



# @ctivated

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

## **BE A POSITIVE PERSON**

How to overcome negative  
mindsets

## **DEPRESSION**

A survivor tells her story

## **THE MEASURE OF FAITH**

It's easier to come by than  
you think

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## *Personally speaking*

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Who doesn't get discouraged from time to time? It usually starts over some small thing—a little disappointment or mistake, a careless remark by a friend or coworker, or a negative thought about ourselves or our situation—but how it grows! Pretty soon *everything* seems wrong and our outlook becomes so clouded that we want to quit. We wish we could find a hole, crawl into it, and shut out the world. The next while can be quite difficult, but it usually isn't long before something or someone comes along to help us get back on track, thank God.

The real problem is, the longer we continue in that negative vein, the deeper we sink and the harder it is to pull out of it. Worse yet, if we habitually give in to feelings of discouragement, it can lead to depression, and depression is a killer! It destroys the lives of those who are overcome by it, and it can have a devastating impact on loved ones and others who can't help but be affected.

If you are prone to discouragement or depression, there are two things you need to know: First, discouragement and depression are linked to not only your emotional state, but also to your spiritual state; second, there is a sure and simple antidote—a way out!

Just as God is constantly trying to influence you to make the right decisions and have the right mindset, sinister spiritual forces are constantly trying to bring you down. Learning to recognize the negative broadcasts from the dark side is half of the battle against discouragement and depression; learning to take action against that negative input by tuning in to the Lord's positive broadcasts and believing and doing what He tells you is the other. Victory guaranteed!

Keith Phillips

A handwritten signature of Keith Phillips in a cursive script. The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the printed name.

For the *Activated* Family

# The camel's nose

ACCORDING TO A BEDOUIN FABLE, an Arab and his camel were crossing the desert. Night came and the temperature dropped. The Arab put up his tent, tied his camel to it, and went to sleep.

The temperature dropped further, and the camel asked the Arab for refuge from the cold.

The Arab was adamant. "There is only room in the tent for one!"

The camel was quiet for a few minutes, but soon asked again. "Please, Master! Just my nose. If I could just put my nose in your tent, it would keep me from freezing out here."

The Arab reluctantly agreed.

The camel's nose became warm, but after a while the temperature went down even more. The camel woke the Arab and asked, "Please, can I just put my forelegs in the tent? They are very cold!"

Again the Arab reluctantly agreed.

"Only your forelegs, nothing more!" So the camel nudged his forelegs into the tent and they became warm.

After some time, the camel woke the Arab again. "Master, I must put my hind legs in the tent. Otherwise I fear that they will freeze and I won't be able to finish our journey tomorrow. What good is a camel with frozen hind legs?"

So the Arab agreed once more, and the camel moved his hind legs in. But since there was only room in the tent for one, the Arab was forced to move out into the cold, where he barely survived the night.

Depression is like that camel. It just needs a small opening to get started—usually a thought that seems to have some basis in truth or reason—but if you entertain that thought, pretty soon it and a whole lot more like it move in and take over. Don't let the camel get its nose inside your tent. •

## WHO ARE YOU LISTENING TO?

THE LORD IS NOT THE ONLY ONE TRYING TO GET YOUR ATTENTION or direct your thoughts, so you must learn to watch your thoughts and make sure you're on the Lord's channel. "Test the spirits" to make sure that what you're hearing in your mind or spirit is from the Lord (1 John 4:1). If your thoughts cause you to be discontent, bitter, dissatisfied, unhappy, or critical of others, they are not from the Lord but from the enemy of your soul, the Devil.

One of your best protections is to fill your mind and heart with positive, encouraging, strengthening, and faith-building thoughts from God's Word. Memorize Scriptures and quote them to yourself and even to the Devil when he tempts you with negative thoughts. Give no place to the Devil (Ephesians 4:27).

—DAVID BRANDT BERG (D.B.B.)

BE A

positive

PERSON

BY MARIA FONTAINE

“JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). His life-changing power is the same as ever, and it’s there for us. If we avail ourselves of it, we can *all* have it. Jesus can help anyone overcome anything if they want it badly enough.

