

A person wearing a bright yellow dress is holding a branch with white flowers and buds. The branch is placed in a clear glass vase filled with red liquid. The background is a soft, warm yellow.

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CHANGE YOUR LIFE | CHANGE YOUR WORLD

NEW BEGINNINGS

A New Year's challenge

LIFE'S TESTS

Can weakness be a good thing?

BIG CHANGE COMING

An interview with God on
the Endtime

PERSONALLY SPEAKING



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I'm quite excited about my New Year's resolution for 2007, and I think it's going to work. No, I *know* it's going to work. It's got to, because I see now that my future hinges on it. "Think small."

That may seem like a contradiction of the usual New Year's refrain "Think big," but actually it complements it. I hit on "Think small" after a friend pointed me to an online article by Jim Rohn, "The Formula." Here are a few excerpts from that article that sum up the "think small" strategy:

Failure is not a single, cataclysmic event. We do not fail overnight. Failure is the inevitable result of an accumulation of poor thinking and poor choices. To put it more simply, failure is nothing more than a few errors in judgment repeated every day.

On their own, our daily acts do not seem that important. A minor oversight, a poor decision, or a wasted hour generally doesn't result in an instant and measurable impact.

Failure's most dangerous attribute is its subtlety. In the short term those little errors don't seem to make any difference. Since there are no instant consequences to capture our attention, we simply drift from one day to the next, repeating the errors, thinking the wrong thoughts, listening to the wrong voices, and making the wrong choices.

Now here is the great news. Just like the formula for failure, the formula for success is easy to follow: It's a few simple disciplines practiced every day. As we voluntarily change daily errors into daily disciplines, we experience positive results. (Source: www.affirmware.com.au/Sculptor-Private/the_formula.html)

What better way to further our major life goals than by determining to make better "small" choices, what better time to start than the New Year, and who better to help us make and stick to those choices than the One who made us and knows exactly what we need? With God *all* things are possible. "Think small."

KEITH PHILLIPS
Keith Phillips
FOR THE ACTIVATED FAMILY

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BUILDING

A LIFE

AN ELDERLY CARPENTER WAS READY TO RETIRE, and he told his boss of his plans to leave and live a more leisurely life with his wife. He would miss the paycheck, but he needed to retire. They could get by.

The contractor was sorry to see such a good worker go, and he asked the carpenter to build just one more house as a personal favor.

The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career.

When the carpenter finished his work, the employer came to inspect the house. He handed the front-door key to the carpenter. “This is your house,” he said. “It is my gift to you.”

The carpenter was shocked! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently.

So it is with us. We build our lives, a day at a time, often putting less than our best into the building. Then with a shock we realize we have to live in the house we have built.

If we could do it over, we’d do it much differently. But we cannot go back.

You are the carpenter of your life. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. Your attitudes and the choices you make today build your “house” for tomorrow. Build wisely!

—Author unknown

If you feel that you have made mistakes, taken wrong turns, even failed miserably at this or that, you’re in good company. Many of God’s heroes in the Bible did those same things, but they learned from their mistakes. And God came to them, sitting in the midst of failed dreams or disappointed hopes, and gave them a new reason to live. That’s what He can do when we give up on our own plans and projects and decide to try His. He gives us goals to help us grow and move in the right direction, and then He helps us attain them.

Give Him your heart and life, and let Him give you all the good things He has planned for you. The New Year is a great time to make a new start.

—Nana Williams

One’s philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes. In the long run, we shape our lives and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility.

—Eleanor Roosevelt

NEW BEGINNINGS

A New Year's Challenge

BY VIRGINIA BRANDT BERG



AS WE STAND BEFORE THE NEW YEAR, WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S IN STORE FOR US. But there's one thing we do know, and that is that we can leave the past behind with all of its cares, pains, heartaches, and mistakes. We can't undo one single act and we can't unsay one single word, but if we will give our grief and regrets to God, He can make this New Year a thing of joy and beauty. The Bible promises, "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord" (Romans 8:28)—even our past.

Every day of the past year is beyond our reach, and we should leave it there. God has the past in His keeping, and we should not go back and be tormented with regrets. It's sad how some people say they're trusting God, yet they worry about the blots and stains on the pages of their past.

