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personally speaking



Most people look at Mother Teresa and people like her and think they could never be like that; they could never be so saintly or make such a difference in the lives of so many. Maybe not, but the tragedy is that because they don't think they can, they don't even try.

What they fail to realize is that Mother Teresa didn't set out to become a living saint or a Nobel Peace Prize laureate. And she didn't start out ministering to multitudes of the poorest of the poor. She just saw the need nearest her and responded. Can't we all do that?

God is in the business of using ordinary people in ordinary circumstances to show extraordinary love. The apostle Paul, in explaining the life of service that he and other early Christians had adopted, said, "The love of Christ compels us" (2 Corinthians 5:14). That same love can compel us—and propel us. It provides both the motivation and the power, and it's available to everyone. All we have to do is desire it, ask for it, and nurture it. The more we put it to use, the more it grows, the more it becomes a part of our natural reactions, and the more it is seen in our everyday actions. This was the secret to Paul's success, and Mother Teresa's—and it can be ours.

This issue of *Activated* is dedicated to all the unsung saints in the world who daily give unselfishly of themselves for the love's sake. It's also our hope that it will inspire you to tap into the power of God's love so you, too, can help lighten the loads of those in your corner of the world who are struggling through life.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Keith Phillips".

Keith Phillips
For the *Activated* family



PRIORITIES

WILLIAM GLADSTONE (1809–1898) WAS ENGLAND’S PRIME MINISTER FOUR TIMES, and one of the most important political figures of his era. He was also famous for being an active Christian.

Every day as Gladstone went up the steps of the Parliament building, he bought a newspaper from the same newsboy and said an encouraging word about how Jesus loved him.

One day, as Gladstone and his secretary were going into Parliament, another newsboy stopped them. “Hey, Mr. Gladstone, you know the bloke you usually get’cher paper from? Well, yesterday he was run over by a carriage and he’s going to die. He wants you to come get him in.”

“What do you mean, ‘get him in’?” Gladstone asked.

“You know—get him in to Heaven.”

Gladstone’s secretary protested. “No, no, no, you don’t have time to go see a newsboy! You know how important your speech today is. It could change the course of history!”

Gladstone thought a moment, then said, “One immortal soul is worth more than my speech in Parliament.” So he went to the little garret where the newsboy lay dying. Gladstone prayed with him to receive Jesus. He “got him in”—and then the boy died.

By the time Gladstone made it back to Parliament, a heated discussion was already under way. He gave his speech, and his side went on to win the vote.

Afterwards his secretary asked, “Sir, how could you have gone off like that and almost miss making such an important speech?”

“The speech was a very important and good thing,” Gladstone replied, “but getting that boy saved and into Heaven was a better, more important thing!”

—David Brandt Berg (D.B.B.)

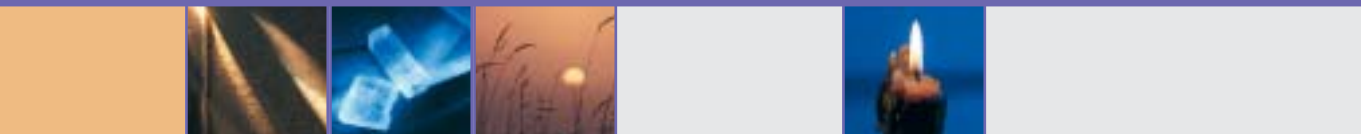
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To comprehend a man’s life, it is necessary to know not merely what he does, but also what he purposely leaves undone. There is a limit to the work that can be got out of a human body or a human brain, and he is a wise man who wastes no energy on pursuits for which he is not fitted; and he still wiser who, from among the things that he can do well, chooses and resolutely follows the best.

There is but one question of the hour: How to bring the truth of God’s Word into vital contact with the minds and hearts of all classes of people.

—William E. Gladstone

DON'T EVER THINK BECAUSE THERE'S SO MUCH DARKNESS THAT IT'S NO USE TO HAVE JUST A LITTLE LIGHT, BECAUSE EVEN ONE CANDLE CAN BE SEEN A MILE AWAY WHEN IT'S DARK.



GOD PUT ON A “LIGHT SHOW” THE OTHER DAY, and we were there to see it. He said a lot of things, too, and we tried to listen. I’m sure He must have shown it before, but we were all too busy to watch.