It is as we continue to become more and more immersed in Jesus and His Word, earnestly wanting His best and asking Him to work in our lives day by day, that we grow deeper in Him and truly become the new people He wants to make us (2 Corinthians 5:17). Our old mindsets pass away as we are transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). The Lord doesn’t make one big change in us and that’s all; He continues to work in our lives—*if* we do our part.

“Ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. . . . Let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (James 1:6–8).

If our mind isn’t focused on the

Lord and His Word, if we’re going back and forth between listening to encouraging things the Lord says to us and the Devil’s lies and fears and worries and discouragement, then we’re definitely double-minded and therefore we’re not going to receive anything from the Lord—at least not in respect to whatever we’re wavering about. If we’re wavering in our faith, then of course we’re not trusting the Lord.

The Lord says He’ll keep us in perfect peace if our mind is focused on Him and we set our affections on things above (Isaiah 26:3; Colossians 3:1–2). The Psalmist David said, “My heart is steadfast, O God” (Psalm 57:7). If our mind is focused on Him, our heart is steadfast on Him, and our affections are set on things above, then we’re going to be firmly connected to Him and won’t waver between the Lord’s Word and the Devil’s lies and fears.

So it is possible to live above worry and fear and discouragement! Of course, you’re still going to have those first little “fiery darts” of temptation (Ephesians 6:16)—the Devil’s

going to continue to try to whisper them in your ear—but you don't have to entertain his thoughts! It doesn't have to keep going on.

“Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). As soon as you realize you're being tempted, if you refuse to give in to him at that point, then you will have the victory. It may take a few minutes or even a few hours to fight the battle, but that doesn't mean you've “given place” to it (Ephesians 4:27). As long as you're fighting it in your spirit and mind, you're doing what the Lord says and you're bound to get the victory. Memorizing a few key Scriptures and quoting them to yourself and the Devil at those times increases your faith and helps to defeat him. The Devil can't stand God's Word!

But if you don't put a stop to discouraging thoughts by resisting them when they first come, if you *yield* to that discouragement, it's going to be a much harder fight for you to pull out of it. You may think it's hard to get rid of those initial feelings, but you'll find that if you don't fight discouragement or worry or fear initially, if you give the least place to it, it can get much worse. The battle you have to fight in the beginning is nothing compared to the one you'll have later if you let yourself fall into one of the Devil's traps!

Fight that discouragement from the beginning. Don't yield to it! You can't help but have negative thoughts sometimes, and you can't help but have initial feelings of depression sometimes. The Devil can just fire them at you sometimes through no fault of your own, but you don't have to accept them.

We are not supposed to operate according to our feelings; we are



*As we continue to become more and more immersed in Jesus and His Word, we grow deeper in Him and truly become the new people He wants to make us.*



supposed to operate by *fact*—faith in the facts according to God’s Word. We walk by faith and not by sight—or by feelings (2 Corinthians 5:7). So what you need to do when the Devil attacks with those negative feelings is fight them with the Word. Fight that oppression in the power of the Spirit with the Word of God, and don’t let it overcome you! Don’t give in to it!

Of course we’ve done wrong things. Of course we’ve made mistakes! Of course we’re sinful and full of faults! So what?! That discouragement is from the Devil, so fight it! And if you’ve already made a mistake, you’re just going to make things worse by getting discouraged over it. Two wrongs don’t make a right, and it’s certainly not going to help matters one bit for you to pile one wrong on top of another by allowing yourself to be lured into the Devil’s trap of discouragement.

So whenever you feel like, “Oh, I deserve to feel discouraged,” fight

I couldn’t reason it out. I had to claim the Word. I had to give it all over to the Lord and let Him take care of it.

Then I got that verse, “They that observe lying vanities”—worthless or empty falsities—“forsake their own mercy” (Jonah 2:8 KJV). If we allow ourselves to get discouraged, we are observing lying vanities, and if we do that, it says we then “forsake our own mercy.” In other words, we miss the offer of the Lord’s mercy, help, faith, and grace, as well as the Lord’s miraculous power that can free us from the Devil’s discouragement.