Once we have turned to God and confessed our mistakes and wrongdoings and asked for forgiveness, then we must not go picking around in the past and bringing up those

things again. God says of your past sins, "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins" (Isaiah 43:25). If God doesn't even remember them, why should we?

The Bible calls the Devil "the accuser" (Revelation 12:10). He loves to accuse us about our past, because he wants to make us feel guilty and condemned. But God's Word says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). Rather than going back into the past and regretting this and that and weeping over things that we can't change, we should remember

God's comforting promise, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

I once read a poem that went something like this: "If I could find the road to yesterday, I'd write the page with cleaner pen and wipe out yesterdays." Well, I don't want to find the path to yesterday, because I can't wipe out anything! Only God can cover those mistakes of the past, and when He looks at us in light of the sacrifice that Jesus has already made, that makes all the difference! It isn't God's way to make us relive the past, and who wants to when the future is as bright as the wonderful promises of God?

When I think about the year that is set before us, I think about all of the promises in God's Word and about the wonderful things that can happen because those promises are unchanging, unchanging, and meant for each of us personally. With all of those promises, why would anyone want to go back and retrace the past, to walk the road to yesterday?

The cross of Christ, like outstretched arms, stands blocking the way to the past. Because Jesus has already paid the penalty for our wrongdoing, we can and ought to say with the apostle Paul, "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).

Forget those things which are behind! Forget them! Press onward and upward toward the goal and the prize! You can't make the sands in the hourglass run backwards, and even if you

IT ISN'T GOD'S WAY TO MAKE US RELIVE THE PAST, AND WHO WANTS TO WHEN THE FUTURE IS AS BRIGHT AS THE WONDERFUL PROMISES OF GOD?

had the wealth of the whole world, you couldn't retrace the path to yesterday, you couldn't go back.

What a pity if we carry the burden of the past when the Lord paid such a price to lift that burden and set us free! "Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe," as the old hymn so beautifully expresses.

A young man once came up to me after I'd spoken to a large group about that. He was an ex-convict just out of prison, and he couldn't believe that it was so easy, that God would cleanse his past if only he would confess his wrongdoings and ask Jesus to come into his heart and be his Savior. He kept talking about all of his wrongs. It was just too much for him to believe that God could forgive such an awful past, but that night he gave his heart to Jesus, and Jesus lifted that load. Jesus forgave that man and gave him freedom he'd never known. After that, the man never stopped talking about the mercy of God and how God had rid him of the torment of the past. He would often repeat the words of a hymn that he fell in love with: "My yesterdays so filled with guilt and shame, my yesterdays are gone, oh praise His name!"

Is there anything more wonderful than the miracle of forgiveness and the assurance of having our wrongdoing forgiven? This wonderful forgiveness is for all of us. Jesus died for all of us. All we have to do is accept His forgiveness and receive Him as our Savior. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). That's His unqualified, unbreakable promise to you.

✱

If you haven't met the One who can lift the burdens of your past and give you a bright future now and eternal life in the world to come, you can today. He stands meekly at your heart's door, waiting for you to invite Him in. Simply pray, "Jesus, please come into my life, forgive my sins, fill me with Your love, and give me Your gift of eternal life." □

Virginia Brandt Berg (1886-1968) was the mother of Family International founder David Brandt Berg (1919-1994).

happy *new day!*

By Ariana Keating



IN MOST COUNTRIES THE NEW YEAR IS CELEBRATED ON THE FIRST DAY OF JANUARY. Growing up in Europe, I thought everyone celebrated it then. But here in Cambodia, my home for the past three years, we get to celebrate New Year *three* times every 365 days.

First there is the international New Year on January 1, best known for late-night parties and morning-after hangovers.

Then there is the Chinese New Year in January or February. The year 2007 on the international (Gregorian) calendar is 4704 on the Chinese calendar. The Chinese New Year is a time to light firecrackers, visit relatives, and burn faux paper money to one's ancestors.

