was doing.

"Oh, you promised to build her a dollhouse, and she's getting ready for it."

"It was like I'd been hit by lightning," the father later said. "I threw aside that book, raced to the shed for supplies, and quickly built her a dollhouse. I didn't do it because I necessarily wanted to or because she deserved it, but because I had said I would and she had believed me and acted upon it. Her faith in her father's word made it impossible for me to let her down."

That's how our heavenly Father is with His children too. The

fulfillment of His promises doesn't always happen immediately, but He always answers in His perfect time and according to His purpose.

So those are a few of the things that help me when my head is barely above water and I'm ready to panic. When I incorporate these principles and practices into my daily life—even if it's just through my thoughts—they activate my faith and it goes from being theoretical faith to living faith.

MARIA FONTAINE AND HER HUSBAND, PETER AMSTERDAM, ARE DIRECTORS OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL, A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF FAITH. "FAITH FORTIFIERS" IS ADAPTED FROM "SIX MORE FAITH TIPS," FIRST PUBLISHED OCTOBER 2010. ■





# Lessons from the Medley

BY OLIVIA BAUER

I WAS CHATTING OVER SKYPE WITH A FRIEND while watching the 4x100 m medley swimming relay at the Olympics, when something one of the commentators said stumped me. “What’s the ‘fly’ leg of the relay?” I typed to my friend.

“The butterfly leg. The four strokes are: Fly, back, breath [sic], free.”

If you follow swimming, you’ll know that we had the order of the strokes mixed up, and that my friend should have probably written “breast.” However, I learned something more than just what the 4x100 medley included. I came away from that conversation with something of a watchword for putting ideas into action: *Fly. Back. Breathe. Free.*

## FLY

It’s exciting to hit on a new idea, to chase a sweet deal, or be on the

1. Proverbs 13:12 NLT
2. See John 8:32.

brink of undertaking a new project. We fly high on enthusiasm, hoping to achieve, to make our mark.

## BACK

And yet, rarely does success go off without a hitch. There are obstacles and challenges along the road to achievement. Around the bend, we may face the grim visage of disaster, rather than triumph. Sometimes we just plain fall, and find that we’re back to where we started, faced with the prospect of beginning again.

The upside of this “leg” is that setbacks or disappointments force us to evaluate all aspects of a decision or project: “How committed am I to this goal? Is it worth the risks, worth the hardship?” If the answer is yes, then buckle up and get back on.

## BREATHE

It requires courage to take the first step a second time. It costs to start

over. It will probably be painful and unsettling, but—take a soul-deep breath—you can do it! Breathe through it, and begin again—with purposeful determination and with belief in yourself and in the value of bringing your idea to fruition.

## FREE

“A dream fulfilled is a tree of life.”<sup>1</sup> There’s almost no better experience than the liberation of fulfillment, the elation of achieving a long-held dream or a hard-fought-for plan, or the reinforcement of self-worth. And then, there’s the urge to do it all again; to once more take up and fight for an ideal, a dream, a cause. The truth is that we can do anything we set our minds and will to. The truth makes us free.<sup>2</sup>

OLIVIA BAUER WORKS WITH A NOT-FOR-PROFIT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION IN WINNIPEG, CANADA. ■



# LIVING THE DREAM

BY KATRIN PRENTICE

ONE OF MY FAVORITE INSPIRATIONAL STORIES is of a young African boy who crossed over 3,000 kilometers of hostile jungle territory on foot because he had a vision and determination.

Legson Didimu Kayira was born in the 1940s to a life of total poverty in the Tumbuka tribe, Malawi, but he dreamed of studying in the United States. When he was 16, he decided to make his way on foot to Egypt and find work on a ship sailing to the U.S. He left home with only a small ax, a blanket, a map of Africa, a map of the world, and two books—a Bible and a copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Fifteen months later, Legson arrived in Kampala, Uganda, where he came across a directory of American colleges. He wrote to Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon explaining his situation and asking for a scholarship. The dean was so impressed he granted him

both admission and a scholarship, while the student body collected \$650 to cover his fare. In December 1960, Legson finally arrived at Skagit Valley College, still carrying nothing but what he'd left home with two years before.

Later, Legson became a professor at Cambridge University and authored six novels and the prize-winning autobiography, *I Will Try*.

Here's another: In 1938, Soichiro Honda began developing a new piston ring, which he dreamed of selling to the Toyota Corporation, but it was rejected.

