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CHANGE YOUR LIFE | CHANGE YOUR WORLD



HEALING IS FOR YOU

That's God's promise!

ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

This girl is living proof

A LIFESAVER IN TIME OF DESPAIR

An HIV/AIDS survivor's remarkable story



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What do the psalmist David and cancer survivor and seven-time Tour de France cycling champion Lance Armstrong have in common?—More than you might realize. Let me explain.

Shortly after I received Jesus and began studying the Bible, a friend asked, “Have you ever noticed how the book of Psalms is really a book of praise? King David begins psalm after psalm by unloading his troubles on God—and he had plenty of them! But then David remembers God’s love and power and goodness, and he begins dwelling on that. By the end of the psalm, David is no longer bemoaning his predicament, but he is praising God for the victory he knows is coming. It usually doesn’t say what God did to get David out of that particular fix, but we know that He did, because none of those troubles were David’s final undoing, as he had feared.”

So what does that have to do with Lance Armstrong?—He made a discovery similar to David’s, and he explains it this way: “Without belief, we would be left with nothing but an overwhelming doom, every single day. And it will beat you. I didn’t fully see, until the cancer, how we fight every day against the creeping negatives of the world, how we struggle daily against the slow lapping of cynicism. Dispiritedness and disappointment, these are the real perils of life, not some sudden illness or cataclysmic millennium doomsday. I knew [then] why people fear cancer—because it is a slow and inevitable death; it is the very definition of cynicism and loss of spirit. So, I believed.”

If you face seemingly unbeatable odds, take heart. Like Armstrong, whose Tour de France victories all came *after* his battle with cancer, God may just be getting you ready for bigger and better things—probably not cycling history, but very likely some new “personal best” with God’s help.

KEITH PHILLIPS

Keith Phillips
FOR THE ACTIVATED FAMILY

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A MADE-TO-MEASURE **MIRACLE**

OVER 20 YEARS AGO, SHORTLY AFTER I FIRST BEGAN VOLUNTEERING WITH THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL, a coworker named David noticed that I was wearing a special shoe with a built-up heel on my right foot. This was because my right leg was 1.5 cm (nearly 3/4 in) shorter than my left. Also, my spine had assumed an S-shaped curve to compensate, and normal daily activities caused aches and pains. In fact, I was medically classified as disabled.

After I explained this to David, he told me he had suffered from the same problem until a Christian doctor had prayed with him and the Lord had caused his leg to grow out on the spot! Immediately I was reminded of a verse from the Bible—“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8)—and faith was born in me that the Lord could also do a miracle for me.

“Let’s pray for your leg when we get home,” David suggested. I could hardly wait!

Back at home, I sat on a straight-backed chair and extended my legs in front of me. David held my feet as we praised the Lord and he said a prayer, asking the Lord to grow my short leg to the length of the other one. A few seconds later I felt my short leg getting warmer, followed by a strange sensation, as though it was becoming elastic.

Then I watched in amazement as my leg actually grew. Bare skin began to show between the cuff of my trouser leg and the top of my sock, and the bare area continued to grow for a few seconds, after which I noticed that my heels were level with each other.

“Keep your feet still,” David said. “You’re moving them around.”

“I haven’t moved a muscle,” I replied.

When I stood up, it felt like the floor was raised underneath my right foot. The rest of my body wasn’t used to having both legs the same length! Looking down, I saw that my right trouser leg, which had been altered to compensate for my shorter leg, was now too short. In the mirror, I could see that my shoulders were even, whereas before my right shoulder had hung down. When I put on my shoes, they were useless. It felt as though my right foot was standing on a block. I had to go buy new shoes and trousers, but I wasn’t going to complain, as I no longer had any back pain!

Jesus had healed me instantly and completely, and I’m still healed. He *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever! ■

MICHAEL NEWCASTLE IS A VOLUNTEER WITH THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN ENGLAND.

HE SAID A PRAYER, asking the Lord to grow my short leg to the length of the other one.



Healing is for you!

THE DAY OF MIRACLES IS NOT PAST! God is still alive, well, and working just as powerfully as ever amongst those who trust in Him. He says, “I am the Lord, I change not” (Malachi 3:6), and Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

To heal is a small thing for the God of all creation. If He created the body, He can certainly fix it! He says, “I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?” (Jeremiah 32:27).

