

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

activated

Vol 11 • Issue 11



BOUNCE BACK

How to get up when you feel down

Positive Programming

Train your mind for success

Living with Praise

An interview with Merlin Carothers



PERSONALLY SPEAKING

I grew up in the era of black-and-white television (1950s), when Westerns were the most popular action genre. There were no computer graphics or other hi-tech special effects in shows like *The Lone Ranger*, *Gunsmoke*, and *Wanted: Dead or Alive*—and no cars

for the now-obligatory car chase. Instead, the action often peaked when a stagecoach or train was attacked by bandits in black hats (to distinguish them from the white-hatted good guys). Horses pulling a heavy stagecoach didn't stand a chance of outrunning bandits on horseback, but trains did. As the music reached a crescendo, the tension mounted and the scene alternated between the hero holding the bad guys at bay, the engineer gritting his teeth, and the fireman frantically shoveling coal into the furnace that powered the train's steam engine. The more coal the fireman could pile on, the hotter the fire and the faster the train would go. As long as there was coal to feed the fire, there was hope.

Our spiritual well-being is a bit like that. When bad things happen, negative thoughts and emotions descend and threaten to undo us. Unless we can escape, they will rob us of the fighting spirit we need to make it through. On our own, we don't stand any more chance against that negativity than a stagecoach had against outlaws. But faith in God is like a steam engine, far more powerful than mere willpower. We fuel the engine by affirming God's power and goodness, by thanking Him for the help we know He will give, even before He steps in. The more we do that, the faster and farther we are distanced from the negative.

The next time bad circumstances befall you and negativity closes in, put your faith into action by focusing on God and His unfailing love and help. Stoke the engine. Outrun the bandits.

Keith Phillips
For Activated

Browse our website or contact one of the distributors below to enjoy the inspirational, motivational, and practical help offered in our books and audiovisual material.

www.activated.org

Activated Ministries

P.O. Box 462805

Escondido, CA 92046-2805

USA

Toll-free: 1-877-862-3228

Email: info@actmin.org

www.activatedonline.com

Activated Europe

Bramingham Pk. Business Ctr.

Enterprise Way

Luton, Beds. LU3 4BU

United Kingdom

+44 (0) 845 838 1384

Email: activatedEurope@activated.org

Activated Africa

P.O. Box 2509

Faerie Glen 0043

South Africa

+27 (86) 445 1196

Email: activatedAfrica@activated.org

Activated India

P.O. Box 5215

G.P.O.

Bangalore - 560 001

India

Email: activatedIndia@activated.org

Activated Philippines

P.O. Box 1147

Antipolo City P.O.

1870 Antipolo City

Philippines

Cell: (0922) 8125326

Email: activatedPI@activated.org

Activated Australia

+61 2 8005 1938

Email: info@activated.org.au

www.activated.org.au

EDITOR Keith Phillips

DESIGN Yoko Matsuoka

PRODUCTION Jessie Richards

www.auroraproduction.com

© 2010 Aurora Production AG

All Rights Reserved

Printed in Taiwan by Ji Yi Co., Ltd.

Cover photo: ©iStockphoto.com/narvikk

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

the aurora phenomenon

BY ANJALI MILES

THE AURORA BOREALIS, ALSO CALLED THE NORTHERN LIGHTS, IS ONE OF THE MOST MAGICAL SIGHTS OF THE NIGHT SKY. WHEN I LIVED IN ICELAND, I SAW IT MANY TIMES. ONE MEMORY STANDS OUT.

It was February 2009, and I was about to leave Iceland to join another volunteer project in Ireland. I had spent most of the day trying to make arrangements to send my belongings ahead, and it hadn't gone well. Each phone call to find out customs procedures had ended in frustration.

As the day went on, things seemed to go from bad to worse. Even a walk in the park had ended badly when I tripped and injured my knee. By the evening I was in tears and could hardly make sense of my thoughts. I knew I'd feel better if I could manage to look at

things from the bright side, but I couldn't find anything to be positive about. How could I be thankful when darkness was all around? How could I find something to be thankful for when everyone was telling me why the things I was trying to accomplish wouldn't work out?