When we turn away from looking at the Lord and we begin to look at circumstances and problems, then we can’t even see the Lord anymore because we’re so busy looking at the mountains! When actually, the Lord says if you have your eyes on Him and have just a little faith, no larger than a mustard seed, you can say to the mountain, “Be removed!” and it will be cast into the sea (Mark 11:23).

*Of course we’ve done wrong things. Of course we’ve made mistakes! So what?!*

that thought! You do *not* deserve to feel condemned or discouraged! You’re not to give in to those feelings!

I was hit with discouraging thoughts the other night. I stopped and prayed against those thoughts, but for a while afterwards I was still being barraged by depressing feelings. So what I did then was claim the Word. I said, “Lord, You promised that if we will cast our burdens on You, You will see us through” (Psalm 55:22). I had to fight it with the Word.

Fears, worries, and discouragement can seem like mountains, but for us, those things should have no place in our lives. When we are living close to Jesus and operating according to His Word, we live in the world of the spirit. It’s a miracle world where the obstacles and problems we encounter can’t stop us. They are dispelled through faith! Looking to the Lord and His Word is what gives us that kind of faith. •

# Saved from

# the Black Pit of Depression

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EVERY DAY I WISHED IT WERE MY LAST. I was only 20, had been married for one year, and had just given birth to our first child, a boy. My doctors told me I was experiencing postpartum depression and that it would go away, but instead it got worse. I didn't want to take care of my baby. All I could think about was death, blood, and pain. I feared the light of the sun, nighttime, even rain. I was aggressive and critical and emotionally unstable. My relationships with others became strained. I cut myself off from all love.

This had actually started years earlier when I was a shy, fearful girl who worried that she wouldn't be liked. Now I had everything that most young women want—a loving husband, a beautiful baby, a house, a car, a comfortable life—but I was miserable. The habits and mindsets we form early in life can lead us into some very dangerous places.

Little by little, things started to get better, at least on the surface. Almost three years passed, and I gave birth to our second son. This time it was

easier. Five more years passed, during which one thing was always clear: My children were a light in the midst of my darkness.

Then symptoms of my depression intensified and I began showing signs of schizophrenia: fear, claustrophobia, seeing visions of Hell, and hearing evil voices in my mind. My depression made me feel so condemned that I was easy prey for any negative thought. From my point of view at the time, the more negative the thought the better. I was like a sponge, just waiting to absorb darkness. I suffered extreme weight loss and was constantly in a dangerous state of mind. I couldn't hide anymore; I had to do something.

I sought help from psychologists and psychiatrists who prescribed strong medication, but the more I sought medical help, the worse I got. I also tried self-help groups, hypnosis, and everything else that money could buy. Nothing brought me peace.

God bless my husband, who stood by me through all of this and never

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*The more  
I sought  
medical  
help, the  
worse I got.*

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Giovana (Jô) Pellizzaro

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*All of our relatives told my husband he should put me in a mental institution, but he refused. Instead, he prayed every day for me to get better.*

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stopped loving me. All of our relatives told my husband he should put me in a mental institution, but he refused. Instead, he prayed every day for me to get better. He knew that if I went into an institution I would never return.

Besides having to support our household, my husband had to take care of our

two small children and help me keep the house reasonably clean. I couldn't drive in the mental and emotional state I was in, so I couldn't shop. He had to do that too. I couldn't cook without burning everything. It's a wonder that I never burned the house down!

I also suffered side effects from all the medicines I was taking: dizziness, dry mouth, nausea, migraine headaches, muscle spasms, and intestinal cramps. Eventually I even lost my motor skills. I walked through the house leaning on the walls for support and would sit staring at the dirty laundry or the sink full of dishes, unable to move or do anything about it.

Only Jesus could save me—and He did! I met some members of The Family. They were actually our neighbors, but I hadn't paid much attention to them. Their faces were too bright and positive. It was more light than I could stand. They bothered me, but

at the same time they fascinated me. I see now that what kept me away was a fear of being noticed, for fear of being loved.

