



# activated

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

## CHAINED EAGLE

How to get rid of bad habits

## LOVE FINDS A WAY

Tommy didn't let disability stop him

## CONFESSIONS OF A WORKAHOLIC

"I enjoyed working, the harder the better, but then..."

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Activated Ministries  
P.O. Box 462805  
Escondido, CA 92046-2805  
USA

[activatedUSA@activated.org](mailto:activatedUSA@activated.org)  
(1-877) 862-3228 (toll-free)

Activated Africa/Europe  
Bramingham Pk. Business Ctr.  
Enterprise Way  
Bramingham Park  
Luton, Beds. LU3 4BU  
England

[activatedEurope@activated.org](mailto:activatedEurope@activated.org)  
(07801) 442-317

Activated India  
P.O. Box 5215  
G.P.O.  
Bangalore - 560 001  
India

[activatedIndia@activated.org](mailto:activatedIndia@activated.org)

VISIT US AT  
[www.activated.org](http://www.activated.org)

EDITOR  
Keith Phillips

DESIGN  
Giselle LeFavre

PRODUCTION  
Francisco Lopez

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## personally speaking



It seems that just about everyone these days is looking for something or someone to be identified with—something that's in, something of value, something bigger than life.

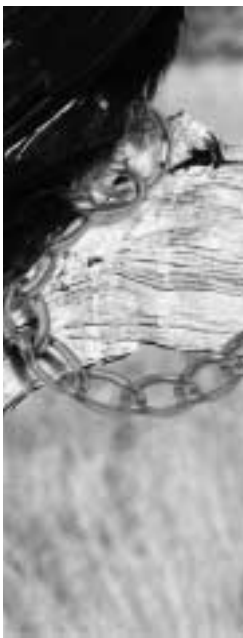
T-shirts and jeans sporting Nike® and other designer logos are everywhere, from Moscow to Mumbai and Tallahassee to Timbuktu. Teenagers and twenty-somethings imitate the dress, attitudes, and language of their favorite rock or film stars, while their parents slave and save for their dream house or the car that's "really them." Passions reach a fever pitch and much of the world goes on hold for events such as the World Cup. Sports stars become international icons, and professional sports gear and memorabilia is a multibillion dollar industry.

Against this backdrop, isn't it strange—and sad—that so few people seem to want to be identified with the One who is *truly* The Greatest? Just look at all Jesus is and has to offer: He was with God at Creation, and "all things were made through Him. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:3-4). Now *that's* big! He took our sins upon Himself and died for us, so we can live forever in Heaven. No one else could do that! He gives real meaning and purpose to life. Who else can do that? And He loves each of us personally, no matter what. What could be better than that?

Who or what do you want others to identify you with? Why be a walking advertisement for some marketing mogul or momentary superstar when you can stand up and be counted with the One who *really* counts? We hope this issue of *Activated* will inspire you to do just that.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Keith Phillips". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and personal.

Keith Phillips  
For the *Activated* family



## CHAINED EAGLE

**M**any people resolve to do this or that, change this or that, break a bad habit, or start a new one. Sometimes it works; often it doesn't. Is that because so many of us are like the bird in the following story?

A man once owned an eagle, and for many years kept him chained to a stake. Every day the eagle walked around and around that stake, and over time wore a rut in the ground. When the eagle was getting old, his master felt sorry for him and decided to set him free. So he took the metal ring off the eagle's foot, lifted the eagle from the ground, and tossed him into the air. He was free—but he had forgotten how to fly! He flip-flopped to the ground, walked back over to his old rut, and started walking in circles like he had for years. No chain and shackle held him, just the habit!

There is a saying: "The chains of bad habits are too weak to be felt until they are too strong to be broken"—and that would be true if it weren't for the Lord and His power. It's not possible for you to change yourself, but it's possible for God to change you by the miracle-working power of His Spirit. He'll do things you can't do!

You may have to put a great deal of your own will to the transformation process as well, but with God's strength and His intervention, you'll find you have more resolve, determination, and ability to change than you ever thought possible. He said, "Whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Matthew 21:22).

This is what it means to "become a new creature in Christ Jesus" (2 Corinthians 5:17, KJV). Jesus coming into your life not only renews and purifies and regenerates your spirit, but it also renews your mind, literally breaking old connections and reflexes and gradually rebuilding it and rewiring it into a whole new computer system with a different outlook on life and a new way of looking at the world, with new reactions to nearly everything around you.

But it's impossible for you to make this change yourself. If you want this change, it's necessary for you to ask Jesus to help. Some changes are instantaneous, others take awhile.—But if you ask Him for help and do your part, you'll be changed, because Jesus changes people!