The Lord let three tiny rays of sunlight beam their way into our dark room—not through the shutter, which was obstructing the light, but through pinholes, letting it in. It’s like your life for the Lord: The smaller you are, the clearer others can see Jesus. The less there is of you, the more His light shines through!

The rays were many different colors, all showing a different color of God’s light, but the same light. It is similar to what the Bible says about each Christian being given different gifts, but all from the same Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4). Each of us reflects in our own way the light of God—each one letting our light shine, showing our particular kind of works to cause men to glorify the beauty of God (Matthew 5:16).

We’re like little rays of light in this spiritually dark world. Even a few rays of light can make a difference. Don’t ever think that because there’s so much darkness it’s no use to have just a little light,

because even one candle can be seen a mile away when it’s dark.

Even a speck of dust, as small as it is, can sparkle like a diamond if it will get in the sunshine—and the greater the darkness, the brighter the light! A little diamond of dust or a little ray of sunshine shows up best when the room is very dark. “Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more” (Romans 5:20).

You don’t dare look right at the sun; it’s so bright it could blind you. But you see its reflection in the things that it shines on. Just so, people can only see God as His children reflect Him, like little diamonds of dust. They can’t look at God, because He’s too bright. They have to look at us believers to see God in our reflection of Him.

God’s light can only be seen if you reflect it! People can only see God in you as you reflect Him. So “let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven” (Matthew 5:16). If the dust weren’t there, you couldn’t see the light, and if the light weren’t there, you couldn’t see the dust. It takes both.

You may never see one of those

little diamonds of dust again, for some of them just float into the light, sparkle for a moment, and then vanish back into the darkness. Some only have their moment of truth, but if only once in its life that grain of dust scintillates with the light of the Lord, it's worth it! Even if only once in its life, it is life and joy to someone, it's worth it! But if it could

is only in one direction. Likewise there is only one way to the Source, God, and you've got to follow that way or you won't make it! Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12). He's the only way. Only in Him is there light—the straight and narrow beam that points to the love of God—and unless you get in that beam of love, you'll never shine. Jesus

DIAMONDS OF DUST

By David Brandt Berg

stay in the Lord's light, it could sparkle its life out to the end, like one candle gives light to the whole house until it is finished. The longer that little grain of dust stays right in the light, the longer it shines and the longer it stays a diamond.

Those diamonds of dust can sparkle so short a while, and then they're gone—like a man's life that is like the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is gone! For what is your life? It's but a vapor that reflects His rays of light for a little while and then it's gone (Psalm 103:15–16). You have no guarantee of tomorrow, so you'd better sparkle now while you have the light, or you may fade into oblivion (James 4:14). Hardly anyone will know you even existed, because so few ever saw God's light reflected in you, shining through you, because you didn't stay in the light. "He who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God" (John 3:21).

The path of the light, the ray we see, is very straight and very narrow. It only shines in one direction, and its source

said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

Think how much God can show you from even a little beam of light if you're just simple and childlike enough to appreciate it. Unless you become as a little child, you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 18:3).

To learn from the Lord, you have to stop, look, and listen. If you don't, you'll get run over by all the cares of this life, instead of running over with His truth, His love and His joy. You'll be overcome by the world, instead of overcoming the world through Him. If you're too busy or in too big of a hurry or too full of your own doings, your own things, you'll never learn anything.

Watch the diamonds of dust: They don't try to sparkle and shine. They just let the light shine on them. They don't work at shining or moving. They're not trying to get anywhere. They're not in a hurry. They just float so quietly on God's air.

So stop—look—listen—and let your dust become a diamond that shows the beauty of God! •

By Philip Salazar



A soccer ball and a sea of smiles

I AM THE FATHER OF A LARGE FAMILY, a full-time Christian volunteer, and a part-time athletic coach. During our family's two-year stay in India, I always packed some sports equipment when we traveled.

Our time there included many challenging and rewarding experiences. Our six teenagers did volunteer work at several medical clinics, where they cheered up and helped ease the suffering of terminally ill children. They also taught at a home for children who had lost their parents to AIDS. We traveled to the sites of natural disasters, bringing water, food, clothing, and other relief supplies. It seemed that wherever we turned, someone needed encouragement or assistance.

One Saturday, after an especially busy week, we packed a picnic lunch and a soccer ball and headed for a cricket ground on the edge of a nearby college campus. The dense trees and bushes that surrounded the field reminded us of our native Northern California. The day was perfect, and so was the spot.

