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Serving God, Others, AND Yourself

1. Deadly Expectations

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8 NIV).

"God's expectations are realistic and woven together with grace."

In our quest to honour God, it's not uncommon to set unrealistic expectations for ourselves... or fall into the trap of another human's expectations. Trying to live up to anything but God's expectations can lead to an unhealthy and sometimes deadly pace of life, often culminating in stress and burnout.

It's important to ask ourselves: Am I living under the pressure of another person's expectations? Or am I living according to God's expectations?

Today, the Lord wants to help you attune your heart to Him and align your expectations with what He has called you to do.

- Make a list of all the expectations you're feeling weighed down by. Be sure to include those you've placed on yourself and what you may be feeling from others.
- Prayerfully review the list and ask the Holy Spirit to help you recognise any "deadly expectations" that aren't rooted in truth or reflect God's character.
- Reading Scripture, fasting, and seeking wise counsel from other believers can help you discern the Lord's expectations above all others.
- Ask God to give you the courage to follow His expectations alone - and, if needed, to help you set boundaries to better protect your spiritual, emotional, relational, physical, and mental health.

2. Battle Scars

"Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their

example of disobedience" (Heb. 4:11 NIV).

"Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:7-10 NIV).

"...your scars do not have to become monuments to pain. With God's help, scars can become shrines to the time He came to your rescue."

Are you living with any scars? Although physical scars usually indicate some kind of trauma, unseen emotional wounds can also have devastating effects. Sometimes, the scars, pain, and shame of our past negatively affect our present and future.

When we're hurting, we often seek temporary fixes to numb the pain. Over-exercising. Binge-watching TV. Maxing out credit cards on shopping sprees. Throwing ourselves into work. Gambling. Abusing food, alcohol, and other substances. Seeking comfort in unhealthy relationships.

God does not overlook these struggles in His infinite wisdom and compassion. Jesus invites us to come as we are: wounded, broken, and authentic. He also empathises with our trials because Jesus was tempted, too. He understands how alluring these empty solutions feel in our moments of weakness.

Despite our battle scars, God can

repurpose our pain to craft a narrative of redemption from our brokenness. He is ever-present, picking up the shattered pieces of our lives to make us whole again... stronger and more beautiful in the mending.

To care for others, you first have to care for yourself. We must prioritise caring for the body and mind God has given us so we can properly reflect His image and serve those around us.

- Reflect and identify the biggest emotional and mental battle scars burdening you. Ask the Lord to reveal whether there's any unforgiveness or bitterness in your heart that is causing you (or those you love) continued pain. If there is, ask Him to help you forgive and begin healing.

- Prayerfully ask the Lord to use your battle scars for His glory. Even though it hurts to talk about pain, doing so can sometimes be the bridge that connects you to another person who is struggling. There is power in sharing your story.

- Thank the Lord that He is always with you and won't forsake you. Consider writing yourself notes or setting timers to remind you to thank God for this truth throughout the day.

3. Reckless Ambition

"Before a downfall the heart is haughty, but humility comes before honour" (Prov. 18:12 NIV).
"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30 NIV).

"...sometimes we confuse our desires for God's expectations. We assume duties and burdens He hasn't assigned to us."

In our desire to serve others and do good, it's easy to be swept

away by reckless ambition. Unbridled ambition is like a drug. It promises happiness and fulfilment until you discover how meaningless fame and fortune are without a God-given purpose.

If you're not tempted by money and power, realise that it can be just as easy to get swept away by the ambition to serve others and the Lord with excellence. Sometimes, the God-honouring outcomes we chase exact a price He never asked us to pay. Yes, the path of obedience often requires sacrifice... but the uncomfortable truth is that selflessness in the extreme - to the detriment of physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual health - is usually rooted in pride.

Steering clear of reckless ambition requires humility, a willingness to let God lead, and an openness to His correction and guidance. It requires vulnerability and trust. When we align our heart and mission with God's will and invite Him to direct our path, our efforts become more fruitful, and miraculously, our stress diminishes. We must humbly trade our reckless ambition for the yoke Jesus graciously extends to us in Matthew 11.