—Adapted from an article by David Brandt Berg

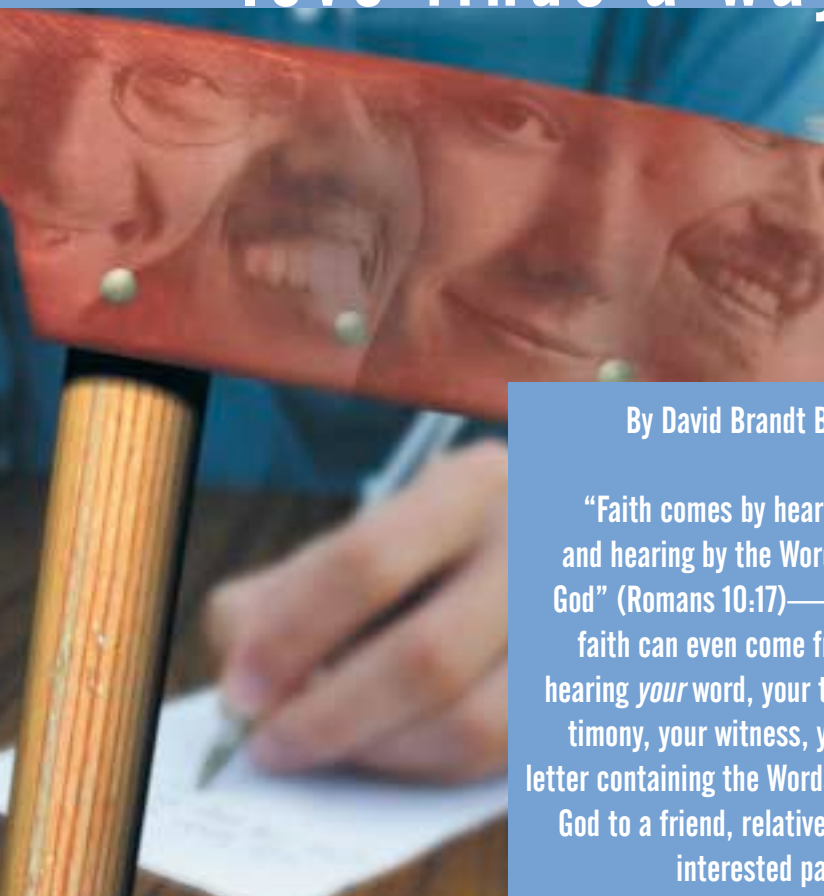
### PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Thank You, Jesus, that  
I can trust You in all  
things. I know You are  
always going to carry  
me through. Even  
when I don't have any  
strength of my own,  
You're right there to  
hold me and carry me  
and see me through.

Thank You for Your  
wonderful instruction,  
leading, and guidance.  
You reach down and  
take me by the hand  
and so gently carry  
me along with such  
patience. You are  
everything to me!



# love finds a way



By David Brandt Berg

“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17)—and faith can even come from hearing *your* word, your testimony, your witness, your letter containing the Words of God to a friend, relative, or interested party.

I’m reminded of a true story I heard when I was young, about a crippled boy named Tommy, who lived in poverty with his aunt in a small third-story apartment of a rundown tenement on a busy city street. He was so severely handicapped that all he could do was lie helplessly in bed.

One day Tommy asked a newsboy friend of his to bring him the book about “the Man who went about everywhere doing good.” The little lad searched and searched for

this unnamed book, until one book dealer finally realized that Tommy must have been talking about the Bible, and the story of Jesus. The newsboy scraped together what little money he had, and the kindly bookseller gave him a copy of the New Testament, which he took back to Tom.

The two boys began to read that Bible together, and after a time Tommy understood the message of salvation it contained. He received Jesus as his Savior, and decided that he, too, wanted

to do good, like the wonderful Man in the book. But Tommy was crippled, and could not even leave his little one-room apartment. So he prayed and asked Jesus to help him, and the Lord gave him an idea.

Tommy began to copy helpful verses from the Bible onto little pieces of paper, which he would then drop from his window to flutter to the busy street below. Passers-by would see them drifting down, and out of curiosity pick them up and read them, and there find the words of the Man who went around everywhere doing good—Jesus Christ. Many were helped, encouraged, and comforted, and some were even saved through the simple ministry of this young boy and his New Testament.

One day a wealthy businessman found Jesus through reading the verse in one of Tommy’s little notes. He later returned to the spot where he had found the scrap of paper that had led him to the Lord, hoping to find some clue as to how it got there. Then he noticed another little bit of paper floating down to the sidewalk. He watched as a poor, tired old woman stooped painfully to pick it up, and noticed her countenance brighten as she read it. There seemed to be new

strength in her step as she journeyed on.

The businessman, now transfixed to the spot, kept his eyes glued upward, determined to find the source. He had to wait a long time, for it took poor Tommy many painful minutes to scrawl even one verse on one of those pieces of paper. Suddenly the businessman's eyes were drawn to a certain window, as he saw a scrawny little arm reaching out to drop another piece of paper, like the one that had brought a whole new life to him. He carefully noted the location of the window, dashed up the stairs of the tenement, and finally found the humble abode of tiny Tom, the sidewalk missionary.