Such beauty, such peace, such rest, I thought. This is going to be great! No crowds, no noisy traffic, no pressing business—just my family and me! Heaven!

I pulled out my old, worn soccer ball and tossed it to one of my girls.

No sooner had we begun to kick the ball around than a horde of slum children emerged from the woods. They had been there all along, it turned out, curiously studying our every move. The sight of the soccer ball, though, had been more than they could stand. Before we knew it, we were face to face with more than fifty children, ranging in age from about six to twelve or thirteen, all eager to join the fun. They wore ragged clothes, no shoes, and had tousled hair and gorgeous smiles. And they all expected something from this family of foreigners.

I called them to gather around and tried to make myself heard over the hubbub. When it became clear that most of the children didn't speak English, I called for an interpreter. An older boy stepped forward. I pulled out my whistle and proceeded to explain the rules. From the oldest to the youngest, they listened respectfully and nodded. We chose teams and the game began.

Like a swarm of bees, we ran up and down the field, chasing and kicking that ball for hours. Forget the teams. Forget the rules. Forget the goals. These kids just wanted to kick the ball! You never saw so many smiles or heard so many giggles and so much laughter!

Every once in a while, someone would kick

the ball out from the conglomeration of little bodies and into the open field. Whenever this happened, one boy seemed to always get to the ball first and claim it for his own. Off he would go, running and kicking the ball away from the rest of us until someone caught up with him and guided him back to the group. Not even my whistle blowing or everyone else's shouts could get him to return with the ball.

Finally, bewildered, I asked my young interpreter why this one boy wouldn't stop when I blew the whistle.

"Why, sir," he said, "the boy is deaf."

Much later, we ended the game and the children gathered at midfield to say goodbye. I was exhausted but immensely satisfied. The sea of smiles and happy faces warmed my heart.

When all but a few of the children had returned to the mud huts and hovels that they called home, two boys, one on a bicycle and the other pushing it, approached me. The younger one on the bike had something to say. With a beaming smile that I will never forget, he exclaimed, "Thank you, sir, for a wonderful day. I had so much fun!"

"You are welcome," I replied. "But I don't remember seeing you on the field today."

It was only then that I realized why his friend had been pushing him. His legs were paralyzed and twisted from polio. My look of shock and dismay only triggered another bright smile.

As he was being pushed off toward home, he looked back and announced, "I enjoyed very much watching you playing with my brothers and friends today. Thank you, sir! Thank you!"

I had been looking for a little relaxation and time with my family, but found a lesson instead.

When I thought that I was spent, that I'd given all I could and it was time to look out for me and mine, God put others who needed His love in my path. He gave me the renewal I needed, but not in the way I had expected. The joy of giving melted away the tiredness and burned-out feeling. •

"I'D RATHER SEE A SERMON"

"I'D RATHER SEE A SERMON"

I'd rather see a sermon than to hear
one any day;
I'd rather one would walk with me than
merely tell the way.
The eye's a better pupil and more will-
ing than the ear,
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's
always clear;
And the best of all the preachers are
the men who live their creeds,
For to see good put in action is what
everybody needs.

I soon can learn to do it if you'll let me
see it done;
I can watch your hands in action, but
your tongue too fast may run.
The lectures you deliver may be very
wise and true,
But I'd rather get my lessons by observ-
ing what you do;
I may misunderstand the high advice
you give,
But there's no misunderstanding how
you act and how you live.

When I see a deed of kindness, I am
eager to be kind.
When a weaker brother stumbles and a
strong man stays behind
Just to see if he can help him, then the
wish grows strong in me
To become as big and thoughtful as I
know that friend to be.
And all travelers can witness that the
best of guides today
Is not the one who tells them, but the
one who shows the way.

One good man teaches many, men
believe what they behold;
One deed of kindness noticed is worth
forty that are told.
Who stands with men of honor learns
to hold his honor dear,
For right living speaks a language
which to everyone is clear.
Though an able speaker charms me
with his eloquence, I say,
I'd rather see a sermon than to hear
one any day!

—Edgar A. Guest (1881–1959)

a true service



ALL
CHRISTIANS
CAN SHARE
THE GOOD
NEWS WITH
THOSE WHOSE
LIVES TOUCH
THEIR OWN

EVERY CHRISTIAN HAS BASIC SPIRITUAL NEEDS, and one of them is fellowship with other believers. Christians need to get together to read and study God's Word, to sing and praise the Lord, and to pray for and encourage one another—"to stir up love and good works," as the apostle Paul put it.

"Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day [of Jesus' return] approaching" (Hebrews 10:24–25). When we spend time with others who also love the Lord and who are doing their best to please Him, it refreshes and strengthens us spiritually.

It's important to understand, however, that meeting together for fellowship and spiritual renewal, whether it is done in a church building, a cathedral, a house, a thatched hut, or the open air, is not our "service" for the Lord. Many people have the mistaken impression that by going to church, listening to a sermon, and giving a monetary offering, they have fulfilled their obligation to God. While those things may be helpful and pleasing to God, there's more to being a true Christian.

Every Christian is meant to be on call, always ready and willing to do whatever the Lord may ask. When Jesus gave His followers what has come to be known as the Great Commission—"Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere" (Mark 16:15 TLB)—He meant for every Christian to do whatever they can to help spread His love and message. Even though they may have other jobs

and responsibilities, all Christians can share the good news with those whose lives touch their own.

So our actual “service” for the Lord is in our everyday living for Him. It’s in our helping others, showing them love, and pointing them to Jesus and salvation. This is our service to God, and it’s genuine work that requires dedication and a measure of self-sacrifice. It’s often hard work, but it’s also the greatest work in the world, for the best Boss in the world, with the best pay in the world—eternal rewards for every labor of love and every person we lead to Jesus.

The plan that the early Christians put into practice so effectively was for believers to unite not only for fellowship, but also in the common cause of reaching out to others with the message of God’s love in Jesus. Their meetings were not for their own benefit only, but to learn how to become more effective in their service for the Lord, to get refilled and reinspired after pouring out to others, and to get ready for more service ahead.

There are dedicated Christians today who operate like Jesus and His disciples and the early Christians did. By putting God first and investing as much of their time and other resources as possible in serving the Lord wherever He has them, these otherwise ordinary people have helped millions discover the love, peace, true satisfaction, and eternal salvation that only Jesus can give. And by their example, they have proven anyone can do it.

With God’s help, you too can share God’s message of true love and salvation with those whose paths cross yours. You too can live a life that reflects Jesus’ love! •



IF THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF OUR EXISTENCE is to receive Jesus as our Savior, then why doesn’t the Lord just take us home to Heaven the minute we do?— Because once we’re saved, we have a job to do; we have a responsibility. There are lots of other people who need to know Jesus, and *we* are the means by which He has chosen to make Himself known.

Jesus alone saves, but He doesn’t want to save us alone. He wants to save the whole world, but in order to do that He needs us to tell others about His love, to give His love and message of salvation to the whole world.

Jesus told His closest followers, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21). He says this still to His followers of today, calling them to give their lives daily in loving concern and care for others, to share His heart and love with those who are seeking for “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). He came to love the world, and He calls us to do likewise.

Will you answer His call? Will you do what you can to win others to Him? Will you spread the Word, spread the message, spread His love?

—D.B.B.

If you would like to know more about how you can share the message of God’s love and salvation with others, order the booklet One Heart at a Time from one of the addresses on page 2 of this magazine. •

A MAJOR SOURCE OF CONTENTION in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a hilltop in Jerusalem that Jews call the Temple Mount and Muslims call Al-Haram al-Sharif, or “the Noble Sanctuary.” The site is sacred to Jews as the location of the former Jewish Temple, last destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D., and never rebuilt since. It is also one of the three most important shrines in Islam.

Today, Al-Haram al-Sharif encloses over 35 acres—nearly one-sixth of the old walled city of Jerusalem. Al-Aqsa Mosque stands

“When you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place . . . then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:15,21).

The prophecy Jesus was referring to says: “And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation” (Daniel 11:31).



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The Middle East Crisis

at its southernmost end, and the smaller Muslim shrine, the Dome of the Rock, at its center. Muslims regard the entire area as holy. The sovereignty of the site and the status of Jerusalem are two of the greatest obstacles to lasting peace in the region.

Recent evidence of this is how a September 2000 visit to the site by then opposition leader Ariel Sharon, accompanied by hundreds of Israeli troops and riot police, sparked the worst series of riots and clashes between Israelis and Palestinians in over a decade.

What will happen in Jerusalem—and on the Temple Mount, in particular—is also the subject of several key prophecies in the Bible about the days in which we are living. In order to understand current events and know what to expect next, it’s important to understand these prophecies that deal specifically with the Temple Mount.