This is only one of many promises of healing that can be found in the Bible—promises that you can claim as your own and expect Him to fulfill. This is also where your faith for His supernatural healing will come from. Faith comes, it grows, by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Faith is built on the Word, so read it prayerfully and ask God to strengthen your faith.

God not only *can* heal you, but He *wants* to heal you. A leper once came to Jesus and said, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” Jesus touched the man and said, “I am willing; be cleansed,” and immediately the man’s leprosy was cleansed (Matthew 8:2–3). He’s more willing to give than we are to receive. All He asks is that we honor Him with faith by believing His promises.

**GOD NOT ONLY CAN
HEAL YOU, BUT HE
WANTS TO HEAL YOU.**

Prayer power!

“The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up” (James 5:15). Prayer is powerful. When we pray, things will happen and things will be different. God *will* answer prayer. He promises, “If you ask anything in My name, I will do it” (John 14:14), and “No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly” (Psalm 84:11). You’ve got these and all of the other promises in the Bible on your side—“exceeding great and precious promises” (2 Peter 1:4)—so when you pray for healing or anything else, bring those promises with you to remind God of His Word. Doing so is a positive declaration of your faith, which pleases Him.

He says, “Prove Me now, and see if I will not pour out such a blessing that there will not be room enough to hold it” (Malachi 3:10). You usually don’t see the blessing—His healing, in this case—the instant you begin praying for it. You have His promises in His Word, but how do you know He’s going to keep them? You’ve got to *prove* Him. You’ve got to put those promises to the test. You’ve got to challenge God. He even tells us, “Concerning the work of My hands, you command Me” (Isaiah 45:11). So hold Him to His Word. *Expect* an answer. He has promised it. Put your faith in the Lord, and claim Scriptures. He is bound by His Word, so remind Him of His promises, cling to them, and never doubt for a moment that He is going to answer—and He will. He has to! He wants to! Trust Him!

Jesus says, “Whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them” (Mark 11:24). “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything

according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him” (1 John 5:14–15). All we have to do is believe His promises, pray, and expect Him to answer.

The “test of faith”

One of the greatest of healing factors is faith—knowing that God loves us and is concerned about our health and happiness, and that He is going to take care of us no matter what. But He often tests our faith before He heals us, because He wants to see if we’ll believe His promises and continue to love and trust Him even if we think we may never get healed. Before He honors us with healing, He wants to see if we will honor Him with faith.

Ongoing illnesses are sometimes a severe test, and sad to say, they sometimes end in bitterness, complaining, and even holding a grievance against God because He doesn’t heal the way the person wants Him to or thinks He should. “God doesn’t love me, He doesn’t care, because He won’t heal me!” That sort of reaction is the opposite of faith, and “without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

God can and wants to heal us, but we must first make the decision that we want what *He* wants and knows is best for us, without reservations. We must also do our part by first correcting any physical or spiritual problems that may be contributing factors. Then you can pray and trust God for your healing, and you’re bound to get results! ■

“CERTIFICATE FOR LIFE”

I am learning so much from our HIV/AIDS support group. Most of us have much for which to be thankful, and yet we complain about minor things which happen in our lives. Some members of our support group believe that it was only when they found out that they were HIV-positive that they started to live, because now they treasure every day. Some say, “That’s when I received my ‘Certificate for Life.’”
—Rachel Scott, AIDS counselor from the Family International in South Africa

all things are possible

By Paulo and Rosa Rodrigues

ANA WAS TWO YEARS AND EIGHT MONTHS OLD WHEN WE FIRST NOTICED IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR HER TO PUT WEIGHT ON HER LEFT FOOT.

It was almost undetectable at first, but grew worse by the day. When neither her orthopedist nor her pediatrician could diagnose the problem, they ordered a CAT scan.

The test results and prognosis were devastating. Ana had three malignant tumors in her brain—medulloblastoma, a very aggressive type of cancer, already in the fourth and final stage and already affecting the bone marrow in various parts of her body. The doctors urged us to have great courage, but to prepare for the worst, as this cancer usually advances very rapidly in children. Our world went dark.

Ana was admitted for emergency surgery. Due to the size of one of the tumors, we were told that she could slip into a coma at any moment. The surgery lasted seven hours and didn't go well. It was only possible to remove one of the tumors—the largest. How much longer would we have Ana with us?