The businessman and Tom soon became good friends, and the businessman brought Tom all the help and medical attention that he could. Then one day he asked Tom if he would like to come and live with him in his palatial mansion outside the city.

Much to his new friend's surprise, Tom answered, "I'll have to ask my Friend about that"—meaning Jesus.

The next day the businessman returned, eagerly seeking Tom's reply. Instead, Tom asked him some rather surprising questions.

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**Suddenly the businessman's eyes were drawn to a certain window, as he saw a scrawny little arm reaching out to drop another piece of paper...**

"Where did you say your home is?"

"Oh," said the businessman, "it's in the country, on a large and beautiful estate. You'll have a room all your own, servants to care for you, delicious meals, a good bed, every comfort and attention, anything your heart desires, and my wife and I will love you dearly and care for you as our own son."

Hesitantly, Tommy queried again, "Are there any people that would pass under my window?"

Surprised and somewhat baffled, the businessman replied, "Why, no, only an occasional servant, and perhaps the gardener. You don't

understand, Tommy, this is a gorgeous country estate, far from the tumult of the city. You'll have quiet there and be able to rest and read and do whatever else you want, away from all this filth and pollution and noise and the busy throngs."

After a long and thoughtful silence, Tom's face looked very sad, for he hated to hurt his newfound friend. Finally he said quietly, but firmly, with tears in his eyes, "I'm sorry, but you see, I could never live anywhere where people don't pass under my window."

Here's the story of someone so simple, so helpless and so isolated, you might have thought he could never have had any ministry at all—but love found a way!

Someone passes under the window of your life every day. Has your love found a way to help them? Has Jesus shown you how you can help them? He will if you want to, no matter what the conditions or your limitations.

God has a window too, and He has promised that if you obey Him and open the window of your life to others, He "will open for you the windows of Heaven, and pour out for you such a blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10). ○

## *A new and better cause*

FROM JESSE, BRAZIL

I recently met Ernesto, a Cuban who had fought in Angola's civil war during the late-'70s and early-'80s. He still carried a heavy burden of guilt because of his part in the bloody war, but at the same time he said he didn't see how the goal could have been achieved any other way.

"Jesus was a revolutionary," I told him, "and He has won hundreds of millions to His cause in nation after nation—all without lifting a sword or firing a shot. He 'conquers' their hearts with love." After we had talked a little more, I asked Ernesto if he would like to meet the Man of Love, and he prayed with me to accept Jesus as his Savior.

The next day, I went to see Ernesto where he works, and he was glowing! "Something is happening to me that I can't explain," he said.

"You don't have to understand everything all at once," I told him. "Just keep

believing that Jesus can change your life, and He will." Poor Ernesto was still trying to sort out where the Communist ideals he had been taught all his life fit in with his newfound faith. On a less philosophical level, he just didn't know if he could make it as a Christian. Sooner or later he was bound to fail.

"It's a growing process," I reassured him. "You simply need to water your budding faith with God's Word (I had given him a Spanish New Testament, which he had already begun to read), and your life will change little by little."

I also gave Ernesto a videotape of the movie *Jesus*, which he later played for all of the children in the apartment building where he lives. He phoned the next day to tell me how excited they all were about the movie's message. What a change had come over Ernesto! He had found love, forgiveness, and a new and greater cause.

we'll see  
them in  
heaven

## *Faith's reward*

FROM ROSE, TURKEY

Ismet, a long-time friend and supporter of our work in this country, always seemed to be so full of his own ideas—an odd mix of intellectuality, transcendental meditation, other New Age philosophies, and Islam—that it was almost impossible to get a word in edgewise. Then one day he asked me about my salvation experience, and I was amazed to hear him say that he wanted to know how he could have this happen to him too.

I explained the plan of salvation and offered to pray with

him, but he didn't want to do it right then. So I wrote out several Scriptures on eternal salvation through Jesus, and explained again that all he needed to do was ask God's forgiveness for the wrongs he had done, accept Jesus as his Savior, and then base his faith on the promises God has made in the Bible—like the ones I had written out.

A few days later, Ismet told me that he had prayed several times for Jesus to come into his heart, but nothing had happened. I assured him

that Jesus had definitely heard and answered his *first* prayer, whether he understood it intellectually or “felt” anything emotionally or not. Over the next couple of weeks I continued to teach him more from the Bible about prayer and faith.

Then one day he phoned me from his office, very excited. “Have you been praying for me?” he asked.

“Well, yes. Why do you ask?” I said.

“Because last night when I prayed to Jesus, I had the most heavenly experience! I felt so peaceful and

blissful. Now I understand that He has been in my heart all this time, but He just wanted to see if I would keep believing and praying to Him even if I didn’t feel anything. When I stopped asking for proof and began to just believe Him, He gave me the proof I had been wanting!”

Isn’t that the way it often is? In the words of Saint Augustine (354–430 A.D.), “Understanding is the reward of faith. Therefore seek not to understand that you might believe, but believe that you may understand.”