The most important New Year here, though, is the Cambodian New Year. During the two-week celebrations leading up to New Year, almost everyone returns to their ancestral birthplace to visit with relatives and to pay respect to their forebears. The celebrations span three or four days in what is mid-April on the international calendar. This is not only the most important holiday of the year, but also the only time that some people ever take off work—and *everybody* does. The bustling city in which we live becomes strangely quiet. Schools shut down, markets close, and the sea of traffic that normally fills its streets is absent.

The first day of Cambodian New Year, according to tradition, marks the inauguration of the new angels who come to take care of the world for a one-year period. People clean and decorate their houses and prepare fruits and drinks to welcome the angels into every home. Elderly people meditate or pray, children play traditional games, and singles look for that special someone to marry.

The second day is for offering gifts to elders. Many employers also give gifts to their employees, and people

donate money or clothes to the poor. In the evening, people visit temples to build mountains of sand and ask the monks for blessings of happiness and peace.

On the evening of the third day, the New Year festival ends with ceremonial bathing.

One thing that the three New Years have in common is that each is a time to evaluate one's life, set new goals, and resolve to do things better in the coming year. Here we have the special opportunity of not one but three special checkpoints each year.

Actually, every day can be a new beginning because every day is another chance to do things better. We may have some pieces to pick up from the previous days, but we can take heart in a promise found in the Bible: God's love and mercy are renewed every morning (Lamentations 3:22–23). So instead of saying "Happy New Year" once or even three times a year, we should say "Happy New Day" *every* day, because it's another opportunity to give life our best shot. Now *that's* something to get excited about! □

Ariana Keating is a full-time volunteer with the Family International in Cambodia.

Strawberries, Candles, and New Resolutions

By Saskia Smith

IT WAS A BRIGHT SUMMER DAY IN SOUTH AFRICA, and the old year was coming to a close. Thoughts had turned from Christmas celebrations to New Year's resolutions.

The farmhouse door clanged behind me as I went into the kitchen. My mother followed my gaze to a heaping bowl of strawberries on the table. "Yvonna brought those over," she said. "A gift from her family."

I found the generosity of our neighbors almost awkward. Our volunteer center occupied the largest and nicest house in the neighborhood. With our growing staff we needed the space. We had six young volunteers in training plus a lot of children, so this small farming community with its low rent and utility rates was perfect for our needs.

Yvonna was a teenager who lived two houses down. Like most families in the village, I knew hers had tended the strawberry fields behind their house for months. In the most celebrated strawberry-growing area in South Africa, they cultivated the plump ruby fruits in their off-hours to supplement their meager income. Yet every harvest, our neighbors came to our door with their arms full of strawberries.

Yvonna had been asking for Bible studies for some time, but we had been genuinely busy and kept putting it off. I sighed and resolved to get Yvonna started on those classes soon.

My family always celebrated New Year's Eve together, and close friends would come for a candlelight get-together. Each person, down to the youngest, would light a small candle from a large central one that symbolized Jesus. Then they would share the things they were most thankful for about the last year, and also their hopes and prayers for the New Year.

That night I publicly forgave a friend for a wrong that had made my life emotionally difficult for the past few weeks. It felt so good to get it off my chest that I wished I had done it earlier. Other people talked about wanting to do more for the



local community. We all agreed. The New Year was the perfect time to get more involved.

New Year's Day dawned bright and full of promise. But Yvonna was not there to see it. She had been killed in an auto accident shortly after midnight.

Everyone in our center was deeply affected by the loss of our friend. In the months that followed we found ways to comfort Yvonna's family, and the community was brought closer together. Many young people, especially, came to us with questions about life, death, and the spiritual realm, which we were happy to answer. Yvonna was already a believer, and I'm certain that from somewhere behind the scenes she has seen the positive effects of her passing and been gratified.

Each New Year since, as the fireworks dissolved in the New Year sky, I have thought about Yvonna and renewed my resolution to not wait for the "perfect" time to do the things that really matter. □

Saskia Smith is a member of the Family International in Taiwan.

LIFE'S TESTS



By Maria Fontaine

LIFE IS OFTEN LIKENED TO GOING TO SCHOOL, and that's a good analogy. God allows all sorts of things in our lives to test us, to see how we'll react to them, to teach us lessons, and to help us grow spiritually. He's hoping, of course, that we'll apply ourselves, take the lessons to heart, learn from them, and live up to our full potential. In short, life's tests are designed by Him to help us become the

people He wants to make us and knows we can be.