Then one day a couple from The Family met my husband at his office. "What you are telling me is good," my husband said, "but my wife is the one who really needs to hear this." So he brought them to our house.

I doubted that they were truly there to help me or *could* help me, but I was in such a bad state that I had to either take it or leave it. I took it, thank God! I took Jesus because He first took me (1 John 4:19). That was a turning point, but I wasn't instantly over my problems. I was like a dying baby that had to be nursed back to health, little by little. My new friends from The Family did that for me.

Day after day they encouraged me to read the Bible and other faith-building publications, like this magazine you're reading now. It was humbling at first, but I learned to ask for prayer when I was having problems. I became especially good friends with one woman. She was patient and loving, but didn't beat around the bush. We read the Word together or talked on the phone every day. I talked about everything that had been bothering me for years. Eventually I found what I had been looking for all along, even though I hadn't known what that was. Jesus put a new song in my heart and on my lips.

Of course the spiritual battle was strong and still is sometimes, because the Devil was furious at losing me. He kept tormenting me with nightmares, bad mental pictures, and sordid thoughts. One night I became so confused and desperate that I got on my knees and prayed, "Jesus, I need



to know the truth! I can't take these attacks anymore. If You aren't the answer to my problems, if You aren't going to deliver me from all this darkness, I would rather end my life. Either transform me or take me!"

Then I opened my Bible and my eyes fell on Psalm 116. Those words seemed to have come straight from my own heart! From that moment on, I didn't believe the Devil's lies! I expected the Lord to act on the promises of His Word. I began calling The Family daily to ask where in the Bible I could find a certain verse in order to fight the Devil with the Word—and it worked! For years I had submitted to the Devil's lies, but the Word exposed and confounded him.

The Devil had never given me any answers, of course; he had only condemned me and left me in the pit of depression. But as I claimed Bible promises each day and asked the Lord to give me grace and strength for the things I needed to do, things got easier and the Devil had less and less to accuse me of. Each time he would tempt me with a depressing thought, I would quote verses that proved he was lying, like Jesus did when the Devil tempted Him.

It took me almost two years to climb out of that black pit of depression, but with Jesus' help I am now a different person! There is no principle in His Word that doesn't work, no promise that He doesn't keep. I can't tell you how much I love Him! I can think of nothing else but Him and how wonderful and powerful He is! The Lord answered my husband's desperate prayers, just like He answers all of our prayers. •

GIOVANA PELLIZZARO IS NOW AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE FAMILY'S WORK IN BLUMENAU, BRAZIL.

**PRAYER FOR THE DAY** Jesus, it's only Your love that makes me what I am. Your acceptance chases away the negative thoughts I sometimes get about myself or my life. I don't deserve to have You, but I also don't know what I'd do without You. All I can do is bask in Your love and acceptance. I'm like a flower, lifting my face to the warmth of the sun each morning. Your love is like that rising sun, bestowing fresh mercies on me each morning. Thank You, Jesus! •

## PSALM 116:1-9

1. I LOVE THE LORD, BECAUSE HE HAS HEARD MY VOICE AND MY SUPPLICATIONS.
2. BECAUSE HE HAS INCLINED HIS EAR TO ME, THEREFORE I WILL CALL UPON HIM AS LONG AS I LIVE.
3. THE PAINS OF DEATH SURROUNDED ME, AND THE PANGS OF SHEOL [HELL] LAID HOLD OF ME; I FOUND TROUBLE AND SORROW.
4. THEN I CALLED UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD: "O LORD, I IMPLORE YOU, DELIVER MY SOUL!"
5. GRACIOUS IS THE LORD, AND RIGHTEOUS; YES, OUR GOD IS MERCIFUL.
6. THE LORD PRESERVES THE SIMPLE; I WAS BROUGHT LOW, AND HE SAVED ME.
7. RETURN TO YOUR REST, O MY SOUL, FOR THE LORD HAS DEALT BOUNTIFULLY WITH YOU.
8. FOR YOU HAVE DELIVERED MY SOUL FROM DEATH, MY EYES FROM TEARS, AND MY FEET FROM FALLING.
9. I WILL WALK BEFORE THE LORD IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING.