List the things you believe you've been sacrificing for the Lord. Then, ask yourself the following questions:

- Pray over the list and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any sacrifices that have been self-imposed rather than a humble response to God's leading.
- If there are any sacrifices you've been making out of selfish ambition, ask for forgiveness and for the Lord to help you remain humble. Thank Jesus for making the ultimate sacrifice on the cross.

4. Easy Targets

"Truly He is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will

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Die Grootpad deur die Woestyn

INLEIDING

Dit was laat sestigerjare. Dit was my voorreg om vir 'n aantal jare by die Wetenskaplike en Nywerheidsnavorsingsraad (WNNR) te werk. Ek, 'n junior klerk van so 18 jaar oud, was dag vir dag betrokke by hoogsgevoelde wetenskaplikes en tegnisi wat ons land van Europa ingevoer het om ons land te kom help met tegnologiese ontwikkeling.

Ek het 'n intense belangstelling gehad in die nuwe projekte waar- aan hulle gewerk het, op alle terreine van ons lewensbestaan. Hulle het onder andere baanbrekerswerk gedoen met die ontwikkeling van spesiale padboumetodes vir woestynpaaie in Suidwes-Afrika (Namibië). Deur sy Nasionale Instituut vir Padnavorsing het die Raad oplossings gesoek vir die uiterste uitdagings wat die droë Kalahari- en Namib-woestynstreke aan infrastruktuur gestel het. Dit het ingesluit watertekorte (miljoene liters per dag was nodig), gebrek aan klip (baie klip was nodig, terwyl daar net sand in die woestyn is); en uiterste hitte (temperatuurskommelingte het veroorsaak dat die tradisionele teer op paaie gesmelt het weens die versengende hitte bedags). Hulle moes werk aan sandstabilisasie, soutwater-verdigting, en spoorpaaie ("strip roads"). Laasgenoemde beteken dat die tradisionele paaie daar tweespoor-paaie was, wat meebring het dat die wiele van die voertuig op die harde spoor gery het, terwyl daar in die middel sand was. Dit het oneindige probleme geskep, en die harde spore het gereeld toegewaaie.

Om 'n geestelike toepassing te vind, kom die Woord tot ons in Jesaja 35:8, "En dáár sal 'n grootpad wees en 'n weg wat die heilige weg genoem sal word; geen onreine sal daarop voorttrek nie, maar vir hulle sal dit wees; wie die weg bewandel - selfs die dwase sal nie dwaal nie." En in Jes. 40:3, "'n Stem van een wat roep: Berei in die woestyn die weg van die HERE; maak gelyk in die wildernis 'n grootpad vir onse God!" [Natuurlik is dit 'n profetiese woord oor Johannes die Doper]. So staan dit ook opgeteken in Jes. 35:8 in die Nuwe Vertaling: "Daar sal 'n grootpad deur die woestyn loop en dit sal bekend staan as die gewyde pad. Onrein mense sal nie daarop loop nie, dit sal net wees vir mense wat reg lewe; dwase sal nie meer op die pad kom nie."

Ja, daar loop 'n grootpad deur die woestyn. Dit is 'n beeld van God wat 'n veilige en direkte pad van verlossing vir Sy mense maak. Dit

geld vir elke gelowige in God en in Jesus Christus, want Jesus het gesê: "Glo in God, glo ook in My," En ook: "Ek en die Vader is een."

1. ISRAEL HET DIE WOESTYNPAD GELOOP

Israel het telkemale in die geskiedenis op hierdie grootpad geloop. Israel se woestynpad begin by die deurtog deur die Rooisee, met Moses wat reeds 40 jaar deur die woestyn gekom het. Maar toe hierdie woestynbewoner sy staf oor die see uitstrek, gaan die see oop en die volk trek droogvoets deur.

Die frase "'n grootpad deur die woestyn" kom hoofsaaklik uit die boek Jesaja voor, waar dit 'n beeld is van God wat uitkoms vir Sy mense bring. Ten spyte van al die obstruksies, was die woestyn nie net 'n plek van straf nie, maar 'n plek van loutering, maar ook gekenmerk deur God se intense liefde, medelye en versorging. God het Sy Teenwoordigheid daagliks gewys deur 'n wolokolom bedags en 'n vuurkolom snags, en hul klere en skoene het in die 40 jaar nie verslyt nie.

