

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

activated

Vol 16 • Issue 6

LAUGHING WITH ABANDON

Enjoying life

Death of Horseshoes

Controlling stress

The Secret

Be still



EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION A TIMELY TEST

If you were to ask, I would have described myself as a fairly easygoing personality. I don't get ruffled too easily and I don't get (too) upset when things go wrong. When I first read David's article (on pp. 4–5 of this issue), where he describes himself as an unrepentant worrier, I pictured myself brushing aside and forgetting my worries, and mentally patted myself on the back. *Yep, I must be stress free!* I'd have confidently told you.

But then I took an online stress diagnosis. I usually don't bother with these types of tests, but this time, some friends had recommended it, and it seemed to be hosted on a reputable site, so I thought I'd give it a go. It also seemed like perfect timing, since I was working on this *Activated* issue devoted to stress relief.

I went into it gamely admitting to myself that I was under a bit more pressure than usual and that I should expect that to be reflected in my results, but after answering the series of questions, I was shocked—even accounting for those factors, my score was much higher than I thought it would be. (Self-awareness might be something else I need to grow in.) The site's verdict: "You need to manage your stress urgently!"¹

In the end, it turns out this *was* perfect timing—not just as help for my work on this *Activated* issue, but so that rather than only pass on the advice and solutions, I could take them to heart for myself.

I think a good start will be to more consciously do as English clergyman Joseph Hall² wrote: "I will cast all my cares on God. They cannot burden Him." A simple but eloquent statement and good advice to put into practice.

Samuel Keating
Executive Editor

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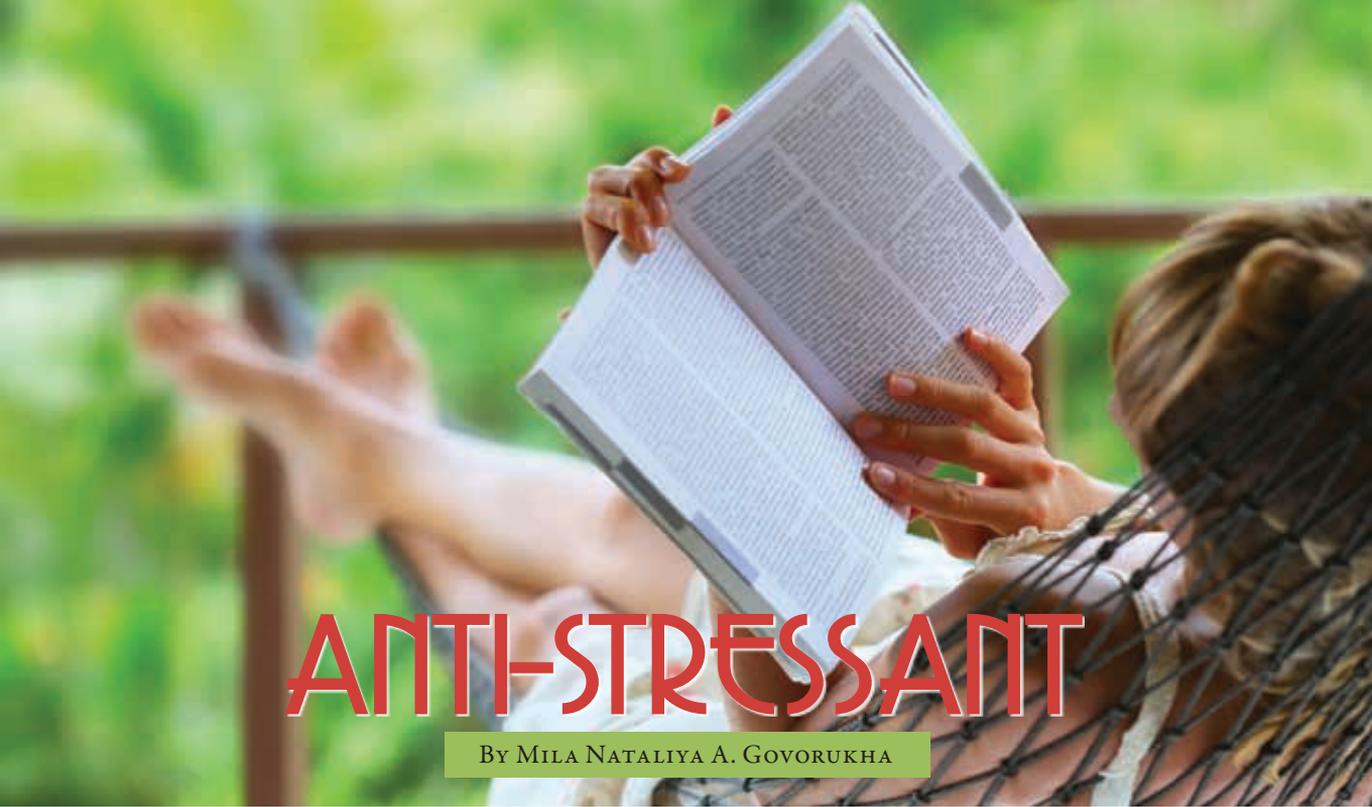
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1. You can test yourself here: <http://www.elibay.com/stresssystemstest.html>
2. 1574–1656



ANTI-STRESSANT

BY MILA NATALIYA A. GOVORUKHA

THE YEAR HAD BEEN FULL OF EVENTS, deadlines, accomplishments. I was working hard teaching English in a private school, as well as tutoring from home. Simultaneously I was working on a diploma in Russian Philology and a Cambridge Proficiency Certificate in English. On top of this, I was leading Christian meetings at a university center and an English Speaking club. It was a full schedule and I loved it.

And then there was my graduate thesis. I had been working on this for the entire year, collecting material, analyzing information, asking teachers for advice, rewriting parts, etc. By the end of February, I thought that the main work was nearly complete, with only details left to finalize. How disappointed I was to be told by my mentor that my “masterpiece” did not hit the mark and that I should redo it from scratch!

