

# activated



CHANGE YOUR LIFE | CHANGE YOUR WORLD

## **THE COLOR OF LOVE**

Paint with a wide brush

## **THE PRISONER**

Escape bitterness through forgiveness

## **THE PEACE OF GOD**

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## PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Some years ago there was a popular song about righting all the wrongs in the world. I don't remember all the words, but the gist of it was "If I were king of the world, I would do things differently." There would be no more war, or hate, or suffering, or any of the other evils that plague our planet.

It was a noble thought, at least on the surface, but it failed to take into consideration one important factor: God has given each of us free will, free choice. In that sense, we *are* each "king of the world." We may not rule over the whole world or be able to make a visible impact on the grand scheme of things, but it is given to us to rule our own personal world. Depending on how well we do at that, we may then be able to have a positive impact on the world around us.

As kings and queens we have both dominion and responsibility. Queen Elizabeth I of England said, "To be a king and wear a crown is a thing more glorious to them that see it than it is pleasant to them that bear it." In other words, it's not always easy to rule, especially not wisely and righteously.

In fact, if you will take an honest look at your realm, I think you will realize that it's humanly impossible to always rule well. You can't always get it right, nor can you expect those around you to. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory [perfection] of God."<sup>1</sup>

But the good news is that although we can't do it, God can and wants to do it through us.<sup>2</sup> That is not to say that we will be perfect from one moment to the next, but moment by moment He will give us the love, humility, wisdom, understanding, and everything else we need to "rule righteously" if we ask Him to. God can help us to do the humanly impossible: love without partiality.<sup>3</sup>

Keith Phillips  
  
 For Activated

<sup>1</sup>Romans 3:23

<sup>2</sup>Matthew 19:26; Philippians 4:13

<sup>3</sup>Matthew 5:43–48

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BY NYX MARTINEZ

# the prisoner

SHE HELD THE CELL PHONE IN HER TREMBLING HAND, not wanting to read the text message that had just come in. But she'd provoked it.

She'd waited a month for his return—the last week sheer torture. When he'd called the previous day to say he was back in town, her heart had skipped a beat. He'd been back for four days, it turned out, but hadn't contacted her till then. They'd made small talk and laughed, but when she asked when she'd see him, he'd been evasive.


Today she had to know what was on his mind, so she'd sent him a message, asking just that.

His reply was everything she'd feared. He wasn't coming back to her. He'd made up his mind.

How could she have made the same mistake again? How could she have forgotten so quickly? No, this wasn't the first time. There had been other men. Each time she'd told herself that this one was different, this one was special, this time it was going to work out. But each relationship had ended like the others, with a short, insensitive phone call or note. This one ended with, "Can we still be friends?" What nerve!

She'd had a premonition that this was going to happen—God trying to prepare her heart for the decision He knew her lover had already made. She'd tried to reason with God then. Now she argued her case. She didn't want it this way. She didn't deserve this.

She went to bed early, hoping to be able to go to sleep and forget it all. But as she tossed and turned, memories of the happy times they'd



"Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hate. It is the power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness."

—E. C. McKenzie

shared appeared like snapshots in her mind—snapshots of them smiling, happy, laughing, together. Now each memory was more painful than the one before. This was what she had lost! How could she ever forget how he'd hurt her?

She would become unfeeling—yes, that was how! She would give up on everyone. She would turn her heart to stone.

That seemed like such a good idea at first, but did she really want to go through life like that?

Still unable to sleep, she propped herself up by her computer and began scrolling through the titles in her digital library. Was it coincidence that the first title her eye fell on was “Bitterness or Forgiveness”?

Part of her screamed, *Don't open it!* Another part of her whispered, *It will set you free.*

She opened it and began to read. She'd read it before, but this time the words sparkled with new meaning.

She read about people who had been through far worse things than she had—women who'd suffered the worst kinds of abuse, parents who'd lost children in senseless accidents or crimes, families torn apart by war—yet each had learned to forgive.

An hour passed, then another, and as she read, she realized that much of the hurt in her past was because she'd allowed relationships gone bad to make her bitter.

In those two hours her circumstances hadn't changed at all, but she was different. Renewed ... almost. She knew there was one more thing that she needed to do.

She opened a new email on her computer. On that blank page her healing process would begin. She would deal with this problem then and there—and not with vengeance, but with real love. She began to type.