Die tog van die Israeliete deur die woestyn (die Eksodus) ná hul bevryding uit Egipte is een van die mees deurslaggewende verhale in die Bybel. Hierdie reis, wat beskryf word in boeke soos Eksodus, Numeri en Deuteronomium, het 40 jaar lank geduur weens konstante struikelblokke, ongehoorsaamheid en geestelike obstruksies. Dan roep Jesaja uit: "'n Stem van een wat roep: Berei in die woestyn die weg van die HERE; maak gelyk in die wildernis 'n grootpad vir onse God!"

Op hierdie grootpad was daar smartlike belewenisse waar hulle noodgedwonge tot God moes roep. Hulle was honger, toe het Hy vir hulle manna en kwartels gegee. Hulle was dors, toe het Hy vir hulle water uit die Rots voorsien. Was dit warm bedags, toe het Hy vir hulle 'n wolokolom voorsien. Was dit koud snags, dan het Hy vir hulle 'n vuurkolom voorsien. Hy het hulle gesond gehou, want geen een van die siektes van Egipte het hulle getref nie. Al het hulle in ongehoorsaamheid teen Hom gerebelleer, het Hy hulle in liefde versorg. God bly getrou. Dit is ook 'n prentjie van ons geestelike woestynpad.

2. JESUS HET DIE WOESTYNPAD GELOOP

Ons lees in Matt. 4:1, "Toe is Jesus deur die Gees weggelei die woestyn in om versoek te word deur die duiwel." Hoekom? Sodat Hy innige medelye kon hê met elke gelowige met hulle smarte, want Hy het ons krankhede op Hom geneem en ons smart het Hy



gedra. Daar was die smarte van die woestynlewe. Koue. Hitte. honger, dors. Min slaap. Alleen in die woestyn met liggamlike sowel as geestelike beproewinge. Totdat Hy oorwin en vir Satan sê: "Gaan weg, Satan! want daar is geskrywe: Die Here jou God moet jy aanbid en Hom alleen dien." Hy het oorwin! Hy het déúr die fisiese en geestelike woestyn gekom. En daar het engele gekom en Hom gedien, Hom versorg.

Aan die einde van Sy ongeveer drie jaar bediening, net voor die kruisiging, vind ons Jesus in Getsémane in verootmoediging voor God die Vader. Hy pleit dat hierdie beker van beproewing by Hom moet verbygaan. Maar Hy voeg by: "Nogtans nie My wil nie, maar U wil geskied." En hiermee kom Hy deur die woestyn as meer as 'n oorwinnaar! En engele kom nogeens om Hom te dien en Hom te versorg, want Hy was vir 'n klein tydjie minder gemaak as die engele (Ps. 8; Heb. 2:5-9). Jesus is ons Wegbereider. Hy het hierdie pad geloop en Sy tog voltooi op die kruis. Hy is begrawe. Hy het opgestaan. Is verheerlik. Hy het die Heilige Gees, die ander Trooster (Helper) op ons uitgestort om in ons, by ons, en met ons te wees.

3. ELKE GELOWIGE LOOP OP HIERDIE WOESTYNPAD

Elke gelowige in Jesus Christus kom op hierdie grootpad deur die woestyn. Op die woestynpad is daar telkemale bepaalde obstruksies wat oorkom moet word, maar met die Hand van die Here wat op elkeen rus, lei Hy ons veilig anderkant uit. Job het gesê: "As Hy my toets, sal ek soos goud tevoorskyn kom." En die liederedigter skryf en sing: Hy't my deurgedra, Hy't my deurgedra, deur die storms van die lewe..."

Op hierdie pad moet ons nougeset hoor en luister wanneer Hy telkemale vir ons uitkoms gee. Israel het die pad geloop as gevolg van hul ongehoorsaamheid. Die gelowiges in Jesus Christus loop hierdie pad, hoofsaaklik as gevolg van hulle

gehoorsaamheid aan God.