One of the things that God uses to bring us along, believe it or not, is our weaknesses. Everyone has their share of those. God allows them for different reasons, according to what He knows each of us needs and is best for us. Among other things, they teach us humility, patience, and other virtues; they teach us the power of prayer, which helps us to live closer to God and become more dependent on Him; and they help us to better understand others, thereby putting us in a better position to help them through their problems and tests.

Our weaknesses are meant to help us, and they do every time we learn from them. If you have a problem with being jealous, bitter, or overly sensitive, for example, the first step is to acknowledge that it is a problem, and the next step is to determine to do something about it, to overcome that weakness with God's help. Once

you take those two steps, it becomes easier for you to recognize the problem when it crops up—and therein lies the test. Will you resist the temptation or give in to it? And if you decide to resist it, will you tough it out, trying to overcome it in your own strength, or will you turn to God for help?

The right thing, of course, is to decide to resist it, and the smart thing is to ask God for help, because God

can even do things that are humanly impossible. The Bible is full of promises about that, promises like, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26), and “I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?” (Jeremiah 32:27). God can and wants to help you overcome your weaknesses, He wants to see you pass the tests, and He will help you if you ask Him to.

He'll help you, but He won't make it too easy by giving you the answers to a test in advance. That wouldn't be a test. In fact, overcoming serious or longstanding weaknesses is rarely a matter of passing a single test. It's more like taking a course. A student who wants to become proficient in a certain subject has to study hard and be drilled over and over, often taking a number of tests before the final exam. But after he passes the course, he no longer has to undergo those same drills or repeat the same tests. He has those lessons down pat, so further testing isn't necessary. He graduates from that grade or level and moves on to another. It's the same with the school of life.

Once you've applied yourself and passed a certain course, then God doesn't need to keep giving you the same tests over and over. He may occasionally pop a quiz on you as a refresher, but if you've already passed the course and retained what you learned, the refresher won't seem nearly as difficult or demanding as the original test—just difficult enough to help keep you up to date and your skills sharp.

Once you've made major progress in overcoming one weakness, then He can teach you other things or strengthen you in other areas. When you graduate from one grade or level to another, the work in the next one is usually a little more difficult, but you will have gained

new abilities that will help you respond to that new challenge and you'll continue to make progress.

It doesn't matter whether the test is great or small. What's important to God is your willingness to accept each test as it comes and to trust that He knows what He's doing in bringing it along. He understands your heart. He understands what you need to keep growing. He understands what your spirit needs, and He knows exactly how to nurture and strengthen it.

So the next time you find yourself struggling with some personal weakness, instead of giving in to it or complaining that life is too hard, take it as a challenge. Choose to learn from it, and you'll soon find yourself excelling in the school of life. □



THE “IMPOSSIBLE” CHANGE

By David Brandt Berg

IT'S NOT POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO CHANGE YOURSELF, but it's possible for God to change you by the miracle-working power of His Spirit. He'll do things you can't do!

This is what it means to become “a new creature” in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17 KJV). In other words, when someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand-new person. He is not the same anymore! Jesus coming into your life not only renews and purifies and regenerates your spirit, but it also renews your mind, literally breaking old connections and reflexes and gradually rebuilding it and rewiring it into a whole new computer system with a different outlook on life and a new way of looking at the world, with new reactions to nearly everything around you.

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

The Renewal Exam

By Erika Blečić

A SERIES OF TRAUMATIC LOSSES HAD LEFT ME ANGRY AT GOD. Alone, without any means of support, and with no hope in sight, I had tried to end my life. I regained consciousness in a hospital, where I spent the next few days recovering.

It was Valentine's Day, the first without my husband, and as I sat alone in a hospital lounge, I cried the only tears left in me.

A man and a woman walked past, and then stopped. "Wait here for a minute," I heard the man say. Then he walked back and with one finger lifted my tear-stained face ... and he kissed me on the cheek.

The man was a fellow patient with whom I had spoken briefly the night before. But why would this near-stranger give me a kiss? Obviously he didn't have ulterior

motives since another woman, presumably his wife or girlfriend, was watching. What had compelled him to reach out to lift me from my darkness? What had I done to deserve that?