“I won't lie and say that I wasn't upset by your decision, but I know that healing starts with writing you about the decisions that I've made, too. I prayed and asked God to help me see our time together and our parting as

He does, and I realize now that He wants to use both to help me grow. I also know that my initial reaction to your decision was wrong because it wasn't loving. ‘Love is patient, love is kind. It is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs’ (1 Corinthians 13:4–5 *NIV*).

“In the past I've kept a lot of ‘records of wrongs’ in my heart—‘That person did this to me,’ ‘That one did that,’ ‘That one hurt me again’—and after your message I was about to add some more. Now I see how that would only be hurting myself.

“I learned tonight that God doesn't necessarily erase bad memories, but He reframes them so that they are no longer significant factors in how we feel, think, or act. Now I want to be more concerned about your happiness than my own. Now I want to forgive so I can find out what it means to be truly free from bitterness, and I came across a quote tonight that I think will help me do just that: ‘To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.’

“Will you forgive me and accept my forgiveness? And yes, we can still be friends—*better* friends for having been through all this together.”

Then she took the final step and hit the “send” key. Off the letter went, and with it the pain and the bitter feelings. The prisoner was set free.

This is a true story. I should know, because that prisoner was me.

*Nyx Martinez is a member of the Family International in the Philippines. ●*

# forgiveness

“LORD, MAKE ALL THE BAD PEOPLE GOOD,” a young boy prayed, “and then make all the good people nice.” Unfortunately, in this imperfect world, sometimes we have to live around people who aren’t always good, and other times we have to live around generally good people who aren’t always nice. We’ve all been in situations where we feel we’ve been unjustly treated or misjudged, and we almost certainly will be again.

At times like that, it’s good to remember that we, too, haven’t always been good or nice. “Judge not, that you be not judged,” the Bible says, “for with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”<sup>1</sup> That should make us a little more thoughtful about our attitudes toward others, especially those who have wronged us, for exactly what we give will be exactly what we receive. “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.”<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps you feel that you have to do something about the wrong that’s been done to you, to hurt others as they’ve hurt you, but don’t do it; don’t bear a grudge. Nothing will sour your disposition and ruin your happiness like letting bitterness creep into your heart. Beware “lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become

defiled.”<sup>3</sup> It is far better to forgive and forget that injustice you’ve suffered. Pity and love and pray for those who hurt you, and then leave matters in God’s hands.<sup>4</sup>

God knows all about it, and His Word speaks with finality regarding our forgiving those who wrong us, no matter how unfair it all seems. Jesus said, “If you do not forgive men their [wrongs], neither will your Father forgive your [wrongs],”<sup>5</sup> and “My heavenly Father also will [punish] you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his [wrongs].”<sup>6</sup>

You can’t do that yourself; it’s not in your human nature to forgive. It has to be Jesus working in and through you. Tell Him about it, ask Him to cleanse your heart of any animosity or bitterness that may be festering, and turn the situation over to Him completely—and don’t take it back the next time you think about that person or situation. Only then is He able to go to work on your behalf, to heal your spirit and help you move on. This usually isn’t what we feel like doing, but it’s God’s solution.

If you’ve been hurt, He waits to help you, He wants to help you, and He will. But you must set things in motion. You must forgive. •

<sup>1</sup>Matthew 7:1-2

<sup>2</sup>Romans 2:1

<sup>3</sup>Hebrews 12:15

<sup>4</sup>Matthew 5:44-48; 1 Peter 3:9

<sup>5</sup>Matthew 6:15

<sup>6</sup>Matthew 18:35

# BEYOND HUMAN LIMITS

Sometimes when we've been wronged and struggle to forgive those who have wronged us, the examples of others who have forgiven far greater wrongs help us put things in perspective. When they speak of the power of forgiveness, the world listens.

When we think of forgiveness, the fear may arise that evil will remain unpunished. It is as if forgiving might mean to give up the right to punish evil.

Despite all of this, I have to see what evil does to *me*—it makes me want to react to evil with evil. Then I see everything with dark glasses of evil. It paralyzes me and alienates me from life. Forgiving means bidding goodbye to evil, in order not to be guided by it any more.

A process of reconciliation may take some time, as the other side has to recognize its faults also. With forgiveness, however, I don't need to wait or waste any time. Forgiveness gives me freedom to love now. When we attain this freedom, we realize that those who have done evil are themselves its victims.

—Father Andrija Vrane, Croatian survivor of the 1990s civil war in the former Yugoslav republics.

I was profoundly touched by him. I felt the genuineness of his apology. I would like to hold him by the hand and show him that there is a future, and that he can still change.