The doctors suggested chemotherapy to slow the inevitable growth of the remaining tumors and to give Ana

more time. We showed Ana's records to other doctors, and they confirmed that chemotherapy was our only recourse.

The next twelve months were a daily fight for Ana's survival, with many side effects from the chemotherapy treatments and subsequent surgeries. Eventually the progression of the cancer slowed, and the treatments were suspended.

Six months later, one of the tumors began growing rapidly again, and Ana underwent another emergency operation. It was getting harder and harder to restrain the cancer.

As Ana's condition continued to worsen and the doctors offered no hope, we needed a miracle from God—the kind we'd heard that other people had experienced when they were beyond medical help. How wonderful it would be, we told each other, if God were to do such a miracle for Ana! For a year and a half we had pleaded with God to heal Ana, but He hadn't answered. Why? What were we doing wrong? We had to find out!

WE GAVE
OUR
DAUGHTER
TO THE
LORD, FOR
HIM TO
TAKE CARE
OF AS ONLY
HE COULD.

We began studying the Bible and some books and audio materials that we had gotten from a member of the Family International, and the more we studied, the more our faith grew. We had been praying, but we hadn't been praying in full faith, truly expecting the answer. *That* was why our prayers had fallen short! We had both believed in Jesus from childhood, but He had always seemed far removed from our present world and its troubles. Now, as we searched the Word of God, we began to comprehend that Jesus truly is alive and working today.

We dug deeper and found other promises: "To you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings" (Malachi 4:2). "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

If God could do what medical science couldn't, how could we avail ourselves of His help? Once more we found the answer in the Word: "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23). "Whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will come to pass, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them" (Mark 11:23-24).

We memorized and clung to His promises with all our strength, and we claimed them in prayer. "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you" (John 15:7).

We gave our daughter to the Lord, for Him to take care of as only He could. We talked to Him about everything, asking for the treatments to go well and seeking His guidance for the difficult

decisions we faced each day, but we left the outcome entirely in His hands.

As soon as we gave our daughter to Jesus, when we surrendered completely to His will, Ana's physical condition started to improve and the aftereffects of her last surgery—infections and fevers—started to clear up. God took care of every aspect of her life until the day, four years later, when another scan showed no tumors whatsoever. The cancer was gone!

The only explanation the doctors could offer was that "the sickness had behaved abnormally," but we know that God had intervened in answer to our desperate prayers. "You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13).

Six years after our ordeal began, Ana is a God-blessed child—happy, healthy, and with faith the size of the world. This was without a doubt the most difficult time of our lives, but it taught us that there is a living and all-powerful God, a God for whom there are no impossibilities, a God who stands ready to work on behalf of all those who trust Him and claim His promises as their own. "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23). ■

Paulo and Rosa Rodrigues are Activated subscribers in Portugal.



*Ana
with
a new
hairdo,
July
2005*

A lifesaver in time of despair

—HOW SALLY CONQUERED HIV

By Iris Richard

“SALLY AGALLO HAD REACHED THE END OF HER TETHER,” said an article in *Drum*, an East African weekly magazine. “So one day she boarded a ferry from Mombasa and travelled far into the ocean, where she leapt overboard.”

“Amazingly,” Sally told *Drum*, “instead of sinking, I floated. I could hear clearly as people screamed that someone had thrown herself in the ocean. Desperate to sink, I forced myself under the water, but something held me up—very surprising, as I am a non-swimmer. It was during this time that God spoke to me and informed me that He had plans for me. He would not allow me to drown myself.”

Sally had wanted to end a life that had become unbearable. Instead, through the miracle-working power of God, she was transformed into a new woman. God had other plans.

I had met Sally two years earlier, in 1998, when she was working as a secretary for an insurance firm. We became friends, and I visited her at her office regularly. She loved the *Activated* magazines and *Get Activated* booklets from the start, and also subscribed to the daily reading program that is offered on the *Activated* Web site. The *Activated* material was always an inspiration, she said. Even so, she wasn't prepared for the troubles that were about to befall her.

She lost her first baby four days after giving birth, and a short while later she and her husband both tested positive for HIV. “All I could see was death staring me in the face,” Sally said. When she and her husband came to our house with the sad news, my co-workers and I prayed with them and encouraged them to look to the Lord and His Word for the faith, courage, and strength they needed to beat the odds.