## ENDTIME INSIGHTS

## The 70 Weeks of Daniel, Part 2

THE NINTH CHAPTER OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL contains one of the most outstanding prophecies in the Bible, and was received by Daniel in about 538 BC. What makes this prophecy so remarkable is that it is a specific time prophecy that deals with both the first and second comings of Jesus Christ. As explained in Part 1 of this series, the portion of that prophecy that had to do with Jesus' first coming (69 of the 70 "weeks") was fulfilled with absolute accuracy. This part explains the portion that has to do with His second coming—specifically the last seven years before His return. All but one of the 70 "weeks" of Daniel's prophecy had to do with Jesus' first coming. The "week" mentioned twice in verse 27 is the remaining "week"—the remaining seven years.

*He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and*

*in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation [offering] to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (Daniel 9:27 KJV).*

The word "he" refers to "the prince who is to come" (verse 26), and since the Antichrist is also referred to as "the prince of the covenant" in Daniel 11:22, we know that the "he" in this verse is the Antichrist.

What is a "covenant"?—It's a pact, a solemn agreement. The signing of this covenant will mark the start of the Antichrist's seven-year reign and the last seven years before Jesus returns.

This covenant is mentioned several other times in the Scriptures. Because it is called a "holy covenant" in Daniel 11:28,30, it appears to be some sort of religious pact, at least in part—quite

possibly one that tackles the thorny issue of religious coexistence between Jews, Muslims, and Christians, and by which Jerusalem will be declared an international city with free and equal access guar-

anteed to people of all faiths. It appears that this will also clear the way for the Jews to finally be able to rebuild their Temple on Jerusalem's Mount Moriah and reinstitute animal sacrifices on its altar.

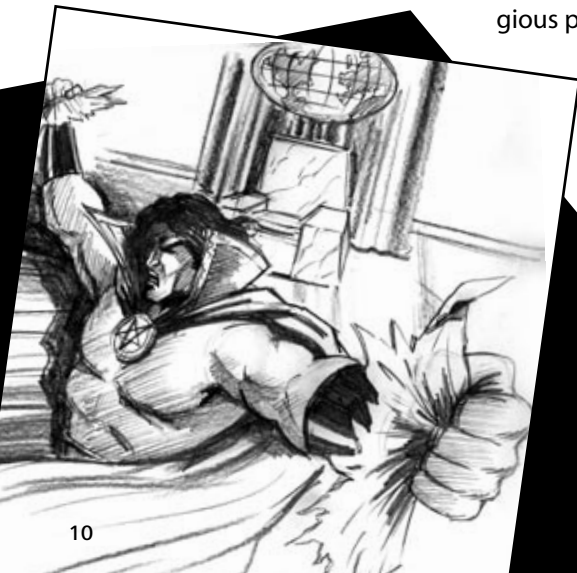
But in the "midst of the week"—or three and a half years into the seven-year covenant period—the Antichrist will renege on the agreement:

*And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate (Daniel 11:31 KJV).*

This is a key Scripture because it tells us that at this point, three and a half years after confirming the seven-year covenant, the Antichrist will forcibly enter the Jewish Temple (the "sanctuary of strength"), which would have to have been built by then, as it does not exist now. He will put an end to the daily sacrifice and place in the Temple area something called the "abomination of desolation."

Over 500 years after Daniel gave this prophecy, Jesus referred to it in His dissertation on the signs of His second coming and of the end of the world as we know it:

*When you see the "abomination of desolation," spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy*



place [the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem] ... 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).

So what exactly is this “abomination of desolation”?—Jesus said we would see it “standing” in the Jewish Temple. Daniel 11:31 says the Antichrist’s forces will “place” it there. Daniel 12:11 says that it will be “set up.” We find out in the book of Revelation that the abomination of desolation is an image of the Antichrist himself (Revelation 13:15), who the Bible also refers to as “the Beast” (Revelation 13:1–7).