Until then I had been managing everything fine, teaching in the mornings and afternoons, and studying in the evenings and weekends, and somehow even meeting up with friends. But now my little world was ruined. I had just two months to redo the paper before submitting it at the beginning of June. In a month and a half, I would take the English exam. My school class would also be sitting year-end exams in May, which in itself meant more work

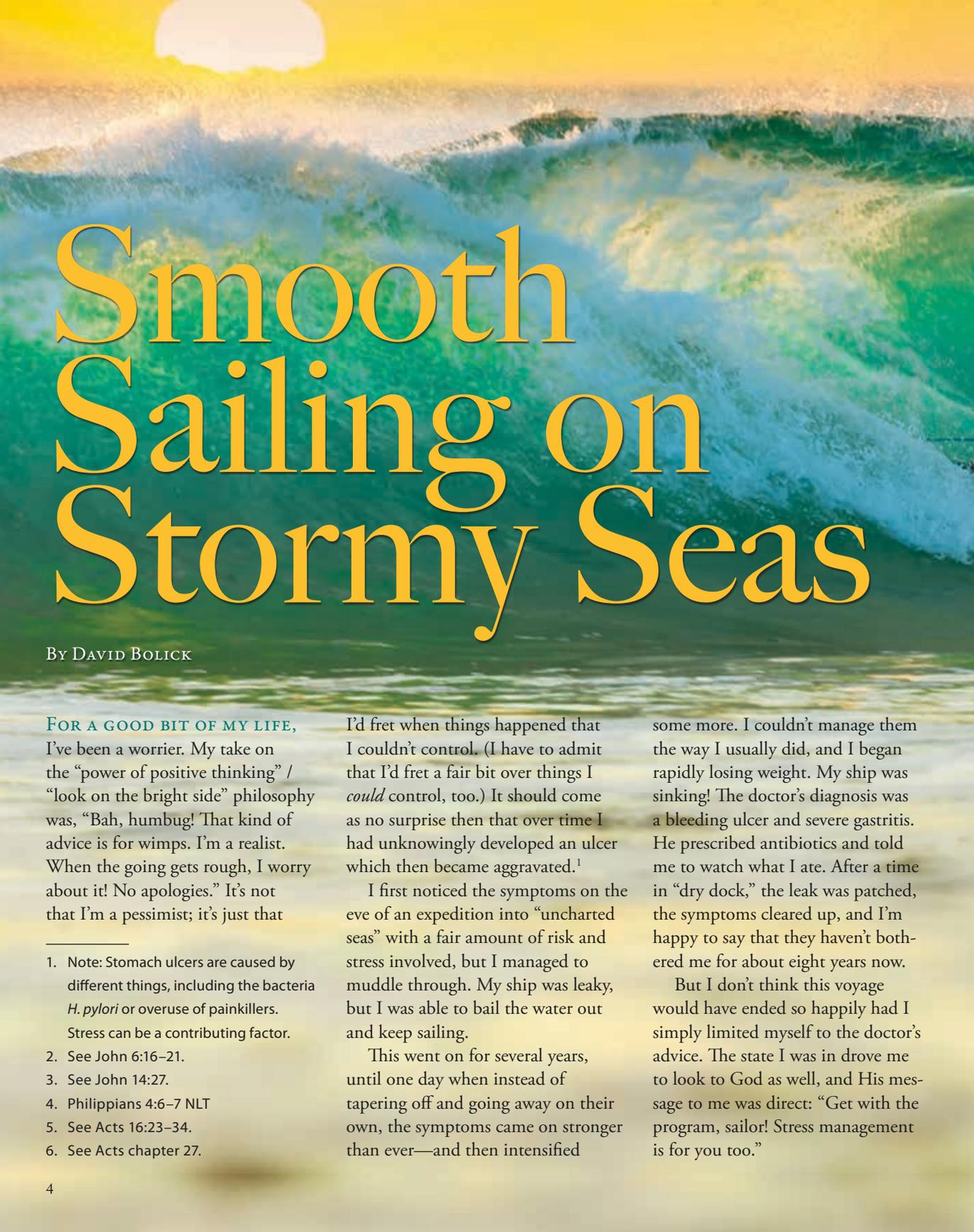
than usual—finishing books, filling in forms, updating student records, etc. I was overwhelmed.

By the beginning of May, I felt worried, stressed, incapable, almost depressed. Then, perhaps unsurprisingly, I got physically sick. I was in bed for a week with bronchitis, high fever, and a very bad cough. In this place of forced rest, I read the Bible, prayed, and simply had talks with Jesus. The biggest lesson was not to worry or stress about things. It doesn't help. It doesn't work. It's not worth it!

Recovering my strength, I rewrote my thesis and successfully defended it. All my students passed their exams, and I finished the school paperwork on time. Unfortunately, I didn't pass my Cambridge exam. It was a pity, but it wasn't the end of the world. I will prepare better next year, hopefully without as much stress.

Looking back, I am thankful for the time of sickness that reminded me that I should always take time to communicate with my Boss, to ask for His wisdom, knowledge, and peace of mind. That's the “antidepressant” and “anti-stressant” I need the most.

MILA NATALIYA A. GOVORUKHA WAS AN ENGLISH TEACHER IN KHARKOV, UKRAINE, AND IS NOW INVOLVED IN MISSIONARY WORK IN THE PHILIPPINES. ■



Smooth Sailing on Stormy Seas

BY DAVID BOLICK

FOR A GOOD BIT OF MY LIFE, I've been a worrier. My take on the “power of positive thinking” / “look on the bright side” philosophy was, “Bah, humbug! That kind of advice is for wimps. I'm a realist. When the going gets rough, I worry about it! No apologies.” It's not that I'm a pessimist; it's just that

I'd fret when things happened that I couldn't control. (I have to admit that I'd fret a fair bit over things I *could* control, too.) It should come as no surprise then that over time I had unknowingly developed an ulcer which then became aggravated.¹