Just then the phone rang. It was a friend calling to tell me that she had heard there would be a magnificent aurora that night. Since I was leaving in a few days, it would probably be my last chance to see one for a while.

I grabbed my coat, called another friend, and off we drove to a spot outside of town, where the city lights wouldn't diminish the effect. It was colder and windier out there, but the view would make up for that.

As we sat and watched vibrant pinks and greens and blues dance across the night sky, new thoughts came to me. These natural light displays are mostly seen near the poles, where it gets very cold and dark. Getting the best view usually involves some hardship or sacrifice.

In that remote spot, I was surrounded by darkness and cold, but the aurora was at its most brilliant. My overall situation hadn't changed, but my heart danced to its gentle rhythm. In what seemed like the darkest hour, God had not only lit up my world and given me something to be thankful for, but He had reminded me once more that every dark night has a beautiful view if we will only look up.

ANJALI MILES IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN IRELAND. ■

bounce back

BY DAVID BRANDT BERG

THIS MORNING I BECAME
DISCOURAGED AND
FRUSTRATED. MY WIFE
SENSED IT AND CHEERFULLY
BEGAN TO SING THIS
CHORUS:

*Cheer up, you saints of God, there's
nothing to worry about,
Nothing to make you feel afraid,
nothing to make you doubt!
Our God has never failed, so why
not trust Him and shout?
You'll be glad you trusted Him
tomorrow!*

The problem is that when we're downcast, if we start talking about the situation, we usually end up voicing our complaints and doubts and having a defeatist attitude. That's what I did when I replied, "Fold up, you saints of God, there's nothing to be happy about!" That was the way I was feeling, and it was kind of nice for a while. "Poor me!"

When we have the poor-me's, we're usually just trying to get attention and sympathy. Our pride is wounded, our ego has been a little deflated, and our self-confidence has been a little shaken. In come Mr. and Mrs. Doubt, and we pull up a couple

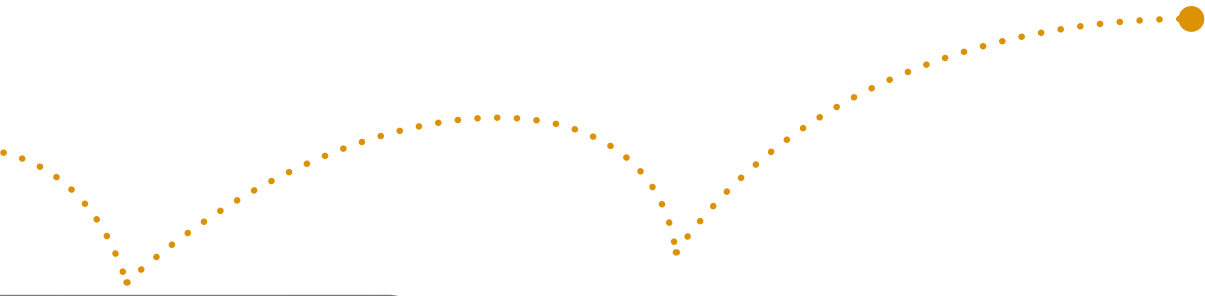
of chairs and invite them to talk it over. Pretty soon we start agreeing with them. "Yes, that's right! I'm not perfect, and I don't have much to be happy about. I might as well quit!"

It's because we get our eyes on ourselves instead of God's goodness. We think so much about our own faults, frailties, and mistakes that we really get down. The devil is the archenemy of happiness, and he can tell us a lot of truth about ourselves that's horrible, not to speak of the lies he tells us. If we start listening to him, there's no end to it.

It reminds me of when the Bible's King David said, "Now I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul."² How could David have made a song out of that? What kind of doleful dirge, sung in a mournful minor key, would that have been? "Someday I shall surely die! God has failed me. I might as well quit!" It would have sounded terrible! I guess that's why you never find that in one of David's psalms. David said it, but he had enough sense not to make a song out of it. Instead, throughout the book of Psalms, he takes a positive approach, praising God in spite of his troubles, because he knew that God would work everything out, because He always had and because He'd promised to.