The Antichrist’s chief aide, the “false prophet,” will be behind the making of this image, which will be able to “speak” and somehow have power to cause those who refuse to worship it to be killed (Revelation 13:11–15). This power will be through the electronic monetary system that the Antichrist government will enact. People will be forced to submit to and worship the Antichrist, because under this system no one will be able to buy or sell without a personal account number, the “mark of the Beast,” in their right hands or foreheads (Revelation 13:16–18). But some will refuse to worship the Antichrist or receive his mark, and the Lord will take care of them (Revelation 12:6,14).

Back to Daniel 9:27: The Antichrist will rule “even until the consummation.” The Hebrew word that is translated “consummation” here comes from the root *kalah*,

which can mean either “complete” or “consume, destroy utterly.” It is unclear which meaning is intended—whether it refers to the last

aspect of the prophecy being fulfilled or the utter destruction of the Antichrist and his forces—but both fit because they happen at the same time. The prophecy will be completed and the Antichrist destroyed shortly after the second coming of Christ, in the wrath of God and the Battle of Armageddon. Verse 27 continues: “and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.” The wrath of God will be poured upon the Antichrist and his followers, but meanwhile God’s saved children will be safely home in Heaven, enjoying the marriage

feast of the Lamb, who is Jesus (Daniel 12:11–12; Revelation 14:9–10; chapters 15–16; 19).

The first 69 “weeks” happened just as Daniel’s prophecy said they would. We have no reason to doubt that the last “week”—the last seven years before Jesus’ return to earth— will not also happen as predicted here in this amazing passage.

Are you ready for Jesus’ return? If not, you’d better *get* ready. Things are really moving! Take Jesus now! •



The Hebrew word translated “weeks” in the King James Version and some other Bible versions is *shabuwa*, for which *Strong’s Greek/Hebrew Dictionary* gives this definition: “literal, sevens, i.e., a week (specifically, of years).” So the 70 weeks of Daniel’s prophecy are actually 70 times 7 years. The fulfillment of the first part of the prophecy, which predicted the exact year of Jesus’ crucifixion, confirms that “seven years” is the correct interpretation of “week” in this passage.

He has killed eight people already.

On Thursday he is scheduled to kill another  
—or be killed.

It's Tuesday. **IT'S TUESDAY.**

# The Professional

*chance encounter*  
You meet him in a chance encounter.  
What will you say to him?

*By the time  
he was 20,  
he had served  
a five-year  
prison term  
for murder.*

A LIGHT RAIN IS FALLING as Family members Jan and Kristina board their bus. It's a two-hour ride to the nearest station where they can catch a train home.

Kristina settles into a seat by the window but quickly discovers that the reclining feature of the chair offers only one position: fully reclined. Jan fares even worse. He takes a seat next to a young man in a denim shirt and slacks, who appears to be quite drunk—not an unusual sight in 1998 Russia. Nearly 10 years after the fall of Communism, dreams have given way to drink.

As the bus pulls out of town, Jan strikes up a conversation.

"Here, have a beer. *Pahzhalsta!*" Misha replies as he reaches into his bag and pulls out two beers. One in each hand, Misha bangs and rubs them together, then taps the bottom of one bottle against the top of the other. The bottom bottle pops open and erupts in a spray of foam. He hands it to Jan.

All the beer has loosened Misha's tongue. By the time he was 20, he had served a five-year prison term for murder. Now he is 24 and has a family—a wife and

a daughter—whom he loves dearly. He makes \$10,000 a month.

Jan asks the obvious. “How does a young man like you make so much money when the economy is in such a mess?” He’s not prepared for the grisly answer.

“I’m a professional boxer,” Misha explains. “But each match is actually a fight to the death, with no rules. The only audience is a handful of Mafia bosses.”

Misha has already killed eight people, but he’s worried about Thursday. His next opponent outclasses him as a fighter and outweighs him by 25 kilos. Misha has already sustained numerous injuries, and his doctor doesn’t give him much longer to live—even if he survives Thursday. He sees no way out.