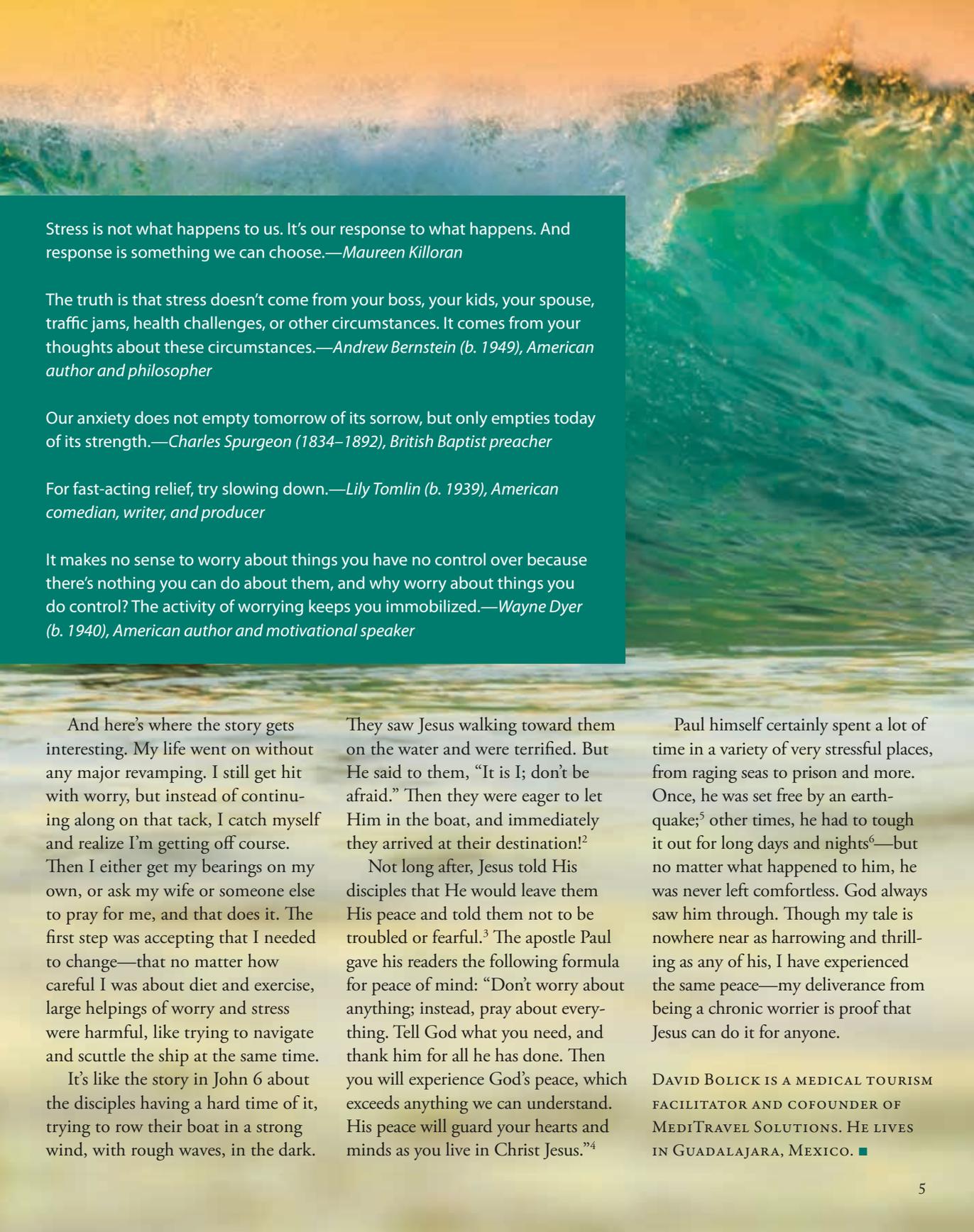
I first noticed the symptoms on the eve of an expedition into “uncharted seas” with a fair amount of risk and stress involved, but I managed to muddle through. My ship was leaky, but I was able to bail the water out and keep sailing.

This went on for several years, until one day when instead of tapering off and going away on their own, the symptoms came on stronger than ever—and then intensified

some more. I couldn't manage them the way I usually did, and I began rapidly losing weight. My ship was sinking! The doctor's diagnosis was a bleeding ulcer and severe gastritis. He prescribed antibiotics and told me to watch what I ate. After a time in “dry dock,” the leak was patched, the symptoms cleared up, and I'm happy to say that they haven't bothered me for about eight years now.

But I don't think this voyage would have ended so happily had I simply limited myself to the doctor's advice. The state I was in drove me to look to God as well, and His message to me was direct: “Get with the program, sailor! Stress management is for you too.”

1. Note: Stomach ulcers are caused by different things, including the bacteria *H. pylori* or overuse of painkillers. Stress can be a contributing factor.
2. See John 6:16–21.
3. See John 14:27.
4. Philippians 4:6–7 NLT
5. See Acts 16:23–34.
6. See Acts chapter 27.



Stress is not what happens to us. It's our response to what happens. And response is something we can choose.—*Maureen Killoran*

The truth is that stress doesn't come from your boss, your kids, your spouse, traffic jams, health challenges, or other circumstances. It comes from your thoughts about these circumstances.—*Andrew Bernstein (b. 1949), American author and philosopher*

Our anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, but only empties today of its strength.—*Charles Spurgeon (1834–1892), British Baptist preacher*

For fast-acting relief, try slowing down.—*Lily Tomlin (b. 1939), American comedian, writer, and producer*

It makes no sense to worry about things you have no control over because there's nothing you can do about them, and why worry about things you do control? The activity of worrying keeps you immobilized.—*Wayne Dyer (b. 1940), American author and motivational speaker*

And here's where the story gets interesting. My life went on without any major revamping. I still get hit with worry, but instead of continuing along on that tack, I catch myself and realize I'm getting off course. Then I either get my bearings on my own, or ask my wife or someone else to pray for me, and that does it. The first step was accepting that I needed to change—that no matter how careful I was about diet and exercise, large helpings of worry and stress were harmful, like trying to navigate and scuttle the ship at the same time.

It's like the story in John 6 about the disciples having a hard time of it, trying to row their boat in a strong wind, with rough waves, in the dark.

They saw Jesus walking toward them on the water and were terrified. But He said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." Then they were eager to let Him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination!²

Not long after, Jesus told His disciples that He would leave them His peace and told them not to be troubled or fearful.³ The apostle Paul gave his readers the following formula for peace of mind: "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."⁴

Paul himself certainly spent a lot of time in a variety of very stressful places, from raging seas to prison and more. Once, he was set free by an earthquake;⁵ other times, he had to tough it out for long days and nights⁶—but no matter what happened to him, he was never left comfortless. God always saw him through. Though my tale is nowhere near as harrowing and thrilling as any of his, I have experienced the same peace—my deliverance from being a chronic worrier is proof that Jesus can do it for anyone.