## ***Crossed plans, crossed paths***

FROM FRANK, USA

In 20 years of driving I had never locked my keys in the car, but then it happened—and at what seemed like the worst possible time! I was supposed to drive some of my co-workers to a special dinner with friends, and we would have to cancel.

I phoned a locksmith, but he wanted \$35 for the job. As I tried to come up with another idea, one of my co-workers noticed a Latino man

in his early 40s pull up near where we were parked. She explained our predicament and that we were missionaries, and asked if he would be willing to drive me the few miles to the campground where we were staying so I could get my other set of keys, and then bring me back. My co-workers would stay with the car. The man cheerfully agreed, as though he had nothing better to do. Almost as sur-

prising, he introduced himself as Vladimir—a Mexican with a Russian name.

As we made our way to the campground, Vladimir started telling me his problems. He was in a state of depression and had just been driving around, hoping that would somehow make him feel better, when he met us. He had been an atheist before he came to the States seven years earlier, but then he had started to believe and go to church. He had even wanted to become a pastor. He had also been a happily married man, the proud father of three beautiful girls.

Supporting a family on minimum wage hadn’t been easy, and he’d had to work several jobs at a time. He hadn’t been home much, and his wife had had an affair with a friend of his. Vladimir’s whole world had come crashing down.

Two years later, he was still plagued by nightmares in which he experienced the tortures of extreme jealousy. In his despair he had turned to alcohol and cocaine, but had managed to stop

before he got hooked. He hadn’t stopped believing in God, but he no longer had a desire to do anything for Him. He’d even lost the desire to live, and was contemplating suicide. On and on he went about his problems.

By the time we got to the campground, Vladimir was all talked out. I shared with him a few verses from the Bible about God’s ever-present love and power to help us through life’s most trying times, and Vladimir prayed with me to receive Jesus as his Savior. He looked so happy after that. What a change!

He was so thankful, he said, that I had been willing to listen to him. He had been too ashamed to go back to church, and had had no one else he could confide in. When I realized that what I had considered a “disaster”—locking my keys in the car—had actually been part of God’s plan to get my path to cross with Vladimir’s, how could I continue to be upset with myself? The Lord had crossed my plans in order to work His greater purpose. ○



# stand out!

Adapted from *Treasures*

George was a sailor on an oil tanker, and like most sailors he was often at sea for weeks at a time.

Once when George's ship was in port, he met John outside a bar. The two talked, and eventually John, who was a dedicated Christian, led George to receive Jesus as his Savior.

"Now that you've asked Jesus to come into your heart, George, your life is going to change," John said.

"How's that?" asked George.

"Well, it says right here in 2 Corinthians 5:17, 'If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.'" George leaned over to take

a closer look at the verse John was pointing to in his pocket-sized New Testament. John continued reading. "Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.' So I want to prepare you, George, that when you go back to your ship, it's not going to be easy. You know as well as I do that sailors are a tough and wild bunch."

"That's for sure!" No sooner had the words left George's mouth than two drunken sailors and two local

men tumbled out of the bar and continued their fracas.

"Most of your old friends don't believe in God or Jesus," John went on, "and they don't particularly care for those who do. But, George, you'll no longer be the ornery, foul-mouthed brawler you used to be. You're going to be so different that your old friends probably aren't going to want to have anything to do with you. They may even persecute you."

So George went back to his ship, and it was a few months before it returned to that port. George went ashore, and it wasn't long before he ran into John, who was passing out tracts. One could hardly miss him. His smile seemed to light up the whole street.

The two greeted each other and John asked how it had gone on the ship.

"Oh, fine—just fine!" George answered.

"I told you it was going to be difficult to be a Christian there, didn't I?"

"No, no," replied George. "It wasn't hard at all!"

"You mean they didn't persecute you or make life miserable for you?" John asked.



“Oh, no! You see, they never even found out that I was a Christian!”

That’s *not* being a real Christian! If you believe in something, you talk about it. Whether it’s your football team or political party or your work or whatever it is, if you believe in something, you talk about it. And if you really believe in and love Jesus, you’re going to talk about Him and share His love with others.

Jesus said that if someone has a candle, he doesn’t hide it—he doesn’t sit alone in some corner and hope nobody will find out that he’s become a Christian—but he puts the candle on a stand so that it gives light to others (Matthew 5:15; Luke 8:16).

Once you’re saved, it should be impossible to hide the love of God and the truth of Jesus. Once you have known His love and have Him in your heart, He wants you to try to share His love with others and to help them find Him too. That’s the least you can do for Him, the one who gave His life for you!

Unfortunately, too many Christians today are afraid

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**If you believe in something, you talk about it. And if you really believe in and love Jesus, you’re going to talk about Him and share His love with others.**

to do anything that would make them stand out as being peculiar or different from the crowd. They’re more concerned about preserving their reputations than they are about helping others or taking a stand for Jesus. But there is really no such thing as “neutrality” for the Christian. Jesus said, “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad” (Matthew 12:30).