He went back to the drawing table, and two years later he had a new piston ring. This time, he won the contract with Toyota, but he had no factory, and concrete was rationed due to WW2. Undaunted, Mr. Honda invented a new formula for making concrete and got his factory built. Unfortunately, it was

bombed—twice—and finally leveled by an earthquake.

After the war, Japan suffered a gasoline shortage. Mr. Honda couldn't afford to drive his car, so he attached a small engine to his bicycle. His neighbors were soon asking him to make "motorized bikes" for them too and encouraging him to build a plant to manufacture his engines.

Because he had no capital, he wrote all 18,000 bike shop owners in Japan a personal letter, explaining his vision and asking for financial contributions. Five thousand of them agreed to advance him capital for his invention ... and the rest, as they say, is history.

What these men, and others like them, have in common is that they refused to let the limitations of their circumstances limit their dreams.

KATRIN PRENTICE IS A LIFE AND EXECUTIVE COACH, ASC (IIC). ■



# THE FAITH PACKAGE

QUIET MOMENTS

BY ABI MAY



LIFE'S UPS AND DOWNS CAN LEAVE OUR FAITH IN A PRECARIOUS POSITION, so how do we increase our faith? The Bible tells us that "faith comes by hearing ... the word of God."<sup>1</sup> Let's unwrap that package, layer by layer.

## ★ FAITH...

What is faith? Joseph Fort Newman says, "Faith is a fire in the heart," while Hannah Whitall Smith tells us, "Faith is nothing at all tangible. It is simply believing God."

Abraham had faith. When God told him to go, he went—without even knowing exactly where.<sup>2</sup> Moses had faith. He left Egypt at God's command, not knowing where he might end up.<sup>3</sup> A prostitute named Rahab had faith; she protected the Israelite spies and was in turn

protected when God brought the walls of Jericho down all around her.<sup>4</sup>

God came through for them, and He will come through for us too.

*Dear God, my faith is sometimes weak, but You are the solid foundation upon which I can put my trust.*

"The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust."  
—*Psalm 18:2*

## ★ FAITH COMES...

The people of ancient Israel had long awaited the coming of the Messiah. When He did show up, it was not in fine robes or trappings of wealth, not at the head of an army or accompanied by the honors of state,

but in simplicity, poverty, and love, riding a young donkey.<sup>5</sup>

When faith comes, it is not always in the package we expect.

*Dear God, thank You for coming into my life.*

"The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned."  
—*Matthew 4:16*

## ★ FAITH COMES BY HEARING...

"Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!"  
—*Matthew 11:15 NLT*

We cannot listen unless we pause what we're doing and focus. When Samuel heard God's voice in the night, he responded, "Speak, for Your servant hears."<sup>6</sup>

Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, was another listener. We're told she "sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word."<sup>7</sup>