The prophecies

When Jesus told His disciples what signs would lead up to His Second Coming, He referred to a prophecy in the Old Testament book of Daniel, written over 500 years earlier:

- What Jesus called the “holy place” and Daniel called the “sanctuary fortress” (or “sanctuary of strength,” as the King James Version words it) is the Jewish Temple area.
- The “him” in Daniel’s prophecy is the soon-coming world dictator known as the Antichrist (also called “the Beast” in the Bible’s book of Revelation).
- “Daily sacrifices” refers to the ritual of Jewish faith in which the blood or flesh of a specified animal is offered in the Temple to God as a substitute payment for sin. This primary ritual of the Jewish faith was suspended when the second Temple was destroyed.
- The “abomination of desolation” appears to be an image or large statue of the Antichrist.
- The “great tribulation” Jesus spoke of is the last three and a half years before His return, when the Antichrist will officially abolish all religions other than worship of himself and will persecute believers of all faiths. This will spark rebellions against his regime, which he will brutally attempt to suppress.

Obviously some things need to happen before these prophecies can be fulfilled.

The Jews have not sacrificed animals to God since their Temple was last destroyed in 70 A.D., and the only place where they would consider resuming sacrificial worship is on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem—the site now occupied by the Muslims' Dome of the Rock.

Before the Antichrist can take away the daily sacrifices, sacrifices must resume. Before the sacrifices can resume, there must be a Jewish Temple. For the Temple to be rebuilt, something has got to give. Either

seem to get better. Apparently the Antichrist will also make Jerusalem the capital of his one-world government, because the Bible says that eventually he will run things from the Jewish Temple (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

“But in the middle of the week [seven years] he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering” (Daniel 9:27). Then, in that holy place, the Temple area, the world government will erect some kind of “living” image of the Antichrist (possibly a computer of some sort), the abomination of desolation,



By Joseph Candel

the Dome of the Rock must come down, or the Jews must agree to rebuild their Temple elsewhere—possibly on another part of the Temple Mount. With both sides refusing to budge on the issue of sovereignty over the Temple Mount, it would take a superman to broker a deal.

Enter the Antichrist

“This king [the Antichrist] will make a seven-year treaty with the people, but after half that time, he will break his pledge and stop the Jews from all their sacrifices and their offerings” (Daniel 9:27 TLB).

This seven-year treaty is referred to again in Daniel 11:28–31—the same passage that Jesus referred to—as a “holy covenant” because it has to do with religion. It will most likely be a pact between the Antichrist, the Jews, the Muslims, and the Christians by which Jerusalem is declared an international city, with free and equal access guaranteed to people of all faiths.

The Jews will finally be able to rebuild their Temple and reinstate sacrificial worship, and for three and a half years things will

and demand that the whole world worship the image or be killed (Revelation 13:14–15).

“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [the Second Coming of Jesus Christ] will not come unless ... the man of sin [the Antichrist] is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4).

The long-term forecast

The world situation—particularly in the Middle East—is going to continue to get worse until the Covenant is signed. Then things are going to appear to get better for a while under the false messiah, the Antichrist. Then things will get *much* worse during the Great Tribulation. But after the Tribulation, when Jesus returns to rescue His own and whisk them off to Heaven, things are going to be the best ever for those who have received Him as their Savior! That’s what we will need to hold on to as things get worse—the promised happy ending! •



EMILIA'S NEW FRIEND

A true story, by Francesco, Moldova

EMILIA WONDERS IF ANYONE WILL NOTICE HER TODAY. Winter will soon set in. That will make it much more difficult to get by on her tiny monthly pension, worth less than five dollars.

In better times, Emilia had been a nurse. Her country had been communist, but life had been good for her. She had had enough money. Prices had been low. People had respected her. They had liked to talk to her. They had thanked her for being a nurse, for helping them.

Now she is old and has no one but a bedridden older sister. She must beg for two, standing all day in front of a high-class shop, waiting for someone to have mercy and give her a few coins. Last winter she thought she would die of hunger. Will this winter be any better?

As Emilia thinks about these things, she doesn't notice a little boy coming toward her, money in hand, or the young woman who follows a few steps behind. Three-year-old Emanuel wants to give Emilia the money because the young woman, Rebeca, has told him that the old woman is very poor and needs their help.