True Christians are more concerned that others find the love and happiness and truth that they have found,

## **Be a wise witness.**

Of course the Lord expects us to exercise wisdom in how and when and to whom we witness. “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves,” Jesus told His disciples. “Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves” (Matthew 10:16). We owe the message of God’s love to everyone, but especially to those who will believe and receive it. The Lord doesn’t mean for us to cause ourselves unnecessary trouble by giving the message to people who we know won’t receive it and possibly even persecute us for it. The whole purpose of witnessing is to win others with the Lord’s love, not antagonize or offend.

than they are about the rejection or ridicule they might receive from those who won’t receive or believe what they have to say. They’re not “chameleon” Christians who change color with every crowd and melt into the surrounding world. They’re not afraid to show some conviction and moral courage.

Jesus “made Himself of no reputation” (Philippians 2:7) and was “despised and rejected by men; a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. ... He was despised and we did not esteem Him” (Isaiah 53:3). He was willing

to do and go through that so you could know God's love. Are you willing to do the same, if necessary, so others can find that same love?

The Bible says, "This is how we know what [God's] love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers" (1 John 3:16 NIV). We ought to be willing to do whatever we can to win as many others to Jesus as we can, while we still can, for "the night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4). If we truly believe that, we'll *do* it!

There is a true story about a woman whose son was appointed his country's ambassador to one of the world's most powerful and influential countries at the time. But when she heard the news, instead of being overjoyed, the woman nearly wept. "Just think," she lamented, "at one time he might have become an ambassador of the Gospel and the kingdom of God, but he settled for being an ambassador of a mere earthly nation that's here today and will be gone tomorrow."

Think of that! He could have been an ambassador for the King of kings, Jesus! He could have been an ambassador not just to one little country, but to the whole world. He could have been an ambassador from the greatest kingdom there ever will be, the only one that will stand forever, and he could have had a special place in Heaven with God's other messengers (Daniel 2:44; 12:3; Matthew 16:27).

There is no higher position or greater honor than to be a messenger of God's love and salvation. That position is open to *you*. Will you take it?

Stand up for Jesus today! You'll be glad you did, and so will God and all those who find Him and His love through your witness. ○



## Not a minute too soon

The last notes of taps echoed in the lieutenant's ears as he sat on his cot, weary from a long day. Then an irresistible urge came over him. The Lord was telling him he should go and witness to his colonel. To leave his barracks after taps without orders would result in a reprimand and possibly court-martial, he reasoned. Still, he couldn't shake the urge.

A few minutes later, the lieutenant stood trembling before the colonel's barracks. He drew a deep breath and knocked.

"What are you doing here?" the colonel asked gruffly.

Stumbling over his words, the lieutenant told him of the irresistible urge he felt to come and talk to him about Jesus.

Without saying a word, the colonel opened a drawer and took out a revolver. "If you had knocked at my door a minute later, I couldn't have answered. I was about to take my life when you knocked. What you have said gives me hope. Come again tomorrow and tell me more about your Jesus.—And, no, I won't use the pistol."

The next morning the lieutenant led the colonel to receive Jesus as his Savior.



A London newspaper once ran the following ad: "Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success." The ad was signed by Sir Ernest Shackleton, Antarctic explorer. Thousands responded immediately. They were ready to sacrifice all for adventure and uncertain honor. Should God's children do less?

# 666 **WATCH**

*“He [the False Prophet, top aide to the Antichrist or ‘Beast’] causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the Beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666” (Revelation 13:16–18).*

## Angel from Hell?

Applied Digital Solutions (ADS), a NASDAQ-traded technology company, has announced its acquisition of the patent rights to a miniature digital transceiver, which the company has nicknamed “Digital Angel®.” Capable of both sending and receiving data, the device is designed to be implanted in humans.

More benevolent applications include providing a tamper-proof means of identification for credit and other purposes, locating lost persons and lost or stolen property, and monitoring the medical conditions of at-risk patients.

When implanted in the body, the device is powered electromagnetically through the movement of muscles, and can be activated by either the wearer or the monitoring facility. Global positioning satellites will continuously track the transceiver’s signals.

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An ADS prospectus explains: “While a number of other tracking and monitoring technologies have been patented and marketed in the past, they are all unsuitable for the widespread tracking, recovery, and identification of people due to a variety of limitations, including unwieldy size, maintenance requirements, insufficient or inconvenient power-supply and activation difficulties. For the first time in the history of location and monitoring technology, Digital Angel® overcomes these limitations.”

The company projects a global market for this technology in excess of \$100 billion. To meet that projection, every human being on earth would need to get one of these implants. Maybe that’s the idea.