Jesus went about the country, healing and teaching; news of Him

1. Romans 10:17

2. See Hebrews 11:8.

3. See Hebrews 11:27.

4. See Hebrews 11:31.

5. See John 12:15.

6. 1 Samuel 3:10

7. Luke 10:39

8. Luke 5:15 NLT

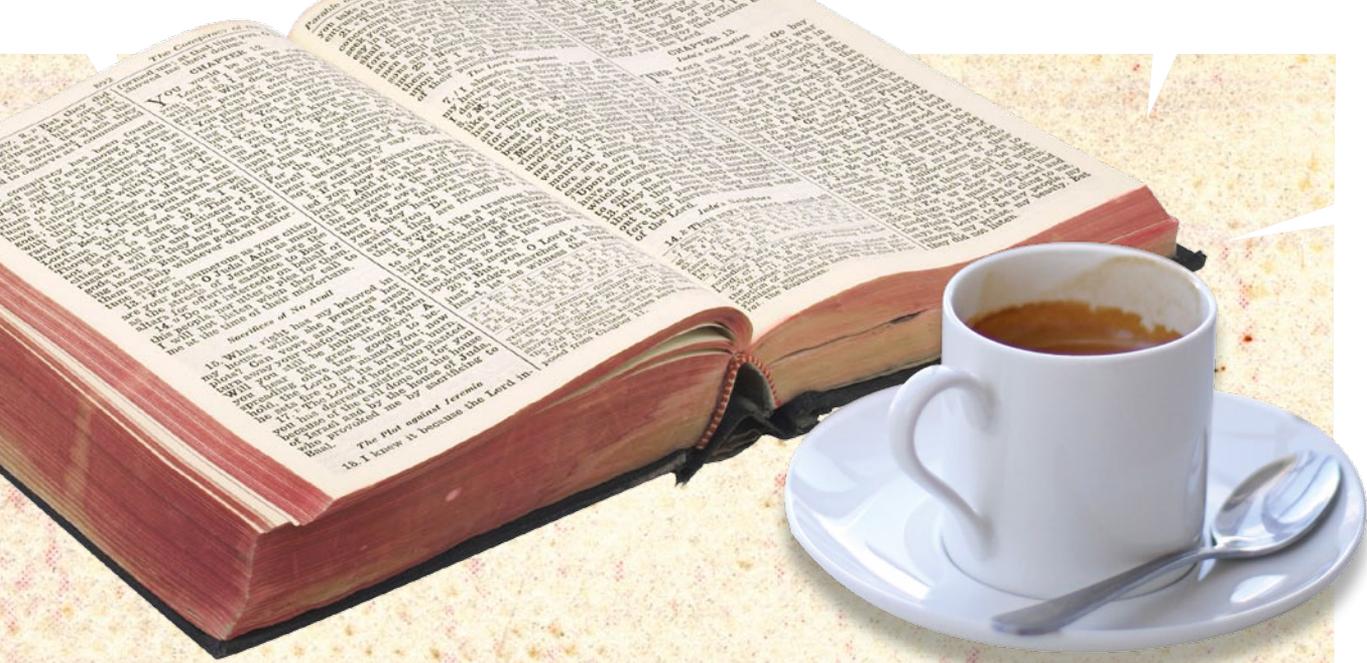
9. See Acts 2.

10. Acts 2:11 NLT

11. See 1 Kings 19:11–12.

12. Job 11:7

13. See Romans 5:8.



spread and “vast crowds came to hear him preach and to be healed of their diseases.”<sup>8</sup> But the crowd needed to be quiet in order to hear Him.

We cannot hear unless we listen.

*Dear God, help me to stop my own thoughts for just a few moments, to listen, so that I can hear.*

★ **FAITH COMES BY HEARING THE WORD...**

What caused such a stir in Jerusalem on the day that the followers of Jesus received the infilling of the Holy Ghost?<sup>9</sup> There were crowds of people in town for a festival and many were foreigners from as far away as Rome, Egypt, and Asia Minor. Different nationalities speaking different languages, yet everyone in the crowd could understand: “We all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!”<sup>10</sup>

No matter who we are, God speaks our language. He communicates in words that we can

understand. Whether through the Bible, other inspired writings, or in a still small voice<sup>11</sup> during our own quiet times with Him, we can get the message.

*Dear Lord, I want to hear Your words, to know You better and to receive Your encouragement.*

★ **FAITH COMES BY HEARING THE WORD OF GOD.**

“Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?”<sup>12</sup> The answer is obvious. As Evagrius of Pontus wrote in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, “God cannot be grasped by the mind. If He could be grasped, He would not be God.” Thankfully, understanding is not a prerequisite for love; we can rest secure in God’s love because God has *shown* us how much He loves us by sending His Son to die for us.<sup>13</sup>