1. Traditional Scottish chorus
2. 1 Samuel 27:1
3. Romans 14:7



When we're discouraged, the devil makes us angry when people try to cheer us up, because we can't enjoy our misery as much while they're trying to make us happy. We're ashamed because our defeatism looks so bad alongside their victorious attitude, so we try to find fault with them and others and everything—even God—to excuse ourselves for being so down.

So this morning I was irked at my wife when she tried to cheer me up with that song, and I jokingly began to sing the reverse. It was a little funny at first because it was so obviously defiant, but when I got to the third line and saw what the reverse of the song was leading to, it scared me and I couldn't go on. How could I sing, "Our God has always failed, so why not murmur and doubt? You'll be sorry you trusted Him tomorrow." If there's anything I know, it is that God has *never* failed. I've *always* been glad I trusted Him tomorrow. I just couldn't possibly sing the song in reverse, no matter how bad I felt.

One of the things that helped snap me out of it was when I realized what a terrible example I was being to my wife, who was trying to encourage me. I realized that I had to get positive for her sake, if nothing else.

My grandfather used to say, "If you must go to hell, at least don't let somebody else stumble over you into hell too!" But that's not possible, because if you're going to hell you're bound to drag others with you. "None of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself."³ No man is an island. Each of our lives is bound to affect others. We're either going to pull people up to our level or drag them down to it, one or the other.

We're going to either be positive or negative, one or the other. It's impossible to be just a little bit of both. The minute you start listening to the devil, you're done for! He'll never quit until he's dragged you to the very bottom and left you utterly defeated.

So keep your eyes on heaven. "Keep your eyes upon the goal, and the victory in your soul." Start doing something positive. Start saying something cheerful and encouraging—like my wife did for me this morning when she began to sing "Cheer Up, You Saints of God," reminding me to trust the Lord.

"BOUNCE BACK" WAS ADAPTED FROM THE ARTICLE "DUMPS," WHICH IS AVAILABLE IN *GREATER VICTORIES*, A BOOK FROM AURORA PRODUCTION. ■

beware of the NEGABUGGER

BY MISTY KAY

RESEARCH REPORT

SCIENTISTS HAVE RECENTLY MADE A FASCINATING DISCOVERY ABOUT AN UNSEEN AND LITTLE UNDERSTOOD PARASITE, THE NEGABUGGER—SO CALLED BECAUSE OF THE NEGATIVE EFFECT IT HAS ON ITS HUMAN HOST’S MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING.

It is too small to be seen by the naked eye, yet the symptoms of infection are plainly evident. It lives by attaching itself to the soft membrane of the inner ear. Its tiny buzzing wings vibrate at a frequency undetectable by humans, but which interferes with brain waves and leaves the victim feeling confused and depressed.

These negative vibrations can be difficult to distinguish from one’s own thoughts, and the subject may easily be led to believe the buzz of negative self-talk. In more serious cases of infestation the negabugger can move into the brain of its host to lay its young, breeding thousands of little negabuggers that can

quickly become airborne and infect others via negative words uttered by the host.

The negabugger is a serious pest, and treatment should be administered at the first sign of contagion. The negabugger must be dislodged and shaken out of the victim’s ear.

In standard cases, treatment can be self-administered by tilting the head in the direction of the negabugger and hopping vigorously while pounding the opposite side of the head. If it is unclear which ear the negabugger is residing in, apply this technique to both sides of the head to be safe. If more than one negabugger is present, it may be necessary to repeat the process.

In extreme or stubborn cases, the victim may need assistance. If a bop on the head with a pillow fails to dislodge the parasite, it may be necessary to shock it out of hiding. A splash of cold water is nearly always effective. To prevent re-infection, place the subject under headphones and play uplifting music and inspirational readings. Also practice positive self-talk exercises with the subject.

(Warning: Pillow and water treatments should only be administered by qualified adults. If children attempt these maneuvers, it may result in injury or damage to property.)