DAVID BOLICK IS A MEDICAL TOURISM FACILITATOR AND COFOUNDER OF MEDI TRAVEL SOLUTIONS. HE LIVES IN GUADALAJARA, MEXICO. ■

BY MARIA FONTAINE, ADAPTED

Getting the Best Results

WHEN YOU HAVE SO MUCH TO DO, slowing things down and taking time to meditate, getting your mind off the work at hand and onto Jesus could be the last thing you feel like doing. Even if you try, you may find that “resting in Jesus” is often easier said than done. Yet He tells us, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . . Learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”¹

So how exactly do you “rest in Jesus”? It means trusting that once you have asked Him to provide solutions to your problems or to help you with the work at hand, He will do just that. It means trusting that He will show you what you can do to help the situation, that He will empower you to do your part, and that He will do what you can't. It means stepping back from your problems or work, shutting out the world around you, and letting your spirit be strengthened through communion with Him.

In short, resting in Jesus means turning matters over to Him and then trusting Him for the outcome. If we want to get the best results, our time with Jesus in prayer and communication with Him can't just be quick and superficial, squeezed in while our mind is still full of the

1. Matthew 11:28–29

2. Hebrews 4:11 NIV

business of the day. We have to take time to connect with Him, share our heart with Him, and let Him clear our mind and soothe our spirit.

Your time with Jesus is really the most important part of the day. If you get in the habit of giving it priority, His presence will linger with you all day to guide and help you.

The Bible says, “Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter into that rest.”² That sounds a little contrary—making an effort to rest—but it takes effort to pull back. The concept of resting in Jesus isn't complicated, but actually doing it—leaving your old way of operating behind—takes work, and it can be difficult at first. But once you get the hang of it, it will save you so much time and effort and stress and strain that you'll wonder how you ever did without it.

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





A PERFECT DAY

BY JOYCE SUTTIN

TODAY WAS PERFECT! It wasn't a perfectly lazy day, or perfect in terms of accomplishments, or without problems. Still, it was so perfect from start to finish that I now feel compelled to retrace my steps and try to figure out what made it that way. Maybe I can make it happen again.

I woke early and greeted the new day with a two-mile walk, thanking God for my loved ones and praying for them. Afterwards I read some devotional material, contemplating what I read and praying that it would change me. I listened to some Christian music, letting the inspiring lyrics fill my soul, then spent a few moments watching as a prism hanging in the window caught a sunbeam and sent rainbows around the room.

After breakfast, I planned the coming school year and ordered study materials for my homeschool students, and then I helped them with their first, seventh, and ninth grade classes. It was a full morning, but surprisingly free of pressure. That time I had taken with Jesus surely paid off.

I *was* beginning to sag as I cut vegetables for lunch, but I found myself thanking God for the abundance of healthy food. My hands were busy, but my heart and mind were far away, sitting at Jesus' feet and enjoying communion with Him. That was just the boost I needed.

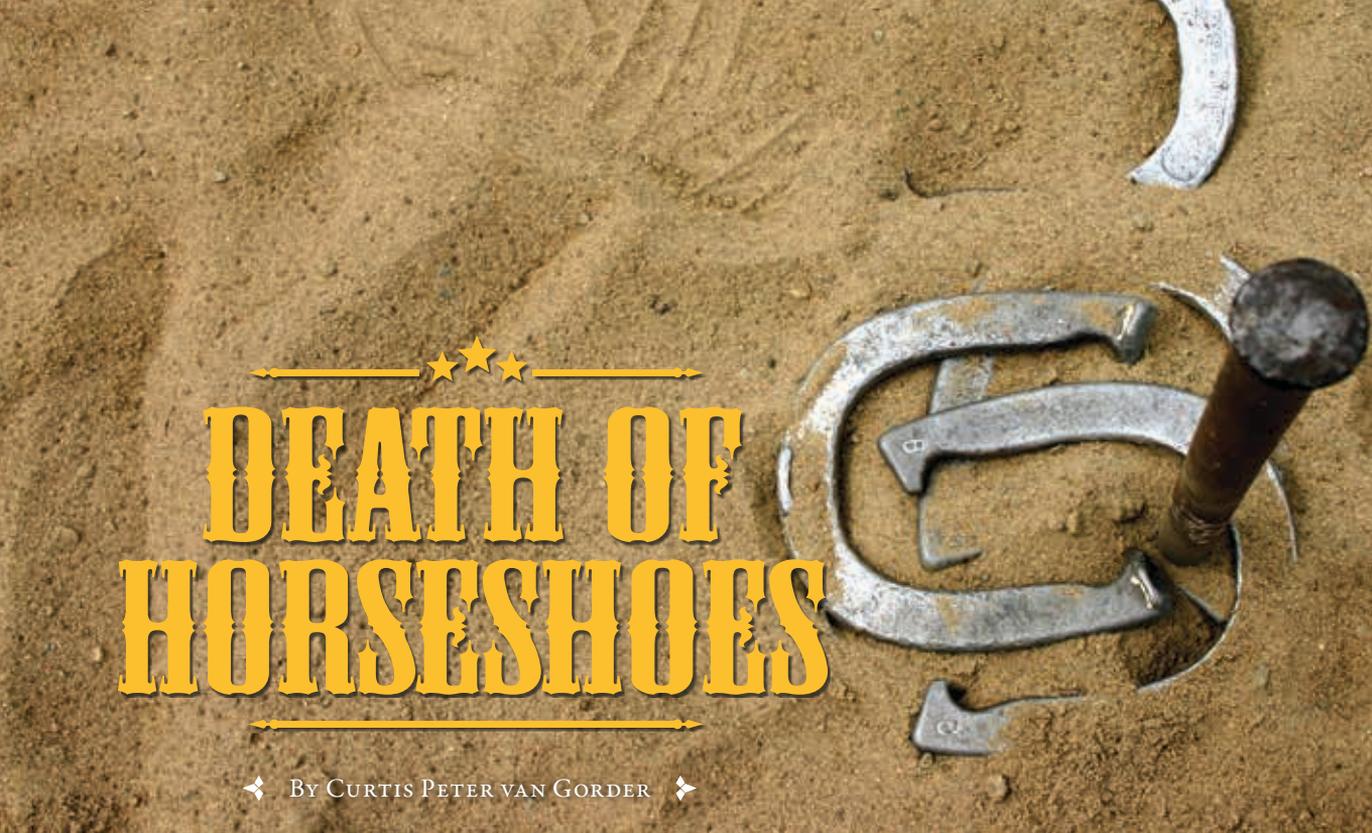
I listened to some piano as I ran an errand in the car. I kept pace with traffic, but without the usual tension in my shoulders. An elderly man driving ahead of me made a slow turn, which aggravated some other drivers, but I found myself praying for him and feeling impressed that he was still able to get around.