They did well for a while, but eventually Sally became very ill with TB, herpes in her eyes and on her face, and other ailments. Her weight plummeted, and she was forced to quit her job. That was when she tried to take her own life.

When we heard about it, we prayed even harder for her, and the Lord answered. She had stopped reading the Word as she slipped into the depression that led to her suicide attempt, but afterwards it came to life again for her and gave her the will and strength to recover.

The Lord has since led Sally to encourage AIDS patients in Nairobi, where she now lives. “All that I had learned through the Word helped me to pull out of the downward spiral that was about to kill me,” she said recently. “The faith that I found there turned



Sally (center) with Iris (right) and Anisa (left)

the tide. The Lord helped me realize that I could lead a happy, meaningful life despite being HIV-positive, and I knew that He could do the same for others—even those with full-blown AIDS.”

Sally had such an impact on desperate and dying patients in the AIDS ward of Nairobi's Mbagathi Hospital, praying with them, reading to them from the Word, and giving personal words of encouragement, that an international NGO has employed her as a community worker.

Sally was tested recently for HIV, and no virus was detected. Because she has been taking antiretroviral drugs, the virus could be hiding. But if the next test in six months is also negative, Sally can stop taking the drugs. She will have been healed of HIV infection! The day of miracles is not past!

When former U.S. President Bill Clinton visited Nairobi to offer help through his foundation, Sally was chosen to speak on behalf of the 1.2 million Kenyans who suffer from HIV-AIDS. Her speech was aired internationally on CNN, as well as on news channels countrywide. Her message: Don't give up! God may have other plans.

Iris Richard is a full-time volunteer and Sally Agallo is an Active member of the Family International in Kenya.



for better health, be positive

It has long been established that psychological factors can contribute to disease. Now more and more doctors are emphasizing that the reverse is also true: Positive attitudes, especially positive spiritual attitudes, can enhance health.

Our bodies are designed to respond vibrantly to positive thinking, and praising God for His goodness, even when things go wrong, is the ultimate form of positive thinking. When we do that, we initiate a chemical reaction in our brains that actually makes us feel better physically. But that's just the beginning, because at the same time, in the spirit, we're pleasing God by telling Him that we love Him and appreciate His blessings in spite of the negative, and that we have faith that He'll work things out and continue to take care of us. King Solomon didn't know the science behind the be-positive principle, but he understood the result. "A broken spirit dries the bones, but a merry heart does good, like medicine" (Proverbs 17:22). ■

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Thank You, Jesus, that there's always something that I can praise You for. Even when it seems like everything's going wrong, You direct my attention to something good and help me bask in the knowledge of Your ever-present care.

Even when I'm sick I can find hope in Your promises of healing and thank You for being with me during my sickness. When my body's weak, You often strengthen my spirit through extra time spent with You, and I can thank You for that. It's always invigorating to feel Your love, because then I know everything is going to be okay. ■

SICKNESS

By Virginia Brandt Berg

WHEN AN OLD FRIEND VISITED ME IN MY HOME—a man who had been a noted writer, teacher, and radio broadcaster—I was shocked at his physical state. It had been some years since I’d last seen him, and in the meantime he’d had a number of strokes. He walked with much difficulty, and could hardly speak.

After he left, someone else who had also been visiting at the time remarked, “What do you suppose he did, for God to let such a thing happen to him?” The question struck me as rather harsh and judgmental, and as I thought about it later, I realized that this is actually a fairly common reaction. When someone suffers from a debilitating sickness or accident, others often wonder what sin the person committed to bring such a punishment upon them.

But is that necessarily the case? I believe that in many cases a better explanation can be found in the Bible’s book of John, chapter 9: “As Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him’” (John 9:1–3).

We also seem to forget that many of the greatest examples of faith down through the ages have been those of

people who, like Job, had their faith purified in the furnace of affliction. Job said, “God knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10). God sometimes uses sickness or some other hardship to draw us closer to Him or get us back on track if we’ve gone astray, but when He does we have this promise: “Afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (Hebrews 12:11).