—Pearl Faku in South Africa, explaining why she forgave Eugene de Kock, the man who masterminded an apartheid-era bombing operation in Motherwell township, South Africa, that killed her husband and three others.

Your love for our family has helped to provide the healing we so desperately need. Gifts you've given have touched our hearts in a way no words can describe. Your compassion has reached beyond our family, beyond our community, and is changing our world, and for this we sincerely thank you.

—Marie Roberts, widow of Charles Carl Roberts, in an open letter to her Amish neighbors thanking them for their forgiveness, grace, and mercy. (On the morning of October 2, 2006, Charles Roberts arrived at the one-room schoolhouse of an Amish community in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, USA. He took 10 young girls hostage, tied them up, shot them, and then killed himself. Five of the girls—all of whom were Amish—died. Commentators the world over were astounded at the forgiveness that was expressed by the Amish—forgiveness that was manifested not only in words, but also in acts of love toward Roberts's grieving family.)

It was at a church service in Munich that I saw him, a former S.S. man who had stood guard at the shower room door in the processing center at Ravensbrück. He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time. And suddenly it was all there—the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, [my sister] Betsie's pain-blanching face. He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. "How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein," he said. "To think that, as you say, He has washed my sins away!" His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side. Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? *Lord Jesus*, I

prayed, *forgive me and help me to forgive him*. I tried to smile, I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. *Jesus, I prayed, I cannot forgive him. Give me Your forgiveness.* As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me. And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself.

—Corrie ten Boom, Dutch Christian survivor of WWII Nazi concentration camps, where her father and sister both died.

“Why should I forgive anyone who doesn't say they are sorry?” people often ask me. And I tell them, “Life is too short for me to hang around waiting for someone to say sorry to me.” My saying, “It's okay—I forgive you,” does not depend on others saying they are sorry. For me that's not a precondition. The Our Father [Lord's Prayer] doesn't say, “Please forgive me so I can go and forgive others.” Jesus taught us that we need to forgive others before we can ask to be forgiven. —Stella Sabiti, who was tortured during the 1970s regime of Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. She is now the executive director of the Center for Conflict Resolution (CECORE), a Uganda-based not-for-profit NGO founded in 1995 by women aspiring to promote alternative and creative means of preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. She has taken her message of forgiveness and reconciliation to five continents and has been instrumental in helping to resolve bloody conflicts in over half a dozen African countries. ●



# THE COLOR LOVE OF LOVE



BY MICHAEL ROY

Some are black and some are white,  
Some are wrong and some are right,  
Some get rich and some stay poor,  
Some make peace and some make war.

Some are yellow, some are brown,  
Some are up and some are down,  
Some go far, some fall behind,  
Some are mean and some are kind.

Some are reds and some are greens,  
Some stay quiet, some make scenes,  
Some say yes and some say no,  
Some will tell you where to go.

But underneath our different skin,  
The same heart beats, deep within.  
For brothers, sisters all are we,  
Meant to live in harmony.

IN RECENT YEARS WE'VE ALL SEEN OR READ about the horrors that can result when animosity escalates between people of divergent racial, ideological, or religious backgrounds. Ethnic confrontations in the Darfur region of Sudan, political violence in Kenya and Sri Lanka, continued bloodletting in the Mideast, incessant carnage in Iraq and Afghanistan, and strained race relations in scores of other countries all attest to the fact that something is dreadfully wrong with the human condition. Most of these conflicts are civil or intrastate wars, and most victims are civilians. Today, 75 percent or more of those killed or wounded in wars are noncombatants.

Can't someone put a stop to it all? Perhaps some international body could decree that all people of every country, color, and creed must respect, accept, and live in harmony with everyone else, regardless of their differences? Unfortunately, even if someone had the authority to issue such a decree, it would never work. Simply put, righteousness cannot be legislated. Kindness, understanding, and love must come from the heart, not as a dutiful response to a law.



To suddenly accept and respect others when you've been taught since childhood that your particular color, creed, or culture is better than theirs is no small task. It would be even more difficult to instantly accept those you resent because you know that their people have caused yours years or perhaps centuries of suffering, humiliation, abuse, or exploitation.

When people have lost loved ones, homes, or land, have been the target of violence, or have otherwise felt the brunt of another ethnic group's scorn, no edict is going to change the victims' attitudes overnight. Even if they wanted to reconcile with their oppressors, old habits die hard. No amount of willpower can instantly overcome deep-seated resentment or hatred.