Worst of all, Misha is certain that God could never forgive him for what he’s done. Is it too late for Misha? Can anyone be too bad for Jesus?

*If only I could get him to pray and receive Jesus,* Jan thinks.

Jan begins to relate the message of salvation, how God has saved even worse sinners.

Misha, now in deep depression, keeps repeating how bad he is. His speech is slurred. He drinks until he passes out.

Jan is left with a sinking, frustrated feeling. He came so close to helping Misha, but failed. As the bus bounces on, Jan and Kristina don’t know what else to do but pray for him.

The bus begins to slow, and the driver calls out their destination. Misha is still sleeping. Jan tries to wake him. If only they could talk a little more. If only Jan could lead him to the Prince of Peace. But Misha is out cold.

Jan and Kristina gather up their things and step off the bus. The rain has stopped, leaving behind what look like

puddles of tears in the streets. Life is so hard for many people.

Jan and Kristina walk a short distance, still trying to shake their sad experience on the bus. They need to catch the next train, but don’t know where to go. They stop to check the signs.

Suddenly Misha appears behind them and says hello as he’s about to pass. Kristina and Jan are so surprised that for an instant they’re uncertain about what to do. Kristina realizes she can’t miss this chance. She reaches out and grabs Misha by the arm, looks him in the eye, and says, “God loves you, Misha! You know He wants to help you!”

“*Da, da*” (“Yeah, yeah”), Misha mumbles.

“Look, Misha, God sent His Son, Jesus, so that you can have a new life. Pray with me right now to ask Jesus into your heart.”

Misha repeats a salvation prayer after her. His new life has begun.

Jan and Kristina miss their train and have to wait several hours for the next one, but Misha didn’t miss what may very well have been his last chance to receive Jesus.

Sometimes people have messed up their lives so much that they think they are beyond help, but no one is beyond the reach of God’s love and forgiveness. Not even a professional killer. Not even Misha.

If you haven’t yet met the Man who has the power to give you eternal life and transform your present one, you can do so right now by praying the following prayer:

*Dear Jesus, I know I’ve done wrong and don’t deserve Heaven, but I accept Your sacrifice on the cross for my sins and receive Your love, forgiveness, and salvation now. Please come into my heart and give me Your gift of eternal life. Thank You for hearing and answering this prayer and for being with me from this moment on. Amen. •*

*Misha’s new life has begun.*

# The measure of faith

BY VIRGINIA BRANDT BERG



A FRIEND OF MINE ASKED THE MANAGER OF A SUPERMARKET if he had ever cashed a bad check for a stranger. “No, I never did,” he said, “because I never look at the check—I look at the man. If I can trust the man, I take his check.” What a lesson in faith!

In Hebrews 10:23 we find these words: “He who promised is faithful.” Who makes the promises in God’s Word?—God does. Look at the Maker of the promises, and then there can be no question as to their absolute validity. God’s Word says, “Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace; thereby good will come to you” (Job 22:21).

To know God is to be sure that He keeps every promise He has made. Abraham knew God and “did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith ... being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform” (Romans 4:20–21).

Some people think of faith as something very mysterious and far beyond their reach. Others think of faith as a gift that some people are born with; some have it to a great degree, but others don’t. Both of those are misconceptions.

“God has dealt to each one a measure of faith” (Romans 12:3). *Everyone*

has been given a measure of faith, but many people don’t *use* their faith. If you don’t use your faith, it becomes flabby, just like muscles when you don’t use them. For faith to grow, you’ve got to keep exercising it.

Faith is not gained through scholarly analysis; it’s “not to the wise and prudent” that the deepest secrets of God are revealed (Matthew 11:25). It’s to those who dare to take God at His Word.

Those of childlike faith push right through all the arguing and doubting. They put the intellectuals to shame as they reach out and take from God the fulfillment of some promise that the intellectuals don’t seem to be able to grasp.