It’s the “afterward” that God is interested in. Afterward, many times there is a great deliverance. It may not always come in the form we have prayed for or expected—it may not come in the form of physical healing—but if we let God accomplish His purpose through it, we’ll come out better for it. “In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:37). “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

People often think of God in terms of judgment, retribution, and punishment, whereas the Bible tells us that “God is love” (1 John 4:8). He deals differently with each of us and very often His ways are past finding out (Romans 11:33), but we always have the assurance that whatever He does, He does in love. ■

GOD KNOWS
THE WAY
THAT I TAKE;
WHEN HE
HAS TESTED
ME, I SHALL
COME FORTH
AS GOLD





LOVE IN ACTION

If we have real love, we won't face a needy situation without doing something about it. We won't just pass by the poor man on the road to Jericho. We will take action like the Samaritan did.

Many people today, when faced with the suffering of others, say, "Oh, I'm so sorry, how sad!" But compassion must be put into action. That's the difference between pity and compassion: Pity just feels sorry; compassion does something about it.

Love can seldom be proven without tangible manifestation in action. The need for real love is a spiritual need, but it must be manifested physically in works: "Faith working through love" (Galatians 5:6). "Someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith *by* my works" (James 2:18).

People often can't understand or believe that you truly love them unless you show them in some visible, tangible way that puts your words into action and your faith into effect.

—DAVID BRANDT BERG

A PICTURE OF LOVE

BY RACHEL SCOTT

IN JESUS' TIME LEPERS WERE TREATED AS

OUTCASTS. So were others who were ill or disabled, due to the same fears and prejudices. But what was Jesus' response? He was full of compassion, healing, and acceptance—not condemnation, fear, or rejection. "All those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them" (Luke 4:40). Jesus set an example for us to follow.

People with HIV or AIDS often experience intense feelings of anger, depression, loneliness, guilt, grief, discrimination, and fear of being unloved or abandoned. They need to be given love and hope, and to find peace with God. They need friends like the man in the following story...



A man visited a friend who was dying of AIDS. He tried to comfort her, but it seemed hopeless.

"I'm lost," she said. "I've ruined my life and every life around me. I'm headed for Hell. There is no hope for me."

"Who is that?" the man asked, pointing to a framed picture of a pretty girl on the woman's dresser.

The woman brightened. "She's my daughter—the one beautiful thing in my life."

"Would you help her if she was in trouble? Would you still love her, no matter what?"

"Of course I would!" the woman exclaimed. "Why would you even ask such a question?"

"Because I want you to understand," explained her friend, "that God has a picture of you on His dresser." ■

RACHEL SCOTT IS A FULL-TIME VOLUNTEER AND AIDS COUNSELOR WITH THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

The

wonders

of our

immune system

SOMETIMES WE GET SICK, but if we try our best to follow God’s health rules, most of the time we can stay healthy in spite of constantly being under attack from myriad harmful viruses and bacteria. For that daily miracle we can thank God for creating our immune system.

The immune system is our front line of defense in an amazing war taking place in our bodies every day. Like a modern army, our immune system is made up of many “soldiers” doing specific jobs. White blood cells search for specific invaders that they have been taught to recognize and destroy. Some cells envelop, some shoot, and others eat invaders. Some white blood cells produce the needed weapons, some command, some police, and some carry messages, but all work together in synchronized harmony to protect us. If we didn’t have these internal soldiers to protect us from the mass of enemy invaders, we wouldn’t survive for long. This is one more proof of God’s design and care of His creation.

Researchers have found that the brain contains messenger molecules that are produced by the immune system, enabling the brain and the immune system to “talk” to each other.

This may help explain why our physical condition is closely related to our mental

and emotional state. If we are happy and free from stress, our immune system is boosted and is better able to fight sickness. Studies have shown that subjects exposed to stress had sharply increased rates of infection. Other habits that can be harmful to our health include criticalness, arguing, sarcasm, making excuses, and denying responsibility. Avoid these like the plague!

On the other hand, a pleasurable experience a day can keep the doctor away. Positive feelings have been found to have at least three health-enhancing side effects.

Enjoyment, even in small doses, can cause an increase in antibodies and thereby boost the body’s protective immune system for hours.

Positive feelings also stimulate the spleen, producing an increase in red blood cells and a corresponding increase in the number of cancer-fighting cells. Amazingly, these cells can destroy cancer cells one by one, leaving normal tissue untouched—unlike chemotherapy, which cannot distinguish between normal and malignant cells.