Gaan ons na die die Grieks in die Nuwe Testament en die Hebreeus in die Ou Testament, vind ons die woorde dat ons moet hoor en doen. Die Hebreeuse woord shema beteken gelyktydig "hoor, luister en doen". In Grieks is dit akouō, wat dieselfde betekenis inhou: "Julle moet doen wat die woord sê en dit nie net hoor nie, anders bedrieg julle julleself" (Jak. 1:22). En Jesus sê: "My skape luister na My Stem, en Ek ken hulle, en hulle volg My" (Joh. 10:27). Om bloot te hoor sonder om te luister (gehoorsaam te wees) is volgens die Bybel waardeeloos. Jesus vervolg: "En elkeen wat na hierdie woorde van My luister (akouō) en dit nie doen nie, sal vergelyk word met 'n dwase man wat sy huis op die sand gebou het" (Matt. 7:26). Toe die storms kom, het die huis geval omdat dit op sand gebou is en nie op die Rots nie. Die Bybelse verskil tussen hoor en luister lê in die verskil tussen passiewe klankwaarneming en aktiewe, gehoorsame aksie. In die Bybel beteken "met aandag te luister" altyd om te glo, ter harte te neem en te doen wat God vra.

Op die woestynpad leer ons die Here van naby ken. Die woord "ken" kan ook twee betekenis inhou: Ken net van sien of van hoor, en ken deur ervaring. Watter pad moet die ernstige gelowige loop om by die kragtige en volle betekenis van die Woord uit te kom, sodat hy dit kan toepas in gebed en gevolglik die wonderwerke van God kan beleef? Jesus het gesê: "Julle sal die waarheid ken, en die waarheid sal julle vrymaak" (Joh. 8:32). Die Bybelse Griekse woord vir ken is ginoskō wat beteken ken deur persoonlike ervaring of belewenis van Jesus, in 'n lewende en intieme verhouding met Jesus. En dit staan in skrilte kontras met "ken" as bloot intellektuele waarneming, wat beskryf word met 'n ander Griekse woord, en dit is oida, wat beteken 'n feitlike waarneming, of dan 'n waarneming met jou

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MINISTRY@WORK

GO ISA MOLAETSA WA KERESETE MO TIRONG

REETSA PELE O BUA

Reetsa Pele • Bua ka Botlhale • Arabela ka Kutlwelobothoko



Letsatsi le letsatsi kwa tirong re kopana le maseo a a lekang bopelotelele jwa rona le mafoko a rona.
 Jakobe 1:19 e re ruta gore re nne bonako go utlwa, bonya go bua, le bonya go galefa.
 A re ithopheleng go reetsa sentle, go bua ka botlhale, le go arabela ka kutlwelobothoko.

BIBELE E RE RUTA

Reetsa gore o thaloganye.



Nna le ditsebe go feta molomo!

KE ENG GO REETSA GO LE BOTLHOKWA?

Jakobe 1:19
 "Ka jalo, bakaulengwe ba me ba ba rateng, a mongwe le mongwe a nne bonako go utlwa, bonya go bua, bonya go galefa."
Reetsa pele o araba.

Diane 18:13
 "Yo o arabang kgang pele a e utlwa, seo ke boisele le ditshong mo go ene."
Thaloganya pele o araba.

Diane 19:20
 "Reetsa kgakololo, o amogele thuto, gore o tle o nne botlhale mo isagweng."
Go reetsa go baka botlhale.

GO REETSA GO AGA

-  Go thaloganya
-  Bopelotelele
-  Botlhale
-  Kagiso



DIKARABO TSA BUNYA DI SENYA

-  Kgalefo
-  Dikgang tsa go lwantshana
-  Ditsebo (gossip)
-  Dikamano tse di senyegileng



DIKGWEETLHO KWA TIRONG



Reetsa pele o bua.



Reetsa gabedi mme. Araba gangwe!



Rotloetsa go thaloganyana go na le go lwantshana.



Dirisa mafoko a gago go tlhola Keresete.

THAPELO

Ntate yo o kwa legodimong, nthuse gore ke nne bonako go utlwa, bonya go bua, le bonya go galefa. Disa lolome lwa me le pelo ya me. Nthuse go bua mafoko a a tlang botshelo, kagiso le kutlwelobothoko mo bathong ba bangwe. A mafoko a me a tlotle Keresete mme a age ba bangwe. Amen.