So how can prejudice, fear, and distrust be overcome when these things have been ingrained for centuries? The answer is summed up in one word: love.

"Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins."<sup>1</sup> If you hate somebody, your interactions with them are likely to breed disagreement and conflict. But if you truly love them, even if they have wronged you, it's possible to look beyond their faults and accept and forgive them.

This may sound like a noble aspiration—to overlook and forgive all the flaws and failings of others—but realistically, who is capable of suddenly releasing resentment, hatred, fear, or other deep-seated negative attitudes they may harbor toward individuals or entire groups of people? Most of us lack the resolve and emotional wherewithal to do that.

The good news is that despite our limited human resources, it is still possible for us to truly love, understand, and accept others, regardless of their past or background. The key to such love comes from the ultimate source of love, God Himself. The Bible tells us that "God is love."<sup>2</sup> He is the all-powerful Spirit of love who created the universe and brought us all into being.

To show us what He is like, He sent His own Son to earth in the form of a man, Jesus Christ. Jesus' entire ministry was one of love. He experienced human suffering and had great compassion on the people as He ministered to their spiritual and physical needs. He became one of us.

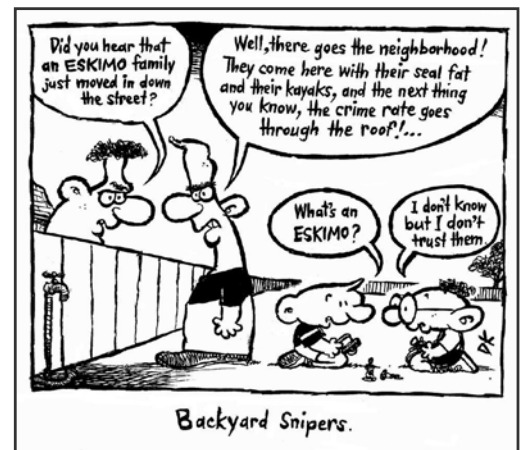
He taught that we could fulfill all the laws of God by keeping just one commandment: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."<sup>3</sup>

On one occasion, an antagonist overheard Jesus teaching this and publicly challenged Him. "Who then is my neighbor?" Jesus responded with the story of the Good Samaritan, in which He clearly showed that our neighbor is anyone who needs our help, regardless of their race, creed, color, nationality, or cultural background.<sup>4</sup>

The way we can love our neighbors and do our part to bring peace to the world is to ask the Prince of Peace, Jesus,<sup>5</sup> to give us the love we need for others. When we are connected with the God of love, His Spirit within us can empower us to do what is humanly impossible: to truly love others the way we love ourselves.

The Bible says of Jesus, "He Himself is our peace, who has made both [races] one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation."<sup>6</sup> The supernatural love of God is what brings genuine peace, unity, and mutual respect between us.

"Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."<sup>7</sup> It's not in our nature, but when we allow God's Spirit to dwell in us, we take on His nature.<sup>8</sup> Then and only then can we look



<sup>1</sup>Proverbs 10:12

<sup>5</sup>Isaiah 9:6

<sup>2</sup>1 John 4:8

<sup>6</sup>Ephesians 2:14

<sup>3</sup>Galatians 5:14

<sup>7</sup>1 Samuel 16:7

<sup>4</sup>Luke 10:25-37

<sup>8</sup>2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:23-24; Colossians 3:10

past the color of people's skin to see their hearts and spirits as He does.

Even when fear, prejudice, and hatred have been ingrained for years, the love of God can wash it all away. Once you personally know that God loves and forgives you, it becomes much easier to love and forgive others. You can then "get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger, along with every form of malice, and be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."<sup>1</sup>

When you open your heart to Jesus, He can miraculously free you from the bondage of hatred and ill will toward others. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."<sup>2</sup>

What a wonderful world it would be if we were all colorblind and race-"unconscious," where the only thing we saw when we looked at others of another ethnic background was love—the color of love. It is possible, "for you all are one in Christ Jesus."<sup>3</sup>

Do you want such love for others? It's yours for the asking. God loves you so much that He sent Jesus to give His life for you. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son [Jesus], that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."<sup>4</sup>

Jesus will freely forgive you for all of your sins and give you eternal life, if you will simply say you are sorry and ask Him to. You can receive Jesus as your Savior right now by sincerely praying a prayer like the following:

*Dear Jesus, I want to know You. Thank You for giving Your life for me. Please forgive me for all the things I have done wrong. I now open the door of my heart, and I ask You to come in and give me Your gift of eternal life. Fill me with Your love, and help me to be more tolerant of others, regardless of who they are. Amen.*