Certain types of pleasure also increase levels of a compound in the body called immunoglobulin A (IgA), which binds to bacteria and triggers the immune system to destroy them. IgA is the first line of defense against colds and flu.

We can help the immune system ward off invaders by living a healthy lifestyle—by eating, sleeping, and exercising right.

What we eat greatly affects our health. Our immune system is a hungry army that needs quality fuel to run well. Give your immune system a boost by decreasing your intake of sugar and refined carbohydrates and by increasing your intake of garlic, onions, red fruits, red and green vegetables, and live-culture yogurt. These contain natural antibiotics, antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals—all of which are important to immune system functioning. Fish, notably fish high in Omega 3 fatty

acids, produce potent reactions that help protect against a long string of diseases.

For babies, eating right means drinking breast milk, if possible. Breast milk contains many components essential to a baby's developing immune system. Lots of physical contact and affection help as well.

Researchers found that depriving healthy men of sleep for four hours, from 3 AM to 7 AM, caused an average 28% drop in killer cell activity, a key marker of immune-system strength. The levels only returned to normal after a full night's sleep.

Exercise is another great way to bolster your immune system. There is evidence that people who get a good workout almost daily can add nearly four years to their life spans. Exercise improves sleep, the ability to handle stress, and mental outlook. It also helps people feel better and have more energy, which contributes to a better love life.

And in addition to the big three—eat right, sleep right, and exercise right—it's been proven that laughter, sunshine, melodic music, and giving and receiving love all help our bodies by giving us energy and strengthening our immune system.

Sometimes we can't avoid sickness, but ill health is often caused by our own carelessness or neglect. Give God and your immune system some cooperation. Take care of your body by making wise lifestyle choices, and you'll be healthier and live longer.

And don't forget to thank the One who thought up all of this. He did it for *you*, because He loves you and wants you to be able to enjoy life to the full. "I will praise You [God], for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well" (Psalm 139:14). ■

CURTIS PETER VAN GORDER IS A FULL-TIME VOLUNTEER WITH THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN THE MIDEAST.

If you haven't yet met the One who has the power to make you happy and whole in body, mind, and spirit, you can right now by praying the following prayer to invite Jesus into your heart and life.

*Dear Jesus, thank You for giving Your life for me. Please forgive me for the wrong things I've done, come into my heart, and give me Your gift of eternal life. Teach me more about Your love, and fill me with Your joy.
Amen.*

FEEDING READING

HEAVENLY HEALING

God can heal.

Exodus 15:26
Deuteronomy 7:15
Psalm 103:3
Psalm 107:20
Jeremiah 30:17
Malachi 4:2

God wants to heal.

Lamentations 3:33
Psalm 22:24
Hebrews 12:13

Nothing is too serious for God to heal.

Jeremiah 32:27
Psalm 34:19
Matthew 19:26
Mark 9:23
Luke 1:37

Healing was part of Jesus' earthly ministry.

Matthew 4:23–24
Matthew 9:35
Matthew 12:15

Jesus' healing power is still at work today.

Malachi 3:6
Mark 16:17–18
James 5:14–15
Hebrews 13:8

FINISH THE RACE

WE CAN FIND INSPIRATION FROM THE LIFE OF JOHN STEPHEN AKHWARI, as told in Bud Greenspan's book *100 Greatest Moments in Olympic History*.

When the winner crossed the finish line in the 1968 Mexico City Olympic marathon, officials thought the race was over. Then, an hour later, John Stephen Akhwari, a runner from Tanzania, entered the stadium. Bloodied and bandaged from a fall, he limped painfully with every step.

As Akhwari made his way around the track, the crowd began to cheer loudly. When he crossed the finish line, you would have thought by the roar of the crowd that Akhwari had been the victor.

Later, when asked why he had not dropped out, Akhwari replied, "I don't think you understand. My country did not send me to Mexico City to start the race. They sent me to finish the race."

When you're bruised and bloodied by life, press on; your Creator did not send you here to start the race, but to finish it!

Keep going, no matter what the cost. Keep fighting, no matter what bruises you get. Keep running, no matter how many times you stumble and fall. Your cuts and bruises and scrapes and scars are medals of honor in the Lord's sight, signs that you had the faith, courage, determination and commitment to keep going, even though it was tough! You may have fallen, but you refused to quit.