In January 2000, ADS received the World Economic Forum’s “Technology Pioneers Award” for its “contributions to worldwide economic development and

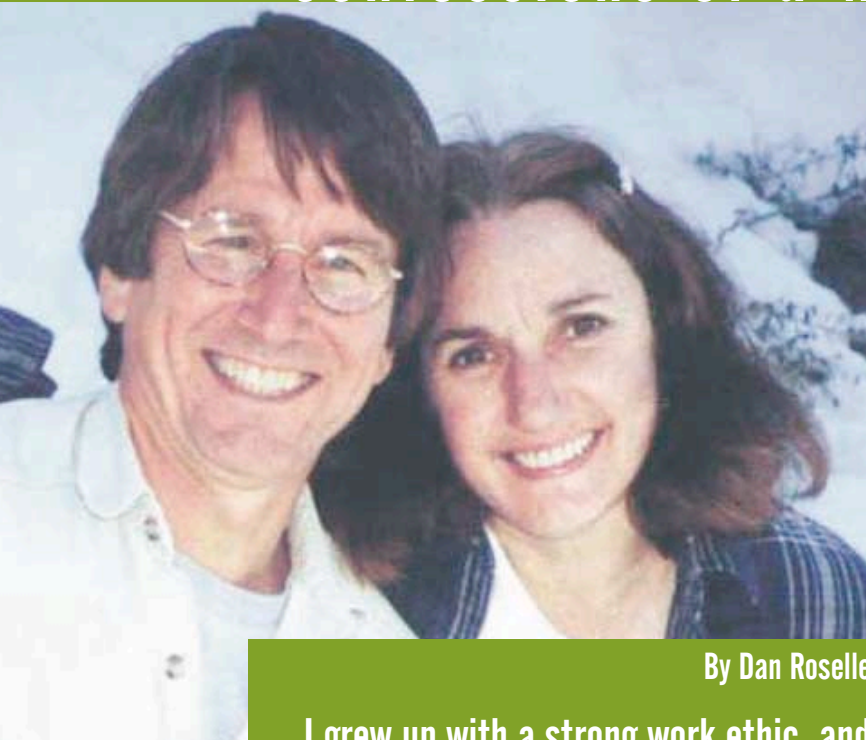
social progress through technology advancements.”

The World Economic Forum bills itself as an independent organization committed to improving the state of the world by “creating the foremost global partnerships of business, political, intellectual, and other leaders of society to define and discuss key issues on the global agenda.”

One of the applications is credit verification (buying and selling). The technology is implantable. The plans are global. Sound familiar?

Whether the Digital Angel® turns out to be the “mark of the Beast” or merely a forerunner remains to be seen, but two things are certain: The mark of the Beast is coming soon, and its packaging and advertising campaign will be both appealing and persuasive. When it comes, don’t *you* be among those who will be duped into taking it “in their right hand or on their forehead.” ○

# confessions of a workaholic



By Dan Roselle

I grew up with a strong work ethic, and from an early age was accomplishment oriented. I got my first job when I was 10 years old, and kept it until I was 17.

**A**t first the income was to help my parents make ends meet. (We're a large family, with 6 children.) By the time I was 12, I was buying all my own clothes and other personal needs, school supplies, etc., from the money I earned. I learned the value of time and money, and I got used to working hard. The fact that I was working while other kids my age were playing didn't bother me; as a

matter of fact, I enjoyed working—and the harder the better. As a teen I thought I could do almost anything I set my mind to, and that gave me a feeling of independence and manliness.

When I made my decision to give my life to the Lord at the age of 19, I was so thrilled with serving Jesus that I wanted to give it all I had, and therefore worked long, long hours. As the years went by, I became what some

people call a workaholic. I could work for hours and hours and hours without stopping. There was always plenty to do, raising a family of my own on foreign mission fields, and I enjoyed staying busy. Unfortunately, I often made life more difficult for others than it needed to be, because I expected them to work, work, work like I did. Even if I didn't say anything to that effect, they often felt bad if they couldn't keep up with me.

As you can imagine, with all this work I didn't take as much time with the Lord as I should have, and therefore often labored in my own strength instead of His. It took years for the Lord to get through to me about my attitude, but eventually He did.

One turning point came years ago: I was returning home from an out-of-town trip one holiday evening, and was eagerly looking forward to the special meal I knew was being prepared. We were living on a shoestring budget with a number of other mis-



sionaries at the time, and we didn't usually have an abundance of food. But this meal would be different; there would be plenty of meat and lots of delicious trimmings. During the long drive home, that was about all I could think about. But when I got home, the plate of food my wife had set aside for me was nowhere to be found. Apparently there had been a mix-up, and someone else had eaten it.

That really bothered me! I went outside and paced up and down the yard, all the while telling the Lord how disappointed I was. I had worked hard and so looked forward to a delicious meal, only to come home to this! Where was the love and thoughtfulness I surely deserved? Where was the appreciation? Boy, did I have a bad case of the dumps!