The Bible tells us that the day is soon coming when Jesus will personally return "in great power and glory" to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. The exploitive and exclusive regimes of man will be no more when "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord."<sup>5</sup>

Ethnic barriers will be swept away then, and the peace-loving people of the world will unite in true harmony. "All people, nations, and languages shall serve the Lord in an everlasting dominion. ... And nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."<sup>6</sup> ●

## FEEDING READING

### Tolerance

*God wants us to live in peace, regardless of differences.*

Leviticus 19:34a

Psalm 34:14

Romans 12:18

1 Thessalonians 5:15

*Tolerance is built on points of agreement.*

Romans 14:19

1 Corinthians 9:19–22

Ephesians 4:3

Philippians 4:8

*We are to be tolerant, as we want tolerance.*

Matthew 7:12

Luke 6:31–33

*Tolerance requires patience and forgiveness.*

Matthew 18:21–22

Luke 17:4

Romans 15:5

1 Corinthians 13:4a

Colossians 3:12–13

*Tolerance is godliness.*

Matthew 5:9

Matthew 5:43–48

Ephesians 4:32

Philippians 2:3

Hebrews 12:14



*As Mr. Creswell saw his dog pounce on Mrs. O'Hallahan's prize roses, he remembered back-- with relief-- to when he had been quick to forgive her for her accelerator malfunction when she'd backed her car into his letterbox.*

<sup>1</sup>Ephesians 4:31–32 NIV

<sup>4</sup>John 3:16

<sup>2</sup>2 Corinthians 5:17

<sup>5</sup>Revelation 11:15

<sup>3</sup>Galatians 3:28

<sup>6</sup>See Daniel 7:14; Isaiah 2:4

“When we know that everything has two sides, let us look at the bright side only.”—Mahatma Gandhi

**Y**OU'RE HAVING A ROUGH DAY. A problem came up at work. You had a low-level argument with your spouse. You received bad news: A relative's health took a turn for the worse. You broke your favorite coffee mug. The kitchen sink sprang a leak. There doesn't seem to be too much to be cheerful about, does there?

The next time your day gets you down, try this spiritual exercise.

The concept is simple. Jesus is the Prince of Peace<sup>1</sup> and we can enjoy no greater peace than spending time with Him. The Bible tells us a sure way to get close to Him: We can enter into His presence through thanksgiving and praise<sup>2</sup>.

It is through praising God, even for the difficulties we face, that we find God's joy, which gives us strength<sup>3</sup> to make it through them. Praise brings joy, and joy brings strength. When we praise the Lord, we're forgetting about ourselves and our problems and concerns. Our not concentrating on ourselves, but rather concentrating on Him and His goodness, brings sweet joy to our hearts. With this joy in our hearts we're no longer pulled down by our negative feelings, doubts, worries, or fears.

Find a quiet spot. It doesn't really matter where you perform this exercise, provided you know you'll be able to have 10 or 15 minutes of peace and quiet.

<sup>1</sup>Isaiah 9:6

<sup>2</sup>Psalms 100:4

<sup>3</sup>Nehemiah 8:10



PRAISE YOUR WAY TO PEACE

## A Spiritual Exercise

Now start mentally listing each of the things that bothered you today—your problems, big or small. As you list each one, direct your thoughts to Jesus and thank Him for helping you face and survive that problem—and thank Him that it wasn't worse.