Back home, between email, phone calls, and a visit from a neighbor, I cooked, cleaned, and spent some time with my teenage son. Sometimes I worry about him, but as we sat together and he shared his opinions, concerns, and dreams, Jesus helped me see a sweetness and depth in my son that I sometimes overlook.

My husband and I went for an evening walk, and as we held hands and watched the setting sun paint the clouds lavender and pink, we counted our blessings together.

I know I can't expect every day to be perfect, but I know how to increase my chances: I'll take time to connect with Jesus and renew that connection throughout the day by turning my thoughts to Him and His goodness.

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



DEATH OF HORSESHOES

❖ BY CURTIS PETER VAN GORDER ❖

I VIVIDLY RECALL THE MEN IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD gathering every evening after work in a vacant lot next to my house for a game of horseshoes. The pace of life was more relaxed when I was a child. Work was from nine to five, and then it was time to knock off and play horseshoes.

You may not know the game of horseshoes. A U-shaped metal horseshoe is thrown toward a metal stake placed in a sawdust or dirt square about 13 yards (12 m) away. The player to land his horseshoes closest to the stake is the winner. When a horseshoe encircles the stake, it is called a “ringer.”

It was a perfect time to chat about the day. The men would relate their latest triumphs or woes, or talk about current events. It all went over my head, of course, but I could see they enjoyed it.

All of that disappeared with the advent of TV. As each family bought a TV set, people spent less and less time playing horseshoes. Instead they spent their evenings in front of the new marvel with its flickering black-and-white images. And that was just the start.

1. See <http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-28677674>.

2. See <http://www.iata.org/pressroom/pr/Pages/2013-12-30-01.aspx>.

3. Luke 1:79

4. <http://elixirmime.com/>

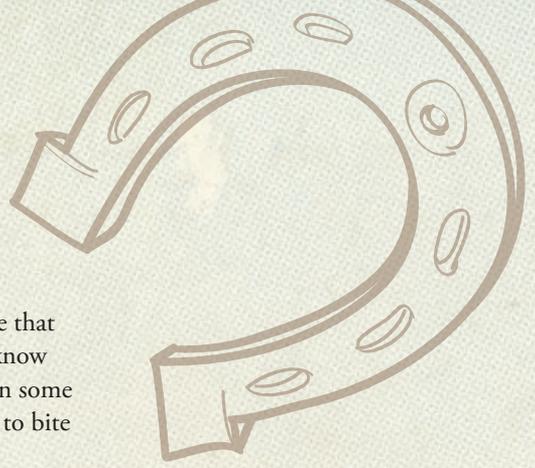
5. See Isaiah 9:6.

6. See John 14:27.

According to recent research, Britons spend more than 50% of their waking day using technology devices, including watching TV, surfing the Internet, and communicating via social media. The daily average of 8 hours and 41 minutes is more than an average night's sleep!¹

The first commercial flights were only one hundred years ago. Now more than 8 million people fly each day on average.² It is questionable whether this speed has made us happier. Nor do I think the advance in technology has brought us peace of mind.

We race from birth to death with hardly time to stop and smell the roses. Do more, do it better, do it yesterday, get rich quick—or in debt quick. Fast food, fast computers, fast money, fast cars in fast lanes, fast talk in sound bites. “Live fast” seems to be our slogan.



Sometimes we pile so much stress on ourselves in this speedy lifestyle that we find it hard to cope. Sometimes we get under stress and don't even know it. On a recent trip to the dentist, I found that I had developed cracks in some of my teeth. My dentist explained that stress had apparently caused me to bite and grind my teeth in my sleep.

Major studies have been done on the subject of stress alleviation, as inefficiency, lost production, and absenteeism—all of which have been linked to stress in the workplace—sap the economy of billions each year. So what's the cure? We can't turn back the clock, nor do we necessarily want to. The world today is different from the one I grew up in, and we need to adapt our strategies. Thankfully, some of the practical solutions these studies have come up with seem easy enough to do:

- Take up gardening.
- De-clutter your home or your work environment.
- Give more love and affection, and allow yourself to receive them in return.
- Get a massage.
- Work on developing loving relationships.
- Make healthy changes in your diet and lifestyle, such as drinking less alcohol, cutting down on caffeine, or stopping smoking.
- Exercise, in nature if possible.
- Give three sincere compliments at work each day.
- Get a good rest.
- Have a good laugh.
- Listen to soft music.
- Take a mini-vacation.
- Get a pet.

All of these practical suggestions are helpful, but finding that peace that passes all understanding takes more. It takes listening for a moment to God's still small voice in our hearts that reassures us that He still loves us in spite of our shortcomings.

Take a moment today to be refreshed in prayer so that you may find rest for your soul. The problems you face will come into perspective as you experience the awesome love of God. A prophecy about Jesus given shortly before His birth said that He would "guide our feet into the way of peace."³ May you follow the way He shows you.

CURTIS PETER VAN GORDER IS A SCRIPTWRITER AND MIME ARTIST⁴ IN MUMBAI, INDIA, AND A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL. ■

THE GIFT OF PEACE

Dear Jesus, You are the Prince of Peace.⁵ I invite You and Your gift of peace⁶ into my heart. May I find rest in You, even in the midst of the turmoil of daily living, and trust in You for life everlasting.

His forever, only His:
Who the Lord and me shall part?
Ah, with what a rest of bliss
Christ can fill the loving heart.

Things that once were wild alarms
Cannot now disturb my rest;
Closed in everlasting arms,
Pillowed on the loving breast.

Oh, to lie forever here,
Doubt and care and self resign,
While He whispers in my ear,
I am His, and He is mine.
—George Wade Robinson (1838–1877)

The Secret

Oh, how divinely sweet it is to come into the secret of His presence and abide in His pavilion!—*David Brainerd (1718–1747), missionary to the Native Americans*



Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.—*Psalms 37:7*



What shall the believer do in times of darkness? Sit still and listen. Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely upon his God. Let him just sit still, as the Scripture says—be still and listen. The first thing to do is to do nothing, to stand still. That goes against human nature, but that's the wise thing to do. There's a saying, "When you're rattled, don't rush." In other words, when you aren't sure you know what to do next, don't rush blindly into anything, hoping for the best.