After a few minutes I began to come to my senses. *I have received a wonderful gift, the gift of hope, and I need to share it with others.* With that thought I took the first small step to climb out of the deep pit into which I had fallen.

A few days later, after being released from the hospital, I looked at all that remained of my savings—just a few coins. The last food in my cupboard was a box of polenta and a can of tomato sauce. *It looks like it's going to be polenta with tomato sauce for the next three days, so I might as well cook it all at once,* I reasoned.

I had just finished cooking and was about to sit down to



eat when the doorbell rang. When I opened the door, there stood a young woman who looked to be on the brink of starvation. Beside her was a child of five or six and just as malnourished. The woman said that she was a refugee and couldn't find work.

She asked if I had some change I could spare, and my thoughts went to those few coins I had left. *How much good could they do her—or me?*

"Some change is all the money I have myself," I said, "so I know what it's like to be without. But I just made some polenta with tomato sauce. Would you like to join me?"

The mother and child timidly accepted, and we ate at my kitchen table. How I wished I could have offered them an enormous steak, grilled to perfection, instead of that polenta! Then



I remembered that someone had given me a chocolate bar a few days earlier, which I had tucked away for even harder times. I gave it to the child in exchange for a hug I will never forget.

When I found out that they lived nearby, I invited them to return. I couldn't promise full-course meals, I explained, but we would share whatever I had at the moment. With a smile and a handshake, they left. I haven't seen them since.

Three days later I saw a job offer in the newspaper and applied, even though I didn't have any credentials or prior experience for that job. Only a few minutes into the interview, I was asked one question I hadn't prepared myself for. "Would you

like to start tomorrow?" Before I could answer, a thought struck me like a lightning bolt. *Had those two strangers at my door been angels on a mission?*

I felt like I had not just passed a job interview, but an exam. First God had sent that man to show me that He loved and hadn't forgotten me, and then He had sent the mother and child to see if I would keep my promise to pass on that love and hope. When I did, He opened the floodgates of His blessings.

Continued...

Today Erika is happy and fulfilled in her work as a newspaper reporter, and just as happy in her "other work" of helping to spread God's love.

She began by sewing clown costumes for Family International volunteers, and now sometimes goes with them to give "clown therapy" to children at a local hospital. "It fills my heart with joy to see a small child, sick and separated from family and home, be lifted above the suffering and loneliness," she says. "All it takes is someone being willing to put on a red nose and sing a song or two." And those children aren't the only ones who have felt God's love through Erika. Seniors in the retirement homes she visits appreciate her friendship, concern, and listening ear. □

Erika Blečić is a member of the Family International in Croatia.

ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS



Q: LIFE SOMETIMES SEEMS TOO HARD, AND SOMETIMES IT SEEMS DOWNRIGHT UNFAIR. I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER IF GOD REALLY LOVES ME. IF HE DOES, WHY DOES HE MAKE LIFE SO MUCH HARDER FOR ME THAN HE DOES FOR SOME OTHERS?

A: God loves each and every one of us, including you, and He wants nothing more than for us to love Him back and live close to Him. He also has a loving plan for each of us that He knows will bring out the best in us and be best for us in the long run.

Unfortunately, the biggest obstacle He faces in carrying out that plan is our trying so hard to follow our own plans instead. We try to make something of ourselves—usually a very distant second best to what He wants to make of us—so He has to keep breaking and trying to remake us. He does this by allowing “bad” things in our lives to get us to the point where we recognize how much we need Him and are willing to turn things over to Him.

He works differently in each of our hearts and lives because we're all different and He knows what will best accomplish His purpose in each life. It's all to the same end, though: that we might learn beyond a shadow of a doubt that we are hopelessly insufficient in ourselves. Once we know this, then He has a chance to step in and give us the help that He's been trying to give all along.

He allows some people to have physical problems, hoping that they'll

see that they can't heal themselves and turn to Him. He gives others good health but lets them suffer some other loss, hoping that they'll turn to Him to fill that void. He gives some people prosperity, power, or recognition, but these often carry heavy burdens of responsibility that others may not see—burdens that are intended to cause the bearers to turn to God for help.