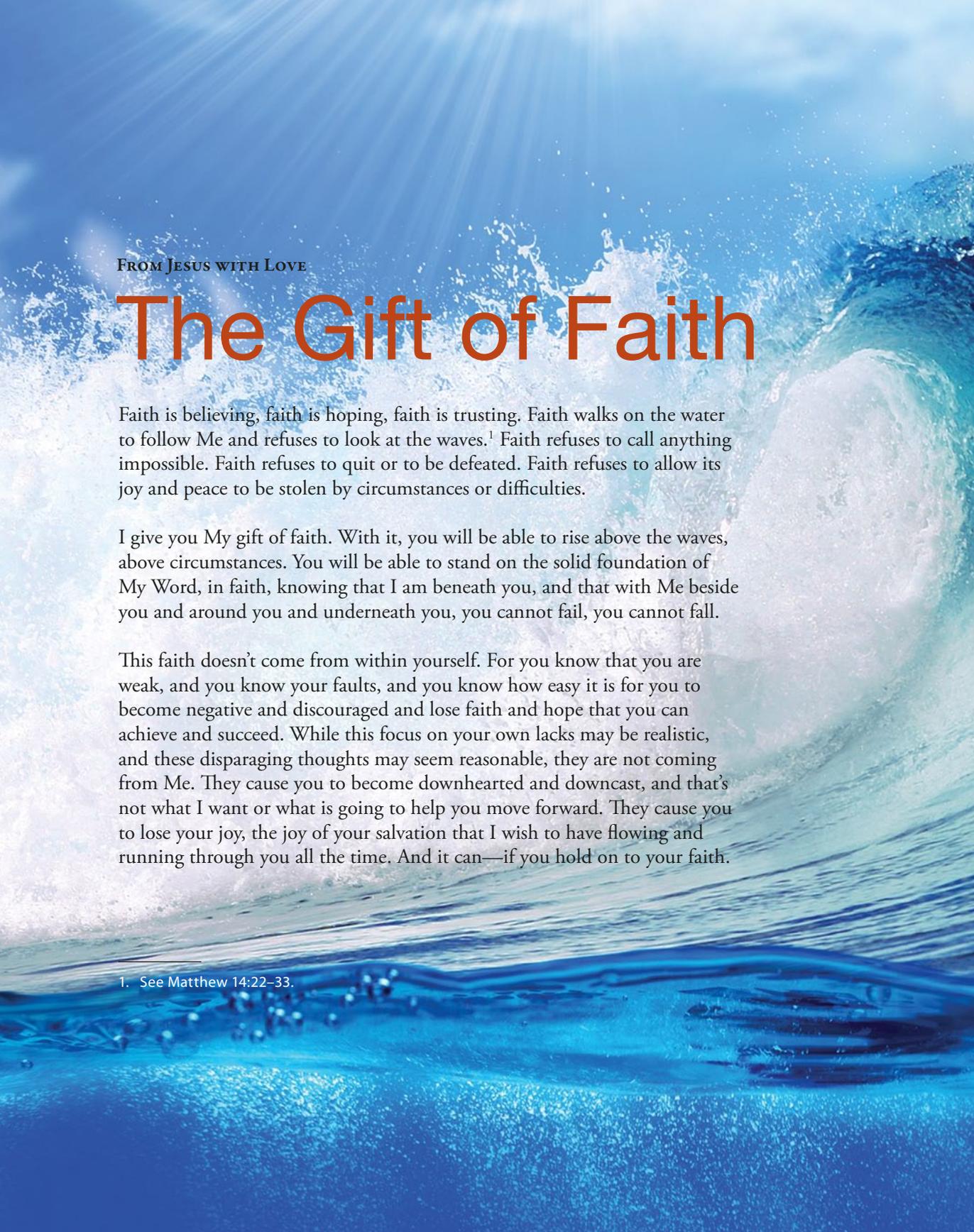
*Dear God, may I always rest in Your love, even without comprehending its mystery.*

“I ask that he will strengthen you in your inner selves from the riches of his glory through the Spirit. I ask that Christ will live in your hearts through faith. As a result of having strong roots in love, I ask that you’ll have the power to grasp love’s width and length, height and depth, together with all believers. I ask that you’ll know the love of Christ that is beyond knowledge so that you will be filled entirely with the fullness of God.”—*Ephesians 3:16–19 CEB*

“God is an infinite circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.”—*St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430)*

“I cannot tell where God begins, still less where he ends. But my belief is better expressed if I say there is no end to God’s beginning.”—*André Gide (1869–1951)*

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FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

# The Gift of Faith

Faith is believing, faith is hoping, faith is trusting. Faith walks on the water to follow Me and refuses to look at the waves.<sup>1</sup> Faith refuses to call anything impossible. Faith refuses to quit or to be defeated. Faith refuses to allow its joy and peace to be stolen by circumstances or difficulties.

I give you My gift of faith. With it, you will be able to rise above the waves, above circumstances. You will be able to stand on the solid foundation of My Word, in faith, knowing that I am beneath you, and that with Me beside you and around you and underneath you, you cannot fail, you cannot fall.

This faith doesn't come from within yourself. For you know that you are weak, and you know your faults, and you know how easy it is for you to become negative and discouraged and lose faith and hope that you can achieve and succeed. While this focus on your own lacks may be realistic, and these disparaging thoughts may seem reasonable, they are not coming from Me. They cause you to become downhearted and downcast, and that's not what I want or what is going to help you move forward. They cause you to lose your joy, the joy of your salvation that I wish to have flowing and running through you all the time. And it can—if you hold on to your faith.

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1. See Matthew 14:22–33.