Be still and see what God will do. It is when we are quiet and trusting in God that He can work. Worry often prevents Him from doing all that He can. If our minds are distracted and our hearts are stressed, we're not in a position where He can do much for us. The peace of God must quiet our minds and bring rest to our hearts.

Put your hand into the hand of God, and let Him lead you out into the bright sunshine of His love. Be still. Let Him do the work for you. "Be anxious for nothing, but ... let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God ... will guard your hearts and minds."¹

—*Virginia Brandt Berg (1886–1968), American evangelist and pastor*



God does not stand afar off as I struggle to speak. He cares enough to listen with more than casual attention. He translates my scrubby words and hears what is truly inside. He hears my sighs and uncertain gropings as fine prose.—*Timothy Jones*



My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.—*Exodus 33:14 ESV*



My little boy came in one day and stuck his little head into the doorway of my study. Now he knew he was not supposed to disturb me during working hours. And his conscience troubled him a little on account of this. But he looked at me nevertheless with his kind, round baby eyes and said, "Daddy, I will sit still all the time if you will only let me be here with you!" That he received permission when he approached my father-heart in that way, every father will know.

1. Philippians 4:6–7

That little experience gave me a great deal to think about. Is not that just the way we often feel with regard to our Heavenly Father? We do so love to be with Him, just to be in His presence! Moreover, we never disturb Him, no matter when we come nor how often we come!

—*Ole Hallesby*
(1879–1961), *Norwegian Christian teacher*



Give your burdens to the Lord, and he will take care of you.—*Psalms 55:22 NLT*



Peace comes not from the absence of trouble, but from the presence of God.—*Unknown*



Dear restless heart, be still,
for peace is God's own smile,
His love can every wrong
and sorrow reconcile;
Just love, and love, and
love, and calmly wait
awhile.

—*Edith Linn Forbes*
(1865–1945)



Learn to know Jesus so well that we feel safe when we have left our difficulties with Him. ... As ... we learn to know Jesus better and better, our prayers become quiet, confidential, and blessed conversations with Him, our best Friend, about the things that are on our minds, whether it be our own needs or the needs of others. ... And especially will our prayer life become restful when it really dawns upon us that we have done all we are supposed to do when we have spoken to Him about it. From that moment we have left it with Him. It is His responsibility then.

“A little while with Jesus—
oh, how it soothes the
soul,
and gathers all the threads
of life
into a perfect whole.”

—*Ole Hallesby*



It's not stress that kills us, it is our reaction to it.—*Hans Selye*
(1907–1982), *pioneering Austrian-Canadian endocrinologist acknowledged as the “Father” of the field of stress research*



There is no place where the mind can be as fully renewed as in the secret place of prayer, alone with God. When we come aside from the temporal things that distract and harass us, and there in the presence of God we put our mind on the things of God, the transforming power of God then begins to work in us, and we are changed, renewed.—*Virginia Brandt Berg* ■

LAUGHING WITH ABANDON

BY THERESA NELSON



HOW EASY IT IS TO LISTEN TO THE ADVICE OF OTHERS and change ourselves into something we are not. To quit being our unique and wonderfully made selves. To base our worth on what others think instead of what God thinks.

An elderly family member came for a visit. “A lady does not laugh with her mouth wide open, head thrown back, submitting all viewers to the spectacle of her tonsils,” she advised.

I was crushed. “Do I really laugh like that?”

She did an imitation of me that was pretty frightening.

I grew careful. I would catch myself laughing, enjoying the moment, but then my relative’s words and impersonation would flash through my thoughts. So I’d close my mouth a little to shield

spectators from the sight of my back teeth, lower my chin until I was looking straight ahead, and try to relax my lips into a smaller, more controlled shape and manner.

I wanted to enjoy life, laugh with abandon, but my self-consciousness haunted me and was stealing my joy. “A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.”¹

Then one day I forgot and laughed like I had before. The sun kept shining. No one said my tonsils were unusually shaped. No one moved away calling me a hyena. I began laughing again, enjoying the sound and rhythm.

One day while in Ireland with family, my daughter, who loves to snap pictures unawares, took a candid camera photo of me laughing. It is one of my favorite images.

We had stopped on the sidewalk during our walk around Dublin and had started joking with each other.

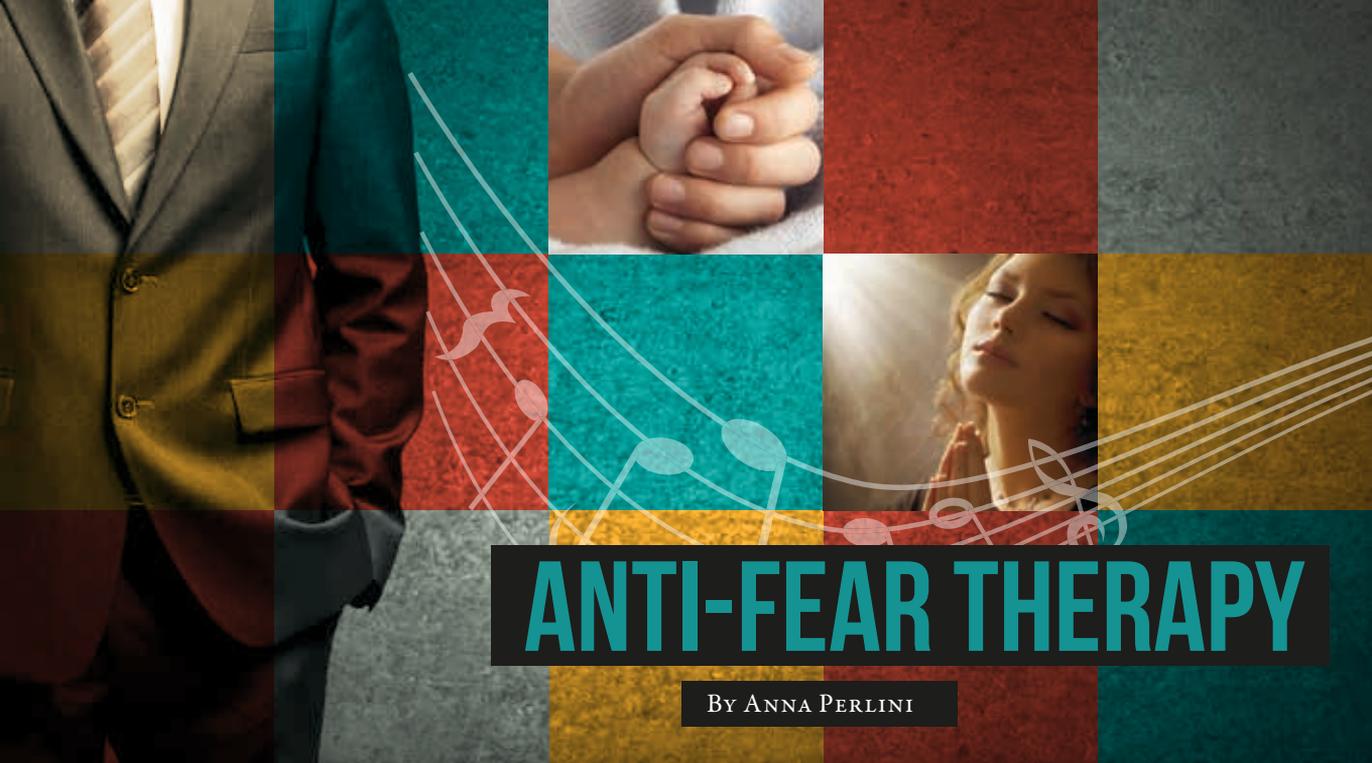
In the picture I am sharing a laugh with my dad. My arm is reaching out to touch him, my head is tipping back, my mouth is opening wide, and I am laughing. Not just with my voice and lips, but with my whole body. My whole spirit.