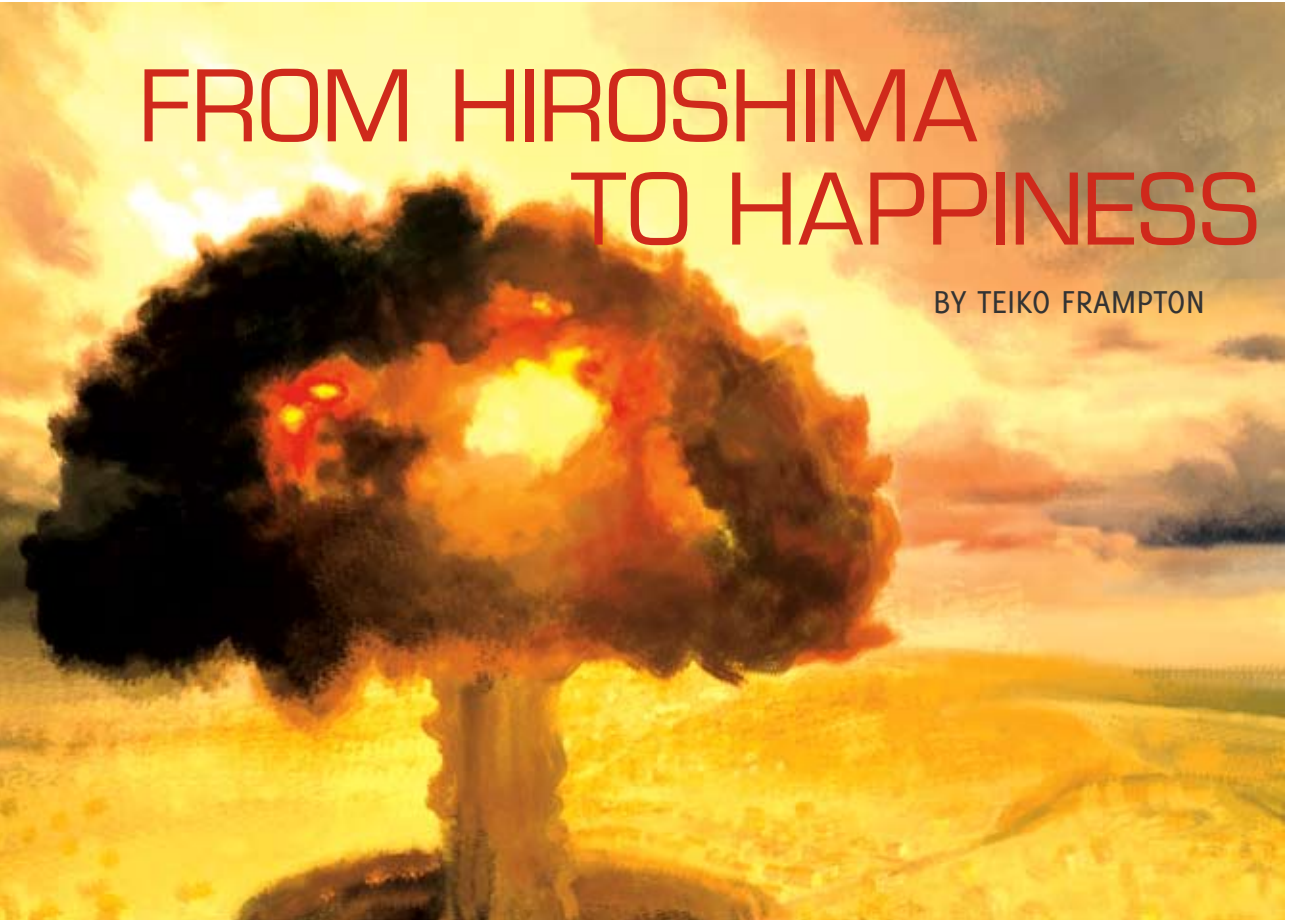
Get specific. Verbalize your thanks for each of those difficulties, one by one. For instance, “Thank You, Jesus, that the problem at work was solved by lunchtime, and now I better understand my employer's expectations,” or “Thank You that Grandmother manages to stay so cheerful in spite of her illness, thank You that she has such a competent doctor, and thank You for how You are caring for her during this time”—and so on.

Do that, and you'll start feeling better very quickly! Now take a few minutes to thank Him for the *good* things that happened today. Think back over your day chronologically, and you'll probably be amazed to see how many good things you experienced!

This is a great exercise to perform daily, and not only when you're having a rough day. Make it a habit to praise God for everything in your life—the good and bad, the pretty and ugly, the joyous and sad—and you will experience peace and contentment. ●

# FROM HIROSHIMA TO HAPPINESS

BY TEIKO FRAMPTON



THE FIRST BLUE-EYED PERSON I EVER SAW was the pilot of a U.S. fighter plane who was about to fire on my mother and me. I was ten years old, helping my mother pick oranges in a mountain field, when a U.S. squadron flew over our island, heading towards the Japanese naval port close to Hiroshima. One fighter plane broke away from the others and came directly towards us. My mother cried out, “It’s coming for us!”

We ran to take cover under some large trees at the edge of the field, but soon realized we could not make it there in time. My mother took me into her arms for a last embrace, as we looked up in terror. There our eyes met the gaze of the young pilot. Perhaps seeing we were an unarmed woman and a girl made him change his mind, because he did not open

fire but quickly pulled his plane up over the mountain and flew away.