Faith operates in an entirely different realm from our five senses, but some of the same principles apply. When we taste something sweet, we have evidence that it is sweet because our taste buds tell us so. No matter what anyone else says, we know it’s sweet because we have evidence.

In the spiritual life, faith conveys to us evidence of spiritual truths, just as our five senses convey evidence of physical things. Just as we accept what our five senses tell us, we must accept as evidence what our faith tells us. When we do, our faith brings that

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# PUT GOD TO THE TEST! PROVE HE EXISTS!

A lot of people who say they don't believe in God aren't really atheists. Maybe they simply haven't made a final decision because they haven't had a chance to know the truth. But even if they have doubts or questions that need answering before they will be convinced, if they're sincere and really want the answers, if they really want to know, God will show them.

So even if you don't believe in God or the Bible or anything else, you can put God in a test tube and

prove He exists—and *you* are the test tube! You just need to put God inside of you and see what happens. If you will sincerely pray, "God, if there is a God out there somewhere, show me. Reveal Yourself," He will! Once you admit the possibility by doing that, then you're giving God a chance. There's a tiny spark of faith, and God will honor that faith by letting you see and feel and know the proof. He may not do it immediately or in the way you expect, but sooner or later in some way He will.

God loves faith. He loves us because we believe Him. Once you begin to believe, then God will prove Himself in many ways—by answers to prayers and miracles, and by changes in your life. —D.B.B.

thing to pass and makes it real to us. "As you have *believed*, so let it be *done* for you" (Matthew 8:13).

Take God at His word. When the troubles and trials come, instead of letting them grow and grow, get your Bible, find a promise, and claim it in Jesus' name. Here is one that is surely too big for me to comprehend, but I often claim it: "Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13). And here's another one: "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know" (Jeremiah 33:3).

No wonder the Word calls these promises "exceedingly great and precious" and tells us that through them we can become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). All you need is simple faith!

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Just as an unseen force of attraction holds the material world together and the unseen principle of confidence holds the financial world together, so the unseen law of faith is the underlying force that holds the spiritual world together.

—V.B.B.

## FEEDING READING

### *The cure for discouragement and depression*

*Discouragement is a spiritual attack and must be fought in the spirit.*

2 Corinthians 10:4–5  
Ephesians 6:11,16–17  
James 4:7

*Getting our minds on Jesus and eternity puts things in proper perspective.*

Romans 8:18  
2 Corinthians 4:16–18  
Hebrews 12:2–3

*Fill your heart and mind with God's Word.*

Psalms 94:19  
Psalm 119:28  
Psalm 119:59  
John 8:31–32  
John 15:3

*Count your blessings and think positive thoughts.*

Psalms 42:5  
Psalm 103:2

Isaiah 26:3  
Ephesians 5:18b–19  
Philippians 4:8

*Speak faith and praise the Lord for deliverance.*

Psalms 9:1  
Psalm 35:28  
Psalm 66:8,16  
Psalm 107:2

*Forget yourself and your own problems by getting busy helping others.*

Isaiah 41:6  
Proverbs 11:25  
Luke 6:38

*Scriptures to claim when hit with discouragement:*

Deuteronomy 31:6  
Psalm 31:24  
Psalm 142:3a,7a  
John 14:1  
1 Corinthians 10:13

# Consider the sparrow...



*My eye is on the sparrow as she flutters about in search of food and a place to nest. I guide her to a resting place, and she trusts Me. She doesn't worry about what she doesn't have. She just goes about her day and trusts that I will provide her needs. How small and numerous are the sparrows, and yet I know and watch over them all. I remember and care for each one.*

*You, My child, are far more precious*

*to Me than all the sparrows combined, and if I show such concern for these small and seemingly insignificant birds, will I not also care for you?*

*I know your troubles and I understand your fears. I am here to give you faith and answer your prayers, but I need you to trust Me as the little sparrow does.*

*You don't see her fluttering about in a panic, worried and flurried; she is calm and peaceful, knowing that My eye is on her and I will care for her as My own.*

*My eye is on you, too, and I stand ready to help. So trust Me, won't you? Let Me do the worrying!*