Clinical study

In a clinical study involving my children and young teenager, I have found the prescribed treatment to be quite effective in helping them pull out of bouts of self-pity and other negative emotions.

For example, one day I entered the kitchen to find my then 13-year-old sobbing over a sink of dirty dishes. I sympathized, saying, “I am so sorry you’re not happy. I want you to know how much I love you. In fact, I love you so much that I have to do this. ...” Producing a pillow from behind my back, I went to work. My daughter laughed and begged for mercy. Post-treatment, the patient appeared to have made a miraculous recovery.





HAVE A LAUGH

“A merry heart does good, like medicine”¹—and is not just good for your spiritual uplift. Many studies have shown that it’s also good for your physical body. If you stop and have a good laugh, it can help to pull you out of the doldrums. Have a sense of humor. Relax. Laugh. Have fun—some outlet that lets you forget your problems and enjoy life.

She returned to washing the dishes, but to my dismay she quickly relapsed. Time for step two. I went for the cold water. She saw it coming, but never thought I would really do it. After a brief chase around the house, I had her cornered and ... *splash!* Even she thought that was funny. A few rounds of laughs, and the dishes were almost done.

As the mother of an emotional teen girl, I have spent many hours reasoning, cajoling, comforting, and praying in various attempts to pull her out of her hormonal bouts of gloom, but lately I have found the negabugger treatment to be even more effective and faster working.

Once the negabugger’s unsuspecting targets are made aware of the danger, they can learn to recognize and take steps to protect themselves from it by not entertaining negative or destructive self-talk. An ounce of awareness is worth a pound of cure. Beware of the negabugger!

MISTY KAY IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN TAIWAN. ■

FEEDING READING

Positiveness

Count your blessings.

- Psalm 40:5
- Psalm 103:2
- Psalm 126:3

Look for the good even in tests and trials.

- Psalm 119:71
- Habakkuk 3:17–18
- Romans 8:28
- 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- James 1:2-4
- 1 Peter 4:12–13

Cultivate positive attitudes towards others.

- Romans 12:10
- Ephesians 4:32
- Colossians 3:12
- 1 Peter 4:8

Make thankfulness and praise a habit.

- Psalm 35:28
- Psalm 100:4
- Ephesians 5:20



POSITIVE PROGRAMMING

BY SAMUEL KEATING



MOST OF US BATTLE NEGATIVE THINKING AT SOME POINT IN OUR LIVES.

We put ourselves down for real or imagined faults and weaknesses, or we compare ourselves negatively to others. The use of positive statements that you can repeat to yourself is a proven technique for overcoming that negativity.

Our thoughts shape our attitude, our attitude shapes our actions, and our actions help to shape our future. A changed life begins with a change in thinking. The Bible instructs, “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”¹ You set that process in motion by filling your mind with godly, positive thoughts. “Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things ... and the God of peace will be with you.”²

The key is believing that what you are affirming is possible, because once you believe that a certain thing is possible, it is. “If you can believe, all things are possible.”³ It takes practice to focus on the positive, but in time you will see results in a happier, more secure life.

The Bible is filled with positive affirmations. As we learn to apply those to ourselves and everyday situations, we begin to see ourselves and life more as God does, and that is reflected in our thoughts and behavior.

Here are a few examples to get you started. We are all different and have different needs, so choose the

ones that seem to apply the most to you, or come up with some of your own.

- Whether or not I feel capable of this task, I am going to do my best and trust Jesus to do the rest. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).
- I made a mistake today, but I’m determined to learn from it, get up, and try again. “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholds him with His hand” (Psalm 37:23–24).
- Things may not be working out the way I had hoped—at least not yet—but I’m going to keep trusting that God has something good up His sleeve. “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).
- I may not be perfect, but I’m special to God because He gave me a unique mind, a unique personality, unique abilities, and a unique destiny. “I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works” (Psalm 139:14).
- Nothing can come between me and God’s love. “I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38–39).
- I have nothing to fear because God is love and He is always with me. “Perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18).