At the end of the race, you'll then be able to say like Paul did of old: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day" (2 Timothy 4:7-8). ■

VICTORY FROM DEFEAT

God sometimes allows such things as sickness, troubles, and problems to test and strengthen our faith, and to help us get even greater victories out of seeming defeat. Sometimes "bad" things happen just to keep us close to the Lord. Sometimes they happen to draw us closer to each other. Sometimes they happen to keep us humble. Sometimes they happen to make us pray. So even troubles and tribulations are good for us if we let them accomplish God's purpose.

"All things work together for good to those who love God" (Romans 8:28). God is not going to let anything happen to you, His child who loves Him, except what is for your ultimate good. So even though "many are the afflictions of the righteous" (Psalm 34:19), the Lord is going to deliver you out of them all, no matter how many or what. A-L-L, all! So the next time you're afflicted with sickness or other troubles, expect God to deliver you, just as He has promised to in His Word.

—DAVID BRANDT BERG



ANSWERS TO YOUR endtime QUESTIONS

By Joseph Candel

THE TECHNOLOGY NEEDED TO INSTITUTE THE COMING “MARK OF THE BEAST” ECONOMIC SYSTEM, as foretold in the Bible, is progressing rapidly. So is the media campaign that will help put it in place. As governments worldwide debate the use of microchips in national ID cards and passports, as RFID (radio frequency ID) chips gain more widespread use commercially, and as microchip implants in pets and even humans become more common, new questions are being asked and old debates are being reopened. This month’s question:

Could national ID cards be the mark of the Beast?

The British government has begun issuing passports containing biometric identifiers (such as iris patterns or fingerprints), and Parliament is debating a bill that would make national ID cards compulsory in 2008. Lawmakers in the U.S. and other countries may follow suit. These ID cards are not the mark of the Beast, as the Bible plainly states that bearers will receive the mark of the Beast in their right hands or on their foreheads.

“He [the Antichrist’s government] causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on [or “in”] their right hand or on [in] 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).

These ID cards are, however, preparing the way. The more people get used to some new government regulation, restriction, or provision, the more they tolerate it and eventually just learn to live with it. What may at first seem unthinkable and raise howls of protest, later becomes accepted by a few, then many, then most. And that’s how the Antichrist and his agents will capitalize on these compulsory ID cards to prepare the world for what’s next.

Once national ID cards become the norm in parts of the world where they were previously unknown, the next step will be to sell the public on the advantages of microchip implants over plastic cards—convenience, security, cost effectiveness, better law enforcement, and so on—and that it’s time to switch to the Verichip¹ or something similar. Once the Antichrist’s government makes the mark of the Beast mandatory (Daniel 11:31; Matthew 24:15,21; Revelation 13:14–18), what better way to carry it out than microchip implants? Our present currency-based economic system will then be obsolete, because the chip will be capable of linking electronically to everyone’s personal financial records.

As far as we know, national ID cards are not the mark of the Beast. Neither is the Verichip. Both of these are, however, precursors of the mark of the Beast. ■

¹ Verichip™ is a rice-size injectable microchip. It is a product of the U.S. company Applied Digital Solutions, and is already being used to monitor pets, convicts, Alzheimer’s patients, and children, and by the military, police, and fire departments for ID purposes. It is also being used in place of membership cards at some trendy nightclubs and resorts. These applications will be expanded, and other applications are sure to follow.



FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

Ever-Present Help

I don't want you to look at this sickness as something that I stand back and watch you go through—you there and Me here. It's never been like that, really, and I certainly don't want it to be like that now.

My heart breaks to see you in pain—not only the physical pain, but also the mental and spiritual attacks that come with it, the thoughts of helplessness and hopelessness, the despair. Please believe that I never allow anything to happen to you, one of My children who loves Me, that's not in some way for your good. Hang on to that promise.

I'm right here. I know it hurts, and I feel for you. I'm right here by your side. No, I'm not even that distant; I surround you, covering all the sore spots, soothing as only I can, and I won't leave you for an instant.

In times of pain, I will bring sweet relief. In times of distress, I will be your comforter. In times of doubt, I will fan your spark of faith. In your darkest hour, I will be your guiding light. In times of torment, I will be your safe haven. In times of emptiness, I will be your all-in-all.