"And there is something else you can give her," Rebeca has also told Emanuel. "Even more important than money, you can give her

Jesus." Emanuel loves Jesus and he knows that Jesus loves him. Emanuel has never seen the woman before, but she looks kind.

"Repeat after me," he tells her, after handing her the donation. "Jesus, please come into my heart. ..."

Emilia is so surprised that a little boy would give her a gift of money and then want to pray with her that before she has time to think, she hears herself repeating Emanuel's little prayer. But then the strangest thing happens. Immediately she feels more optimistic. She feels loved.

Emanuel is thrilled as only children can be. He had watched his parents pray with other people to find Jesus, but this was the very first time he had been the one to lead the way.

Emilia wants to get to know Emanuel and Rebeca better, so she invites them to her humble apartment and insists on cooking something for them. They become good friends.

Emanuel goes back to visit Emilia from time to time, sometimes with Rebeca, and sometimes with his mother, Pricilla. Each time they take Emilia and her sister some food and a little money. Each time they talk with them about Jesus and pray with them. Jesus is now Emilia's best Friend too.

This winter will be *much* better. •

LIVING THE LIFE

Nyx Martinez

IF YOU WERE A HIGHLY PAID ARTIST, worked for a popular music group and multimedia recording company, had just landed jobs in music video production and radio show hosting—if you were nineteen and already making a name for yourself—would the tough and sometimes sacrificial life of a full-time Christian volunteer appeal to you more?

When God called me to greater dedication and service for Him, it took me three years to say yes and actually do what He was asking of me. I had found a comfortable and respected place in life, and I had no desire to give that up.

But for three years, like a recurring dream, God kept speaking to my heart. My parents were full-time Christian volunteers, so I had been born into a life of service and had been happy there for sixteen years. Then the world pulled me away.

I had had so much of a good thing that I stopped valuing it. The good thing was my service for the Lord, which, little by little, I left on the shelf with other things I thought I'd outgrown. I suppose I had dreamed the typical teenage dream—to be successful, to be different yet admired, to be recognized, to be *somebody*. I also craved excitement and financial security. For some reason, all those things came easier to me than they do to most teenagers, and that's when I began to forget my true blessings—God's blessings of genuine happiness, satisfaction, and fulfillment that I had found

in helping others.

Those years of indecision were full of ups and downs that further threatened my faith. Bigger and better job opportunities came my way, including an offer for me to help script, produce, and be in the cast of a feature-length film. Meanwhile, my personal life unraveled. In pursuit of self-satisfaction, I made decisions that hurt others. Good friends watched me change for the worse and turned away. As I gained more of the world, I lost more of what really mattered.

Empty, ashamed, and angry with myself, I finally had to choose between two lives. Part of me wanted to quit—to give up on myself and give up on God—but something else implored me to hold on. God never gave up on me.

In January 2002, I boarded a plane from my native Philippines to Thailand, where God had called me to serve. It took faith and courage to say, "Okay, today I'm going to stop living for the world." But the happy ending to my story is that God gave me the courage and faith I needed. Today, I'm the happiest I've been in a long time because my life is in good hands—God's hands! And, yes, His "paycheck" covers all my living expenses, with fringe benefits the world could never match.

So, am I successful? Excited? Secure? Making a difference? Yes! I am all those things and more. I am a full-time follower of Jesus, living the life—and proud of it! •





A: DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE in the workplace can put a strain on your nerves and on your ability to perform in your job, especially when jealousy over position is a factor. But it doesn't have to be that way.

It takes time to build new relationships of mutual trust and respect, and you may have to work at it. As frustrated and threatened as you may feel, you

- Concentrate on finding contentment in giving your best, regardless of what others say or do.

- Keep your cool. "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1).

- Sincerely compliment all your coworkers, but especially those whom you feel threatened by.

ANSWERS TO **YOUR** QUESTIONS

Q: I'VE BEEN STRESSED-OUT AT WORK OVER RELATIONS WITH A NEW COWORKER. HE IS TALENTED AND AMBITIOUS, BUT BEHAVES AS THOUGH HE'S JEALOUS OF MY POSITION. I FEEL THREATENED AND DON'T KNOW HOW TO REACT TO HIS AGGRESSIVE TEMPERAMENT.

can be sure that persistent kindness will pay off in the end.