1. Romans 12:2

3. Mark 9:23

2. Philippians 4:8–9

4. Romans 4:21



- God wants me to be happy and enjoy life. “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15:11).
- Today I’m going to think more about others and less about myself, and I’m going to make someone else’s day better. “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).
- I am not going to give up! I refuse to call it quits! Jesus promised that His strength is there for me as long as I keep trying. “Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart” (Galatians 6:9).
- I may not have as much materially as some people, but I have things that matter more—integrity and peace of mind. “Godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Timothy 6:6).
- God wants to guide me through today and help me make the very most of it. “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know” (Jeremiah 33:3).
- God will help me make the right decisions. “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5).

These aren’t mere random, feel-good statements that don’t have any solid foundation. Each is based directly on one of God’s unfailing promises, and what He has promised, He will also perform.⁴ With God, there are no limits!

SAMUEL KEATING IS A MEMBER OF THE
FAMILY INTERNATIONAL AND AN *ACTIVATED*
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR. ■

ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it.

—Charles Swindoll (b.1934)



perspective

adjustment

BY PETER AMSTERDAM

DURING AN ESPECIALLY BUSY TIME, I HAD A PERSPECTIVE ADJUSTMENT THAT CHANGED MY OUTLOOK FOR THE BETTER.

I was involved in several major projects, had a huge amount of work to do, and was quite tired—almost exhausted.

The verse that came to mind and changed my attitude about my circumstances was, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”¹ I realized that the long hours of work, the tiredness, and the difficult decisions I faced were all part of my “reasonable service.”

Most of us have responsibilities that are sometimes difficult and trying. We all face situations that are challenging or cost us personally. We all have times when we feel so tired we think we can’t go on.

Some of the great men and women of God, our forefathers in the faith—people like Abraham, Moses, Peter, and Paul, as well as outstanding Christians down through the ages such as David Livingstone and Mother Teresa—made great sacrifices and

endured many hardships and sorrows during their lifetimes. They repeatedly suffered poor health, many of them experienced loneliness, some of them struggled with depression, and they sometimes worked years on end without seeing much in the way of results. When we look at our situations from that perspective, it helps to see some of the things we go through in a different light.

The verse that comes right after “present your bodies a living sacrifice” says, “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”² That verse applies well to having the right perspective on the sacrifices we make. If we have a realistic and yet also positive, praiseful attitude, it can make a big difference. When our perspective is renewed and realigned with the Lord’s, it does literally transform our life.

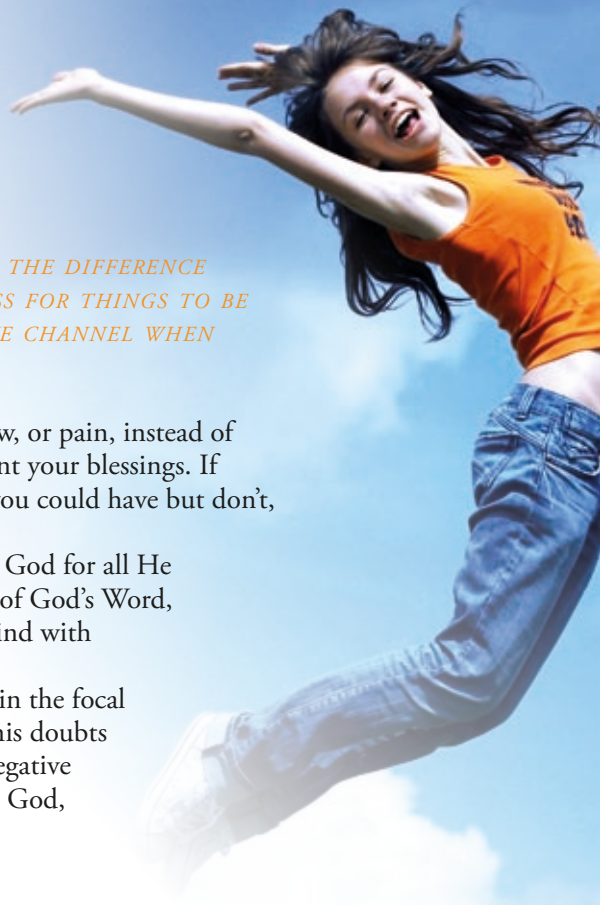
So whenever you are tempted to feel that life is too rough, try to look at the sacrifices you have to make through this new perspective. When you do, you can’t help but see things more positively.

Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger [...] may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink; but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall be revealed in and for us.³

—David Livingstone
(1813–1873)

1. Romans 12:1
2. Romans 12:2
3. Romans 8:18

The Positive Power of Praise



Q: *I'VE HEARD THAT POSITIVE THINKING CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS, BUT SOMETIMES I'M AT A LOSS FOR THINGS TO BE POSITIVE ABOUT. WHAT CAN I DO TO GET ON A POSITIVE CHANNEL WHEN EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE GOING WRONG?*

A: When your heart is weighed down with worry, fear, sorrow, or pain, instead of dwelling on your woes, think about Jesus and His love. Count your blessings. If nothing else, you can be grateful for all the other problems you could have but don't, because God has spared you from them.

Look on the bright side. Think on the *good* things. Thank God for all He has done. Chase away the dark clouds by letting in the light of God's Word, prayer, praise, song. Do anything you can to occupy your mind with positive thinking.

If you're thinking about God's goodness and putting that in the focal point of your concentration, then this pushes the devil and his doubts and lies and fears out of the way. You can't be positive and negative at the same time, so fill your mind with the light of praise to God, and it will push the darkness out. ■

THAT'S LIFE!

A Prayer of Thanksgiving

By Bonita Hele

Jesus, thank You for life and all it involves. When something goes wrong, we often say, "That's life!" But life is so much more than the little things that don't turn out the way we wish they had.

Waking up each morning with eyes that see and ears that hear—that's life!

Talking with a child and catching a glimpse of the world

through those innocent eyes—that's life!

Pausing in the middle of a hectic day to watch a bird soar or a butterfly flit among the flowers—that's life!

Chatting with an old friend and remembering just how special that friendship is—that's life!

Receiving an unexpected word of encouragement—that's life!

Holding a newborn baby and catching his first smile—that's life!

Walking in nature, taking in its sights and sounds, and breathing that fresh air—that's life!

Lying down to sleep at night and thanking God for all the blessings that the day brought—that's life!

Bonita Hele is a member of the Family International in India.

the sun still shines

BY VICTORIA OLIVETTA

AS FAR BACK AS I CAN REMEMBER, I DIDN'T LIKE CLOUDY DAYS, ESPECIALLY IN WINTERTIME. THEY SEEMED ENDLESS AND WITHOUT HOPE, CHILLING BOTH BODY AND SOUL.

Still, they are a part of life, so I decided to *learn* to like them—and now I do. My secret? Actually I have several.

Sometimes I take advantage of those days to bake a cake, cookies, or some other treat to enjoy with my coffee. The entire house smells of freshly brewed coffee and homemade goodies, and that creates a warm, satisfied feeling.

I've also learned that I can help brighten the day by what I wear, like a favorite brightly colored sweater or a little extra jewelry.

Most of all I've learned to thank God for those days. I'm still not crazy about them, but I have a warm house that doesn't leak, a cozy bed, food on the table, and someone to enjoy my blessings with.

Not too long ago, I was out on one of those gloomy days. Although it was overcast, I didn't expect it to actually rain, so hadn't taken an umbrella. Mid-morning I was 25 blocks from home when I was caught in a downpour. By the time I got home, I was sure I had more water in my clothes and hair than was left in the clouds. A hot shower and lunch put it all behind me, though, and I felt much better.

When I had been caught in the rain, I had prayed for all the people who were at that moment victims of some disaster. Not a disaster like burning the chicken or having their hair dye turn out wrong—I mean a *real* disaster like being left homeless by an earthquake, with no hot shower, dry clothes, and warm meal to set things right.