He has many ways of working in our lives, and things don't always seem fair or equal. But whatever He allows to happen to you, it's because He *loves* you. If God goes to the trouble of numbering the hairs of your head, as Jesus said He does (Matthew 10:30), He's clearly concerned about you. And if He's that concerned, surely He wants to make your every experience a step forward.

The next time you go through an especially hard time or life seems unfair, try *thanking* Him for it. That's contrary to human nature, but it's the best way in the world to tell Him that you've come to the end of your human resources, that you love Him no matter what, and that you're counting on Him to turn the latest “bad” situation to your good. You'll be amazed at what a difference that attitude will make. God will heap on His blessings. □

UPHILL GAINS

By David Brandt Berg

LIFE CAN BE A STRUGGLE AT TIMES. It takes faith and courage and a lot of fight. The trouble with some people is that they stop trying in trying times. They give up mentally and they give up spiritually. But the Bible tells us, “Men always ought to pray and not lose heart” (Luke 18:1), and, “Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart” (Galatians 6:9).

It’s amazing what faith can accomplish, especially if you’ve got not only faith but a lot of gumption and get-up-and-go. You’ve got to put some gumption into it. You’ve got to put some real “umph” into it! It’s been said that triumph is 10% “try” and 90% “umph!” The will is powerful. “The spirit of a man will sustain him ... but who can bear a broken spirit?” (Proverbs 18:14).

Strong faith and a strong will have many times overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles and handicaps. When you’re weak and incapable and insufficient, then Jesus has a chance to be strong and capable and sufficient in you. He says, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Jesus always has the victory for you if you’ll keep going to Him for help. So don’t give up too soon. Don’t quit just before the victory. Anything wonderful can happen in that little margin of time when you don’t give up but keep on believing and keep on praying.

It’s thrilling to look back and see your progress—to look back down that rugged mountain road you’ve just come over and to see that you’re really getting somewhere—but it’s even more exciting to look forward and up to heights you’re soon to attain and views you’re soon to thrill to if you keep climbing and don’t quit! □



FEEDING READING

Personal growth

WE MUST DESIRE TO LEARN AND APPLY OURSELVES.

Proverbs 2:1–5
Proverbs 18:15
Matthew 5:6
1 Corinthians 9:24–27

GOD’S WORD IS OUR SCHOOLMASTER.

Deuteronomy 6:6–7
Joshua 1:8
Job 22:21–22
Psalm 119:9
Psalm 119:98–100
Proverbs 6:22
2 Timothy 2:15
1 Peter 2:2
2 Peter 1:2–4

WE SHOULD PRAY ABOUT THE LESSONS GOD HAS BROUGHT OUR WAY.

Lamentations 3:40
Matthew 7:7–8
James 1:5

WE NEED TO PUT OUR LESSONS INTO PRACTICE.

Matthew 7:24–25
James 1:22–25

GODLY INSTRUCTION IS A SHORTCUT TO LEARNING.

Proverbs 4:13
Proverbs 9:9
Proverbs 19:20

LEARNING TAKES TIME, SO BE PATIENT.

Proverbs 4:18
Philippians 1:6
James 1:2–4



BIG

change coming

AN INTERVIEW WITH GOD ON THE ENDTIME

INTERVIEWER: *Here we are in the third millennium since Jesus was on Earth. People have been going on about the end of the world for around 2,000 years, and probably longer. Yet this old world just keeps plugging along. I think people have gotten a little tired of hearing about the end of the world.*

GOD: Just because they are tired of it doesn't mean it won't happen.

I think people picture the stereotypical doomsayer, someone a bit off his rocker, wearing a sandwich board sign that says, "The End Is Near." I think people can be excused if they disregard this kind of thing. Just because a kook or two says this, it doesn't mean that what they are saying isn't fairly close to the truth.

So You are saying that the end is near?

The end of the world as you know it, yes!

Please elaborate on the "as you know it." What is going to happen?

Do you want the good news or the bad news?