It's like the story of a man who moved into a community where a notoriously disagreeable and contentious old man lived. When the newcomer to the neighborhood was warned about the old man's temperament, he answered, "If he disturbs me, I will kill him!" His statement reached the ears of his ill-tempered neighbor who had, in various ways, already begun to torment the new settler. But every offensive action was met with kindness until at last the cantankerous old man was overwhelmed by the kind words and deeds of his new neighbor. As a new friendship began to blossom, the old man admitted, "I was told that you said you would kill me, but I didn't expect you to do it *this way!*"

Here are a few practical tips that can help you improve your relations:

- Pass on the credit to others at every opportunity. If someone gives you a tip or corrects a mistake before it causes a problem, or when someone thanks you for your good work, share the credit.

- Make friends with coworkers on a social level, even if just over a cup of coffee out of the office.

- Take time to listen to others. Show interest in their situations and be sympathetic.

- If you're in a position to improve or change things at work, ask your coworkers for suggestions that would help their work to go better.

- Laugh at others' jokes.

- Most of all, ask the Lord for insight into your coworker and for plenty of His love to be able to handle him or her. His love will spread encouragement and tolerance that will lift up others and cause them to respond in kind. •

PRAYER

If the life and love a Christian experiences seem far from you, it may be that you haven't yet received Jesus into your heart and accepted His gift of eternal love and life. If that is the case, you can do so right now by inviting Him in. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door [of your heart] and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in" (Revelation 3:20). Simply pray the following prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank You for dying for me, so I can have eternal life. Please forgive me now for every wrong and unloving thing I have ever done. Wash away all that, and help me to do better. I need Your love to fill and satisfy my heart. I want the life of heavenly happiness You have for me—here and now, and in Heaven hereafter. I open the door of my heart and ask You, Jesus, to come in. Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer. Amen.

COMING NEXT...

Put God on the Spot!

The Lord loves to precipitate a crisis. He sometimes lets things happen to make us pray and believe Him for the answer. He wants us to be specific and take a definite step of faith by making specific requests and expecting specific answers. Specific prayer puts both God and us on the spot, but it is also a sign of our faith, which pleases God.

Some people are afraid to ask the Lord for definite answers to prayer because they might not get them—and that might be a reflection on their spirituality, or even hurt God's reputation. "What if He doesn't answer prayer? What will people think of our faith and our God?" They generalize in order not to be pinned down, in case they don't get an answer.

But God *loves* to be put on the spot because He knows He'll never fail. He'll never fail as long as we meet the conditions, exercise our faith in prayer, and obey His Word. And then when He answers, it will be a testimony to His faithfulness, as well as to our faith in expecting a specific answer. So tell Him exactly what you need or want done, and He won't fail!

—D.B.B.

To find out how to put more power behind your prayers, don't miss the next issue of *Activated*.

FEEDING READING

How to talk your way to better personal relations



Positive, wholesome speech has a great effect on others.

Proverbs 15:1a

Proverbs 25:15

Ecclesiastes 10:12a

To avoid criticizing and gossiping about others, dwell on their virtues, not their shortcomings.

Philippians 4:8

The Lord blesses us when we do not speak badly of others.

Psalms 15:1,3

1 Peter 3:10

Avoid getting drawn into arguments.

Proverbs 17:14

Proverbs 26:4

Philippians 2:3

Try to not be offended when others speak badly of you.

Ecclesiastes 7:21–22

Psalms 119:165

Don't speak evil of them in return.

1 Peter 2:21–23

1 Peter 3:9

Let your good works disprove their lies.

Titus 2:7–8

1 Peter 2:12

1 Peter 2:15

1 Peter 3:16

Special chapter: James 3

FROM
Touch
JESUS
others
WITH
with My
LOVE
love

Before you go to sleep at night, think about My love for you. If you'll count your blessings, you will see how I have blessed you in so many ways, through so many things and so many people. Each of these is a token of My great love for you, personally.

I ask that you also think about how much love you have given. What did you do today to show love to others, so they too could be touched by My love? If you followed the leading of your heart, that little nudge I gave you each time I put an opportunity to show love in your path, you were also touched by My love. You can't give love without receiving a touch of My love in return. That's why it can be truly said that it is more blessed to give than to receive, that more love is found in giving love than in receiving love. If others don't return your love, I repay; and if they do, you receive doubly, from them and from Me.

How much love do you give? Remember that I have no mouth but yours and no hands but yours to touch others' hearts and draw them to Me. Give and it shall be given to you. As much as you have done it to others, you have done it to Me.