I was born on one of the beautiful islands of Seto-Naikai (Inland Sea) in the province of Hiroshima, western Japan, on January 7, 1934. I was seven when World War II started. Due to shortages caused by the war, my parents had to close their clothing shop and take whatever work they could find, which turned out to be farm labor.

I was 11 years old when, at 8:15 the morning of August 6, 1945, everything suddenly went dark. The darkness was followed by a blinding violet light; then came a tremendously terrifying, resounding boom and an earthshaking tremor. The first atomic bomb had been dropped by U.S. forces on the nearby city of Hiroshima. Local public warning

sirens sounded, and all of us at my small school quietly dispersed to take cover.

Many people from our town rushed to Hiroshima to find out what had happened. There they discovered that the bomb had killed almost everyone within a two-kilometer (1.25-mile) radius of the city center, and others there were in torturous pain.

The people returned to our town heartbroken, only to find after a while that they themselves were now suffering from some strange ailment they knew nothing about, which turned out to be radiation sickness. It eventually killed many and caused others to suffer for the rest of their lives.

As you can imagine, these events caused me to develop strong bitterness towards Americans and foreigners in general, which I harbored for years.

I later trained as a nurse at the Osaka University Hospital Nursing School. I worked for 30 years and became what many would consider a proficient and diligent chief nurse in the highly respected government hospital of Osaka. I did not realize that I had deep-seated bitterness towards foreigners due to my war experiences, but if any were admitted to my ward, I would keep my distance and designate other nurses to take care of them.

I retired while still in my 50s, due to heart problems, and moved to the beautiful Pacific seacoast of Shionomisaki, southeast of Osaka. There I lived with a longtime friend who had also just retired from his work.

Living in this natural environment by the sea, fishing and enjoying nature, was like paradise for me for the first two or three years. But after a while, I became forlorn, depressed by the futility of life.

It was my older sister Lydia who introduced me to faith in Jesus. She suggested that if I would simply ask Jesus to come into my heart, I would find the love, truth, and happiness that I so needed. I had no interest in God, but I prayed to receive Jesus out of respect for my older sister.

Our peaceful life by the sea was not to last much longer. My beloved friend had a cerebral hemorrhage, went into a coma, and died two days later. I was so sad and felt so hopeless that I contemplated suicide.

Lydia sensed this. She opened her Bible and showed me a verse about hope, but I could not understand it at all. Later she told me about Jesus' love and said He could heal my heart. We had talked for hours, when Lydia suddenly noticed that my facial expression had been totally transformed. She suggested that I look at myself in the mirror. I then saw that my face had changed so much that I looked like a child again, happy and smiling.

Lydia continued telling me about Jesus and His sweet love, life, and power. I soon found that my dear companion's departure from this world was no longer so painful for me. I could actually feel Jesus' loving arms around me.

It was not so much with the articulate understanding of my mind that I grasped these things. Rather there was an amazingly deep awareness of Jesus' presence and His supernatural help in every detail of my life. His closeness totally obliterated any thoughts of suicide and hopelessness.

I had never touched a Bible before this, as I had rejected any idea of religion. However, when I did get a chance to read the Bible for myself, I was amazed to see that the physical and spiritual experiences I had had were all explained in there.

I moved up to Tokyo to be closer to Lydia and her Christian friends from the Family International, some of whom were foreigners. I then became aware of another miraculous transformation. My strong bitterness towards foreigners had been totally removed. In fact, I later married a foreigner, Steven, who is British. I had learned that God's love was relevant to not only myself, but to everyone in the world.

TEIKO FRAMPTON IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN JAPAN. ●

# The Peace of God

## Inner peace

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.— *Saint Paul, Philippians 4:7*

If we have not quiet in our minds, outward comfort will do no more for us than a golden slipper on a gouty foot.—*John Bunyan*

Peace comes not from the absence of trouble, but from the presence of God.—*Unknown*

Our daily lives can easily become filled with stress, pressure, and confusion. But we can stop at any moment and slip away into the presence of God's Spirit through prayer and meditation, and there find peace and refreshing.—*Mottos for Success*

Dear restless heart, be still, for peace is God's own smile,  
His love can every wrong and sorrow reconcile;  
Just love, and love, and love, and calmly wait awhile.  
—*Edith Willis Linn*