When bad weather or some other circumstance has you down, praying for others who have it worse puts things

in perspective and does the soul good, like a hot shower warms the body after getting caught in the rain, or the smell of homemade cake lifts the gloom of a dark day. When we remember that we have a very big God who sees and knows everything, who loves us dearly, and who will never let us be tested beyond what He knows we can handle with His help,¹ this lifts the spirit, like the aroma of freshly brewed coffee.

Even when the sky is overcast, the sun is still shining above the clouds. That's a fact. The clouds might keep us from seeing it, but it's there, just as round and bright as on any other day. When darkness closes in around us, the sunshine of God's love is still there, as constant as ever, waiting for just the right moment to dissipate the clouds and warm our souls once again.

VICTORIA OLIVETTA IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN ARGENTINA. ■

1. 1 Corinthians 10:13

“this is good”

AN AFRICAN FOLKTALE

THE STORY IS TOLD OF AN AFRICAN KING AND HIS CLOSE FRIEND, WHO HAD GROWN UP TOGETHER. THE KING'S FRIEND HAD A HABIT OF LOOKING AT EVERY SITUATION POSITIVELY AND REMARKING, “THIS IS GOOD!”

One day the king went on a hunting expedition, and he gave his friend the job of loading his guns and handing them to him. Apparently the friend did something wrong at some point, because one gun misfired and blew the king's thumb off.

“This is good!” the king's friend remarked as usual.

“No, this is *not* good!” the king replied, and he sent his friend to jail.

About a year later, the king was hunting in an area that he shouldn't have ventured into. Cannibals captured him and took him to their village. They tied his hands, bound him to a stake in the ground, and stacked firewood around his feet. However, just as they were about to set fire to the wood, they noticed that the king was missing a thumb. The cannibals had a superstition that forbad them from eating anyone who was less than whole, so they untied the king and sent him on his way.

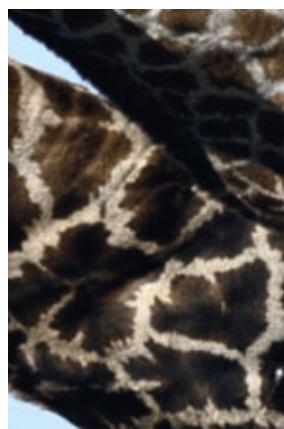
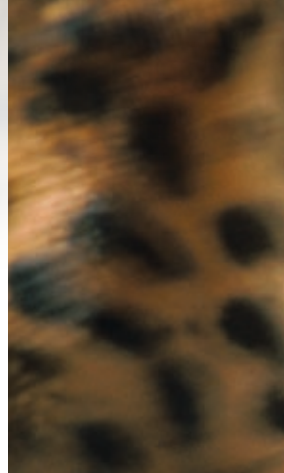
As the king traveled home, he was reminded of the event that had taken his thumb, and he regretted the way he had treated his friend. He went straight to the jail and released his friend.

“You were right,” the king said. “It *was* good that my thumb was blown off.” And he proceeded to tell his friend about his brush with death. “I am sorry for sending you to jail for so long,” he said. “That was very bad of me!”

“No,” his friend replied, “this is good!”

“What do you mean, ‘This is good’? How could it be good that I sent my friend to jail for a year?”

“If I had not been in jail,” the king's friend replied, “I would have been with you.” ■





living with praise

An Interview with
Merlin Carothers

BY JULIA KELLY

MERLIN CAROTHERS HAS HELD BOTH DISTINGUISHED AND DISHONORABLE TITLES IN HIS 85 YEARS: AWOL SOLDIER, BLACK MARKETER, DEMOLITION EXPERT, PRESIDENTIAL BODYGUARD, MASTER PARACHUTIST, METHODIST PASTOR, ARMY CHAPLAIN, CIVIL AIR PATROL PILOT. HE SERVED IN THE U.S. ARMY IN EUROPE, KOREA, VIETNAM, AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.

He has jumped out of an airplane 90 times. And yet, he says that discovering the power of praise-filled prayer has been one of the most exciting experiences of his life. He has written over a dozen books that recount hundreds of cases where illnesses have been healed, mental health has been restored, broken relationships have been mended, and other “impossible” situations have resulted in miracles—all through the power of God released through praise to God.