Psalm 4:7 says, “You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.”² That’s how I want to approach life. Laughing. Truly laughing and enjoying this temporal, messy, and yet so mysterious life that is God’s gift to me. I want to laugh with abandon because God is on my side and He also has a sense of humor. Just look at a platypus.

THERESA NELSON LIVES IN MISSOURI, USA, WITH HER HUSBAND AND TWO CHILDREN. HER WRITING OFTEN POINTS READERS TO GOD AND HAS APPEARED IN OVER 50 PUBLICATIONS. ■

1. Proverbs 17:22 ESV

2. ESV



ANTI-FEAR THERAPY

BY ANNA PERLINI

I WAS CLEANING UP MY BRUSHES AND PAINT CANS

after some volunteers and I finished painting a large mural for the local Sunday school when Maxim passed me a note:

I was really encouraged to meet and work on this project with people like you, so full of faith and positiveness. Can you please remember to say a prayer for me, as I'm going through a very tough time in my life? Thank you.

I was rather surprised, as he didn't appear to be someone with a lot of problems. He was a successful, well-mannered, friendly gentleman.

Some months later, Maxim invited me to his home for dinner. It was then that he confided how he had been battling for years with debilitating panic attacks that prevented him having a full social life. Lately, even just the fear of having

an attack was enough to discourage him from going out. Therapy hadn't seemed to help, and he was so ashamed of his condition that he'd begun making up excuses whenever he was invited to an event.

As he was sharing this, I felt I could relate, as I had also experienced a recurrent fear that brought on distress and worry, albeit milder than his.

For several years following a car accident, I had become very fearful of driving, particularly on busy highways. My heart would start beating faster and I'd break into a cold sweat, and eventually I started dreading getting into any kind of vehicle. It took a while to get over, so I understood what Maxim was going through.

Maxim told me more about his condition. At first, I just listened, then I told him about my own experience.

"How were you able to overcome this?" he asked eagerly.

I shared how trusting in Jesus, praying, and listening to uplifting music was the key. Things didn't change for me instantly, and even now I occasionally have small bouts of the same fear, but these mostly serve to remind me of how far I've already come. Before the evening ended, we prayed together for him to learn to entrust his fears to Jesus.

The good news is that after a few months of following the same "therapy" as I had, Maxim was freed from his panic attacks. He has resumed his social life, started traveling again, and opened up his home and heart to other needy situations.

ANNA PERLINI IS A COFOUNDER OF PER UN MONDO MIGLIORE,¹ A HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION ACTIVE IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA SINCE 1995. ■

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

Activated welcomes guest contributions, although we cannot guarantee that every article will be used. Send your submissions to activated@activated.org.

CREATIVE SILENCE

By SUMIT DHAMIJA

INDIA, WHERE I LIVE, is a country of wide, sweeping farmlands; huge mountains jutting their peaks into the sky; broad rivers lazily moving over rocks. The land is as peaceful as it always has been, but the people who live here, like anywhere in the world, are often stressed.

Dr. Hans Selye, a prominent medical research scientist, has observed, “In this hurry-up world we are subjecting ourselves to too many stresses. We hurry constantly and worry incessantly.” Unfortunately, many have yet to learn to develop inner peace.

An excellent technique for overcoming stress is the practice of silence. It entails going into a quiet place and doing your best to be still and shift your mind into neutral. William James (1842–1910) said, “It is as important to cultivate your silence power as it is your word power,” and Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) declared, “Silence is the element in which great things fashion themselves together.” God’s Word gives the same advice: “In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.”¹

I recently read an interview with a rubber manufacturer who pointed out that his industry did not learn to make efficient tires until they were redesigned to absorb road shock rather than merely to resist it. We too would be more successful if we learned to relax and let the pressures and stress of life flow right through us rather than rigidly battling them.

SUMIT DHAMIJA IS AN *ACTIVATED* READER IN INDIA WHO SAYS, “I HAVE BEEN READING *ACTIVATED* SINCE 2005, AND THE SPIRITUAL CONTENT HAS HELPED ME HOLD ON TO MY FAITH DURING TURBULENT TIMES.” ■

1. Isaiah 30:15

If you are to maintain power to meet your responsibilities and to continue effectively over the long pull, you must give as much consideration to that delicate, yet powerful mechanism known as your human personality as engineers give to their engines. You can purchase another engine, but that “engine” known as yourself cannot be reproduced if it fails, and stress is a major cause of that failure.

—Norman Vincent Peale (1898–1993), *American minister and author*

We need to find God, and He cannot be found in noise and restlessness. See how nature, the trees, the flowers, and the grass grow in perfect silence. ... We need to be alone with God in silence to be renewed and to be transformed. For silence can give us a new outlook on life.