Jesus lay in the boat sleeping. The waves rose, the wind blew and the storm battered the small vessel about. His disciples were afraid: Afraid of the wind, afraid of the waves and fearful for their lives. They came to Jesus, woke Him up, begging for His help. The answer lay in His power. He said, "Peace, be still," and there was peace. The wind ceased, and there was a great calm.<sup>1</sup> No matter the turmoil of our life, we too can find peace if we turn to Jesus for His help.—*Abi F. May*

Let My Spirit rest upon you and fill you with peace. Let My Spirit flow through your thoughts, mingle with your spirit, and give you strength.—*Jesus*<sup>2</sup>

## Peace with those around us

Live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.—*Saint Paul, 2 Corinthians 13:11*

All men desire peace, but very few desire those things that make for peace.—*Thomas a Kempis*

All works of love are works of peace. ... Peace begins with a smile.—*Mother Teresa*

Jesus gave us the key to happiness and harmony when He said, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). And remember, "neighbor" doesn't only mean the one who lives next door; your neighbor is anyone He brings across your path.

When people don't treat others with much love, of course they're going to have problems. In fact, all of the evils in the world today can be traced back to people's lack of love for God and one another. The simple love of God and one's neighbors is still God's solution, even in such a highly complex and confused society as ours. If we love God, we can love others, follow His rules of life, liberty, and the possession of happiness, and all will be well and happy in Him.—*David Brandt Berg*

Sometimes it can be difficult to do the right thing, especially when the person you're dealing with hasn't done right to you, but I didn't say, "Do to others as they do to you." My code for living is far above that normal perception of fairness. I want you to live on a higher plane. Anyone can be nice to those who are nice, but the person who can be nice to those who aren't is the bigger person and more blessed by Me.—*Jesus*

<sup>1</sup>Mark 4:35-41

<sup>2</sup>Quotes attributed to Jesus but not followed by Bible references are excerpts of personal messages that individuals received from Jesus while in prayer.

## Peace in a world of conflict

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.—*Jesus, Matthew 5:9, KJV*

We look forward to the time when the power of love will replace the love of power. Then will our world know the blessings of peace.—*William E. Gladstone*

Peace is not a relationship of nations. It is a condition of mind brought about by a serenity of soul. Peace is not merely an absence of war. It is also a state of mind. Lasting peace can come only to peaceful people.—*Jawaharlal Nehru*

It is people's rejection of the love of God and His loving laws that causes them to be selfish and cruel to their neighbor—man's inhumanity to man, which is so apparent in today's weary world with all of its enslavement by oppression, tyranny, and exploitation. Hundreds of millions suffer needlessly from hunger and malnutrition, disease and ill health, poverty, overwork, and abuse, not to mention the tortures of war and nightmares of perpetual fearful insecurity.—*David Brandt Berg*

Pray for those who are touched by war at this very moment. They need your prayers, and each one needs Me, the Prince of Peace.—*Jesus*

## Peace with God

Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.—*Saint Paul, Romans 5:1*

You can have peace in your own heart even though all around you is war and confusion. You can have peace by personally receiving Jesus Christ into your own heart by asking Him to come in. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him."<sup>1</sup>—*David Brandt Berg*

"In the fear [reverence] of the Lord there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge."<sup>2</sup> This place of refuge is promised to all believers, yet so few venture therein. I say unto you, come aside, My dear one. Come under My wings, into My place of refuge, that you may experience My love and My peace.—*Jesus*

<sup>1</sup>Revelation 3:20

<sup>2</sup>Proverbs 14:26

FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

# Forgiveness is divine

The power to forgive is one of the greatest powers given to man. It's part of the nature and essence of God, and when you exercise it you assume godlike stature. You have the power to forgive and thus rise above the pettiness of mortals.

Choosing to forgive another is one of the hardest things most people ever do, especially if it's undeserved. It's hard because it's not human nature. Human nature cries out for revenge and retribution. But why get stuck in human nature?

I came to bring forgiveness and salvation from sin, but I also came to save you from human nature. When you received Me as your Savior, you received a measure of My superhuman nature. Once you've received Me, how much that superhuman nature rules in your life is up to you, and that is reflected in your choices. Since one of the most outstanding traits of My nature is a readiness to forgive, how quick you are to forgive others is a pretty good indication of whether or not you're letting My superhuman nature take charge.

Whether that person who wronged you deserves forgiveness or not is not the central issue. The central issue is *you* doing the right thing. No one really deserves forgiveness. If others have done wrong, they deserve a just punishment. But forgiveness is greater than justice. Justice is human; forgiveness is divine.

Forgive others who have wronged you, even as your heavenly Father forgives you.