When I finally settled down a little, I heard the Lord's voice sweetly chiding me: "I understand how you feel unloved because you didn't get what had been

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**I marvel at the  
patience,  
understanding,  
longsuffering,  
and  
unconditional  
love that Jesus  
has had for me.  
I feel blessed  
beyond  
measure.**

reserved for you. Perhaps this will help you understand how unloved I feel when I don't get the personal time with you that you have promised to reserve for Me. I love you and want to spend time with you, but so often you find something else to do. Then I feel hurt. You have often promised to spend more time with Me, but then you break your promise and go off and do something else."

Oh, how those words hit home! I broke down and cried, and admitted how wrong I had been. I was so sorry! I could see how much I had hurt Jesus, and it broke my heart.

That episode helped me change my way of doing things. I can't say that it was an overnight change, but little by little over the years the Lord helped me get over what I now see was a handicap—my workaholic ways and being so accomplishment oriented—and strengthen and deepen my relationship with Him.

I marvel at the patience, understanding, longsuffering, and unconditional love that Jesus has had for me. I feel blessed beyond measure, and know that He's the One who brought about the change I needed. I didn't do anything to deserve it, I never could have earned it, and I couldn't have done it on my own. All I did was say, "Yes, Jesus, I want to change!" Jesus did the rest. ○

# Building Habits

Believe it or not, they used to build bridges by first flying a kite from one side of the river or gorge to the other. Someone on the opposite side caught the kite and tied a little thicker, stronger string to the end of the kite string, and the men who had sent the kite over pulled the new, thicker string back across. The teams on each side kept repeating the process, next with an even stronger string, then a cord, then a thin rope, then a thicker rope, and so on. Eventually they could pull a small steel cable across, then a heavier one, until finally they had a cable across the expanse that was strong enough to support them and their tools and materials.—And it all started with one tiny kite string!

That's how habits are formed, both good and bad. Add a thread every day, and before long you can't break it. Start developing a *good* habit by taking the first step, however small, in the right direction. Then keep at it until you've built up a routine that can't easily be broken.

—Peter Amsterdam

## Feeding reading

### KICKING BAD HABITS

#### **Recognize the symptoms and their destructive end.**

1 Corinthians 5:6–7a  
Ephesians 4:22–24  
James 1:14–15

#### **Recognize the spiritual force behind the vice.**

2 Corinthians 2:11  
2 Corinthians 11:3  
Ephesians 6:10–12  
1 Peter 5:8

#### **Admit that you can't change yourself, and ask the Lord to help you.**

Psalms 19:12–13  
Psalm 119:133

#### **Take a militant stand, using the Word, against temptation—and the Tempter.**

Galatians 5:1  
Ephesians 4:27  
Ephesians 6:13–18  
James 4:7

#### **The Lord can overcome anything, with our cooperation.**

Psalms 138:8  
Jeremiah 32:27  
Mark 10:27  
John 8:36  
Philippians 4:13  
1 John 4:4

#### **Prayers, encouragement, and reminders of others also help.**

Ecclesiastes 4:9–10  
Matthew 18:19–20  
Hebrews 3:13  
Hebrews 10:24–25  
James 5:16

#### **Publicly thank the Lord and testify of His power and victory.**

Psalms 107:1–2  
Psalm 35:18  
Psalm 40:10

## Answers to your questions

**Question:** I know I drink too much. It started with a couple of beers or a drink or two to help me unwind after a hard day at work, but then it became a habit. Now I can't wait till after work, and find myself drinking more and more. I've tried to stop, but can't. Can you help?



When our habits begin to harm us or others, they move out of the realm of habits into the realm of vices—and it sounds like that's what's happened to you.

What you may not realize is that once a habit has become a vice, it's often more than just an ingrained reaction or physical dependency; it's a *spiritual* problem. The Bible refers to the Devil as our adversary, who is out to destroy us (1 Peter 5:8). What better way to accomplish this than to get us to pull the trigger ourselves, through our destructive habits? *Self-destructive habits* would be a better term.