—Mother Teresa (1910–1997), *founder of the Order of the Missionaries of Charity*



Stress is the trash of modern life—we all generate it but if you don't dispose of it properly, it will pile up and overtake your life.

—Terri Guillemets (b. 1973),
American quotation anthologist

BY CHLOE WEST

ESCAPE STRESS

HOW OFTEN DO WE FINALLY REACH A STATE OF PEACEFUL CONTENTMENT and then wish we could hang out a sign that says, “Do not disturb”?

Of course we can't prevent disturbances or stressful situations, but when they come, the Bible says God can give us peace inside. “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.”¹ If we turn to Jesus, He will give us peace. If we are spending time talking with Him in prayer, reading His words, or even just thinking about Him, the Bible says the reward is peace.

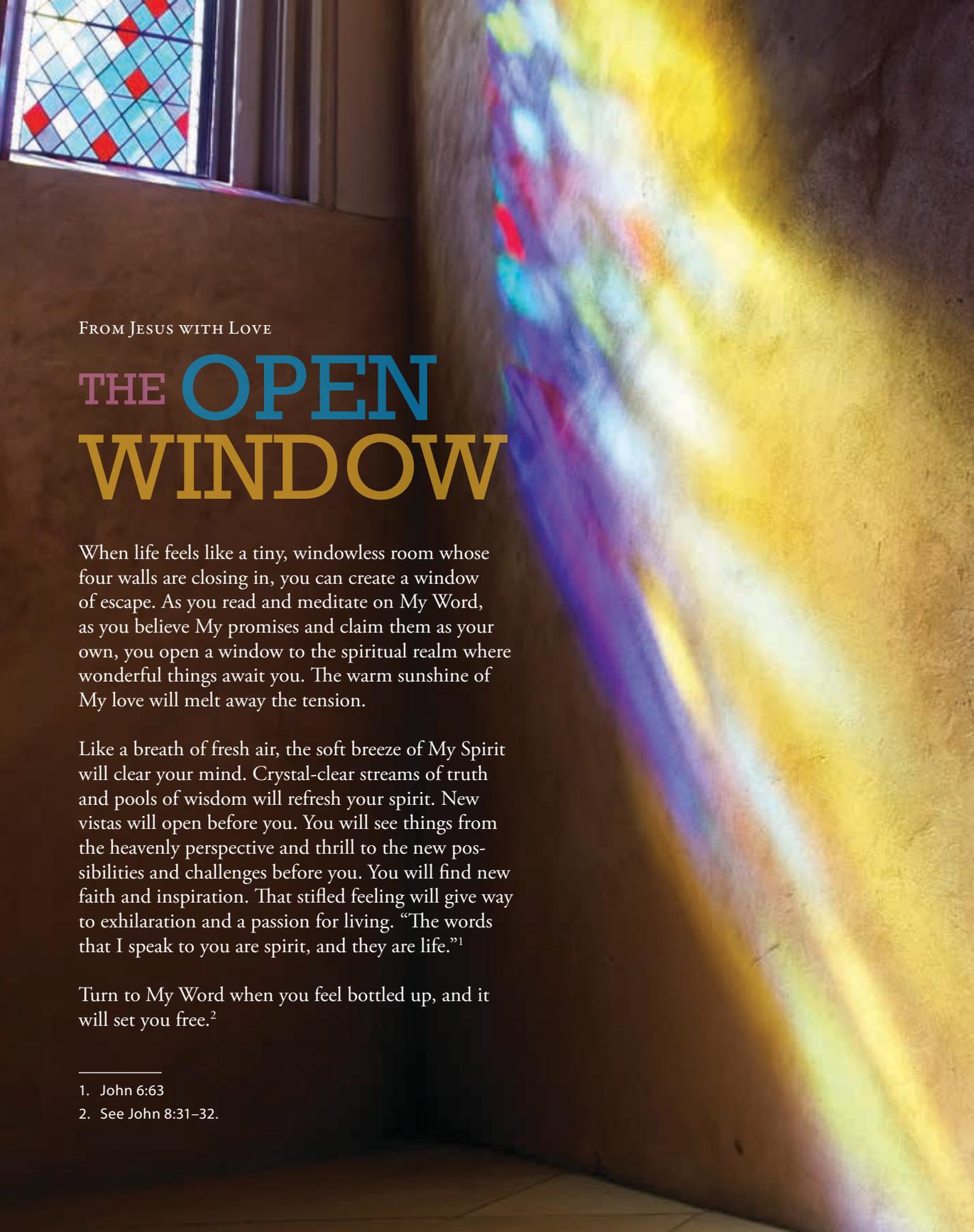
At times it may seem impossible for us to remain peaceful inside. Just coping may be difficult. But Jesus is the Prince of Peace and He says, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”² So when you feel like hanging a “Do Not Disturb” sign on your forehead, remember He has a special brand of peace—eternal, deep, tangible. And it's available for the asking.

CHLOE WEST IS AN AMERICAN WRITER. ■

1. Isaiah 26:3
2. John 14:27
3. See Mark 4:35–41.

Jesus lay in the boat sleeping. The waves rose, the wind blew and the storm battered the small vessel about. His disciples were afraid; afraid of the wind, afraid of the waves and fearful for their lives. They came to Jesus, woke Him up, begging for His help. The answer lay in His power. He said, “Peace, be still,” and there was peace. The wind ceased, and there was a great calm.³ No matter the turmoil of our life, we too can find peace if we turn to Jesus for His help.

—Abi May



FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

THE OPEN WINDOW

When life feels like a tiny, windowless room whose four walls are closing in, you can create a window of escape. As you read and meditate on My Word, as you believe My promises and claim them as your own, you open a window to the spiritual realm where wonderful things await you. The warm sunshine of My love will melt away the tension.

Like a breath of fresh air, the soft breeze of My Spirit will clear your mind. Crystal-clear streams of truth and pools of wisdom will refresh your spirit. New vistas will open before you. You will see things from the heavenly perspective and thrill to the new possibilities and challenges before you. You will find new faith and inspiration. That stifled feeling will give way to exhilaration and a passion for living. “The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”¹

Turn to My Word when you feel bottled up, and it will set you free.²

1. John 6:63

2. See John 8:31–32.