I sat down with Merlin in his San Diego, California, office to discuss his experiences.

Julia Kelly: After you found Jesus, how did you find what you believed God wanted you to do with your life?

Merlin Carothers: I knew the moment I became a Christian that I was called to spread the word—to tell others about God’s love and power. I had no idea how or where or when, but I knew that was what I was supposed to do.

Was there ever a time when it seemed praise wasn’t paying off, but God surprised you?

My wife Mary and I had been pastors of a church in California

for four years when circumstances forced us to leave. I struggled over that. Why had the Lord led us to work there and then taken it away? How could that have been God’s will? Just a couple of weeks later I got a call from a man who ran a television station in Los Angeles. He said he wanted to do some programs on praise, and he would do them for free. After the first 10 programs, he wanted to do more, until finally we had done 200. I could never have afforded to produce those on my own. God had taken a “bad” situation and worked another of His marvels.

1. Romans 8:28;
Deuteronomy 31:8;
Ephesians 3:20

Has your relationship with the Lord changed much as you've grown older?

I've come to realize the grace of God more and more. I always believed, of course, that God forgives, but I didn't understand how, when we fail Him, that doesn't cause Him to love us any less. If a wife hurts her husband, he may say he forgives her and truly mean it, but what she did will still be in his mind and he will probably worry that she might do it again. God isn't like that. When He forgives, He forgets.

How long did it take to learn to put these praise principles into practice?

Learning to praise is a lifelong process. I've been at it for so many years that it comes a bit more naturally now, but it wasn't easy at first, because it was such a foreign concept. I had studied the Bible all of my Christian life, but it took me a long time to understand how God kept emphasizing: "Trust that I am working for your good. Don't ever doubt that or be afraid, and I'll do above and beyond all you could ask or hope for."¹ And He always has!

How have you spent your time since retiring?

I've retired from being a pastor, but I believe I'm supposed to work for the Lord until the day I die. My hero, John Wesley [1703–1791], did that, and he was nearly 88 when he died. He was up at four o'clock every morning for prayer, then he got on his horse and went out to preach. Now I mainly write. The Lord speaks to me about some topic and says, "This is troubling people, so write about it." Some of the things I write seem ultra-simple, but those are often the things that touch people the most. Mary says I'll be writing on the way to the morgue.

What advice would you give to those facing hardships such as job loss, who fear the future?

It's very difficult to talk to people who are in the throes of financial distress. I don't ever tell them, "I want you to thank the Lord for your distress," because that would turn anybody off. What I tell them is to first pray that God will take care of them, and then I try to help them believe that He will. ■

Some have asked me if this principle of praise isn't just another way to talk about the power of positive thinking. Far from it. Praising God for every circumstance does not mean we close our eyes to the difficulties. When we praise God, we thank Him for our situation, not in spite of it. We are not trying to avoid our dilemmas. Rather, Jesus is showing us a way to overcome them.

—Merlin Carothers,
Prison to Praise

FOR MORE INSPIRATIONAL READING BY MERLIN CAROTHERS VISIT
www.foundationofpraise.org



FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

Peace process

How can you find peace of mind and relief from discouragement? Simple. It is within My power to override the negative thoughts that drag you down, and that power is released through prayer and praise. When you turn whatever is bothering you over to Me and praise Me for taking care of it, your focus shifts from your problems to My power to solve them, and that puts your mind at ease. It's a three-step process:

First, hand your heart full of worries, problems, doubts, and fears over to Me.

Second, thank Me for taking care of them, even before you see the answers to your prayers.

Third, let the negative feelings dissolve and My peace fill your being.

How do you start praising, especially if you don't feel like it? Concentrate on Me and My power and goodness. This will probably take some effort on your part because your heart is weighed down with troubles, but once you start, I will carry you from there. I will fill you with peace and confidence. Your praises will also create a force field that will help shield you from further negativity. I can even give you the oomph you need to get started praising. Call out to Me in prayer, and I will answer. That's a promise!