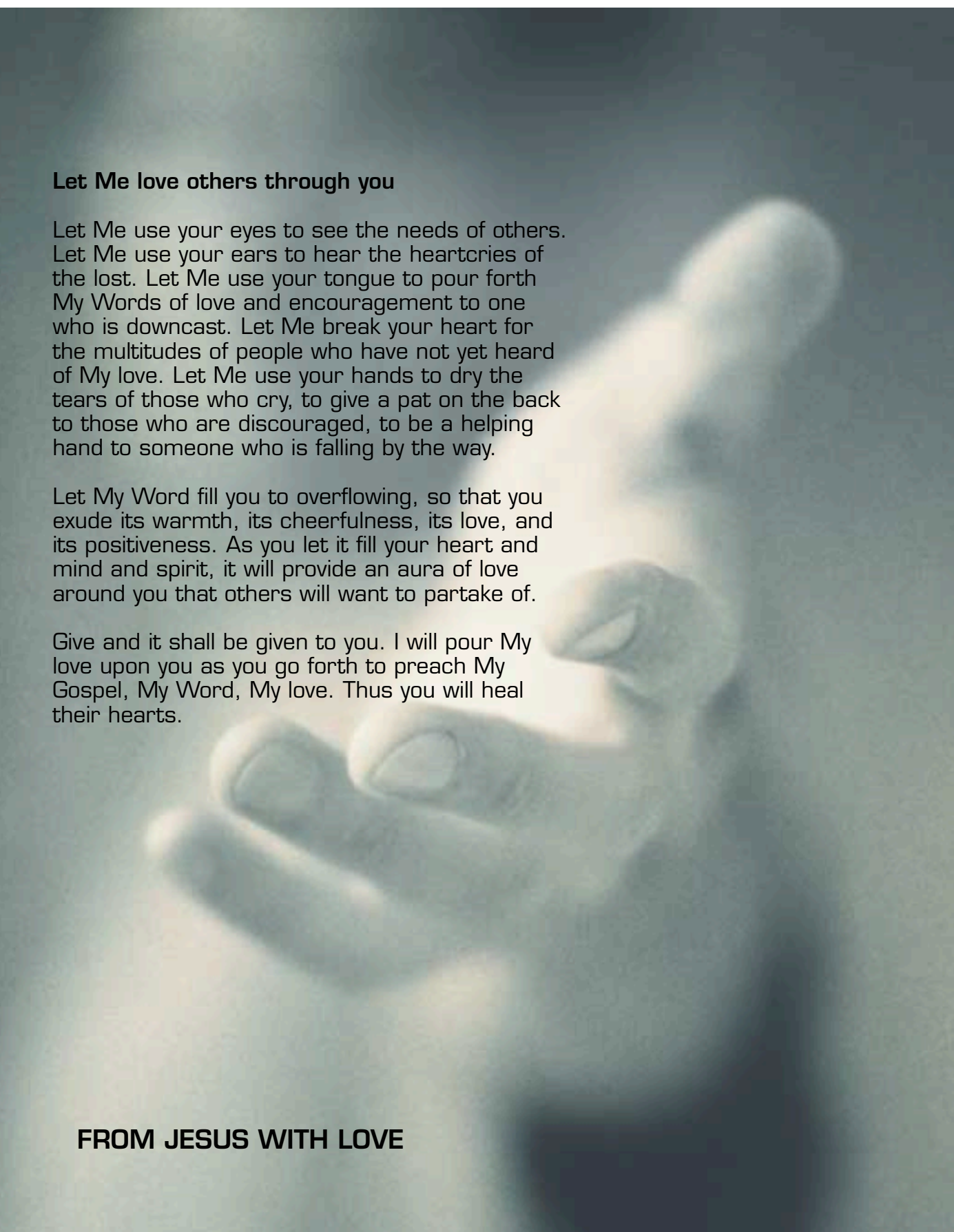
The Bible warns us to not “give place to the Devil” (Ephesians 4:27). When we “give place” to him in our lives, it's like having an evil boarder in our house: He's not in control of the house, but he annoys us and can cause us trouble and all kinds of damage. We tell him to leave but he won't, so finally by the authority and the law—in this case, the authority of the Word and the name of Jesus—we need to have him *thrown out*.

Unfortunately, many Christians go for a long time without getting complete deliverance from deep-seated

vices and bad habits. They don't recognize that their problems are spiritual as well as physical, so they don't take spiritual authority over these spirits and get rid of them.

You have to admit your problem, first of all, and then you have to understand that a spiritual force is binding you to that vice—a force too strong for you to overcome on your own. Then you have to want to be free from it badly enough that you turn to the Lord and earnestly pray for His help. It's often also helpful to confess your problem to others and ask them to pray with you against the evil forces that have you bound, and to help you resist temptation when it comes—which it will!

When you pray for deliverance (and later, as you pray to continue to resist temptation), quote to the Lord promises He has made in His Word. When you do this, it shows you have faith in Him and what He has pledged. Never doubt for a moment that He is going to answer, and He will! No matter what the bad habit or how serious it is, Jesus can set you free!—And “if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). ○



## **Let Me love others through you**

Let Me use your eyes to see the needs of others. Let Me use your ears to hear the heartcries of the lost. Let Me use your tongue to pour forth My Words of love and encouragement to one who is downcast. Let Me break your heart for the multitudes of people who have not yet heard of My love. Let Me use your hands to dry the tears of those who cry, to give a pat on the back to those who are discouraged, to be a helping hand to someone who is falling by the way.

Let My Word fill you to overflowing, so that you exude its warmth, its cheerfulness, its love, and its positiveness. As you let it fill your heart and mind and spirit, it will provide an aura of love around you that others will want to partake of.

Give and it shall be given to you. I will pour My love upon you as you go forth to preach My Gospel, My Word, My love. Thus you will heal their hearts.

**FROM JESUS WITH LOVE**