I am relieved to hear there are both. Perhaps if You just listed it sequentially, that would be best. Very well. There is a lot of detail, but for clarity and simplicity I'll just hit the highlights. As many would agree, the Earth has gotten into pretty bad shape. Its resources, especially water, are being used up at a rate that is not sustainable. So even if things were not heading for a climax according to the timetable that I set up at the beginning, something would have to be done. But because there is global disaster looming, not just ecologically but economically and militarily—a fact acknowledged in many quarters—these factors will help propel humanity into forming a united world government.

Like the United Nations.

No. The United Nations is just an organization with representatives from all nations but with little real authority—more or less a glorified debating society. What I am saying is that the nations will come together to form a world government that has the power to implement what it decides worldwide.

This sounds a bit far-fetched. Nations are not going to be that ready to surrender their sovereignty.

Nations already are. Many surrendered sovereignty over their economies long ago when they had to implement economic plans dictated to them by supranational institutions such as the IMF. Others, such as the nations of Europe, have surrendered parts of their sovereignty in order to form regional unions with other nations. So that bridge has been crossed.

Okay, say they do this. A united world government doesn't sound like a bad idea. At least it could put an end to wars, allow for equal distribution of resources, etc.

Don't kid yourself. Most wars in the world today are wars within nations, civil wars, and there is not a nation on Earth that doesn't exhibit great disparity between rich and poor. So all that talk about peace and equality being instituted if the nations of the world were united under one government of man is just hot air.

But we'll still get a united world government according to what You just said.

Yes, you will.

Every government, even a world government, has its head.

Exactly, and do you know who is going to be at the head of this one?

You?

Ha! No, not yet. The world is going to turn the reins of government over to a brilliant man who will command respect and allegiance from all.

A good leader for a change. Sounds like just the ticket.

That is what everyone—well, almost everyone—is going to say at first. But this man has a sinister secret. He is known by many names, but the one that is the most well known is “the Antichrist.”

That doesn't sound very flattering. Why would he want to call himself the Antichrist?

He doesn't. But I have called him that, and the many millions of Christians who are aware of his imminent arrival on the world stage will recognize him for who he is and will so label him.

With a name like the Antichrist, I suppose he must be the antithesis of the real Christ.

Exactly! And it doesn't take a lot to conclude that if he is the Antichrist, he must therefore be getting his signals from a very different direction than Jesus did. As Jesus was God in human flesh, so, in parody, the Antichrist will be the Devil in the flesh.

Why would we choose the Devil in the flesh to be our world leader?

Because humanity will be both duped and desperate. Most will not recognize him for who he is, but will rather see in him someone with the ability and clout to rescue the world from its desperate situation. He will have already proven his worth by sorting out some very difficult issues and will already be acknowledged as the most astute politician and able problem-solver of the day.

Why will we be that desperate?

Because the world's economic and political conditions will be in turmoil. A worldwide economic crash will not just result in economic hard times, but also the disintegration of stable government. The world will be calling out for strong leadership, and in this man they will get it.

—To be continued in the next issue of Activated

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You can change



FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

Anybody can change, because I can change anybody who wants to be changed and comes to Me. In fact, if you're willing to do things My way, you can be anything that you want to be—as happy as you want to be, as fulfilled as you want to be, as challenged as you want to be, as content as you want to be, as positive as you want to be—because all of these things are within My power to give.

Whatever change you want to make in your life is possible. It doesn't matter what you've been like or how long you've been that way. It doesn't even matter if something you're trying to change is a part of your personality, your inborn nature, or something you feel is unchangeable. Even if you don't think you can change, you *can* because I can change you. If I made the world and everything in it, don't you see that it's a small thing for Me to transform a single life into something new, something even better?

It all begins with a spark of faith. I can speak to your heart and put that spark there—a spark of faith that tells you that I can and want to help you. But for Me to continue to work in your life and bring the desired change to fruition, you must give Me your full cooperation. You must have a believing and yielded heart. You must come to Me and receive My instruction, and then you have to be willing to do the things I ask of you. Only then will I be able to bring about all the changes you desire, and even then they won't all happen overnight. Certain aspects of this miracle can happen in an instant, the moment you believe and ask Me and yield. Others will take time, but as you continue to look to Me and do as I say, you will change. That I can promise!

So you see, everything is possible! It doesn't matter how bad you think you are, because I am able. *All* things are possible with Me, if you believe.