GOPOLA

Modimo o go file **DITSEBE TSE PEDI** le **MOLOMO O LE MONGWE.**

Reetsa gabedi mme o bua gangwe!

MINISTRY@WORK
 GO ISA MOLAETSA WA KERESETE MO TIRONG

Tlota mongwe
 Amogela leano
 Thakarela

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HOPE CENTRE
 IMPACTING TOMORROW

When Life Gets Busy, Keep Abiding

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-tality, while Mary saw the unique privilege of receiving Jesus's undivided attention. What started as a shared blessing (hosting Jesus together) soon exposed the sisters' competing priorities.

We face similar pressures in our relationships today. Loving Jesus doesn't automatically remove our desire to perform, but by seeking holy leisure, we grow in Christ-likeness. This often looks like choosing Presence over perfor-

mance - slowing down, listening attentively, and genuinely enjoying the people God has placed around us.

3. RIGHTEOUS ACTIVITY FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE

Mary's focused attention on Jesus was her first priority, and Jesus said it was *"the good portion"* (Luke 10:42). By sitting at Jesus's feet before she served, she enjoyed a spiritual meal she would remember long after her physical meal was forgotten.

Mary chose Jesus over her sister, her guests, and the cultural expectations of her as a hostess - and Jesus affirmed this as the right choice.

We may not always live up to Mary's example of contemplation before action, but we too can cultivate holy leisure in the middle of our everyday lives. As we sit at His feet and seek first His Kingdom, our priorities are reordered. Our this-then-that approach to life doesn't have to

be at the mercy of our circumstances. We can pursue holy leisure and then undertake righteous activity for His Name's sake. When we do, Jesus will be our Good Portion - the One Thing necessary.

- Cara Ray, author of *The Pursuit of Holy Leisure: Enjoying God in Everyday Places*, and operates an online writing community, *My Writers' Bloc*. She and her husband, Tim, live in Gilbert, Arizona, and have four kids.

Die Grootpad deur die Woestyn

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verstand of kopkennis of bloot emosionele waarneming, wat baie onstabiel is of wat baie kan fluktrueer. Dit is in kontras met 'n belewenis van God. Die vrug van Godskennis is wonderwerke, terwyl die vrug van menslike intellektuele kennis uitloop op droogheid en verstarring met GEEN positiewe vrug vir die mens in nood wat ernstig soek na God se ingrype in sy lewe nie.

Hierby het Jesus aangesluit: *"En wanneer hy sy eie skape uitgebring het, loop hy voor hulle uit; en die skape volg hom, omdat hulle sy stem ken (eidō/oida). Hulle sal 'n vreemde nooit volg nie, maar van hom wegvlug, omdat hulle die stem van die vreemdes nie ken nie"* (Joh 10: 4-5). Wat is die verskil tussen die skape wat Sy Stem ken (eidō/oida) en die wat Jesus ken as die waarheid (ginosko)? Hierin lê 'n stukkie goud opgesluit. Baie mense hoor oppervlakkig die Woord, of neem waar met blote intellektuele kennis, maar doen niks daaromtrent nie. Maar die

soekende siel, wat honger en dorstig is na die Woord, gryp dit aan, en wanneer hy opstaan en Jesus volg, word die 'hoorwoord' 'n 'doenwoord'. Daarom sê Jesus: *"Julle sal die waarheid ken (ginosko) en die waarheid sal julle vrymaak"* (Joh. 8:32). En dit is die konflik wat Jesus gedurig met die Joodse Rabbi's gehad het. Want Hy het vir hulle gesê: *"Waarom ken julle My spraak nie? Omdat julle na My woord nie kan luister nie. Julle het die duiwel as vader, en die begeertes van julle vader wil julle doen. Hy was 'n mensemoordenaar van die begin af en staan nie in die waarheid nie, omdat daar in hom geen waarheid is nie. Wanneer hy leuentaalkom, praat, praat hy uit sy eie, omdat hy 'n leuenaar is en die vader daarvan. Maar omdat Ek die waarheid spreek, glo julle My nie"* (Joh. 8:43-45). Maar vir die wat geglo het, sê Johannes: *"Terwyl Hy hierdie dinge spreek, het baie (Jode) in Hom geglo"* (Joh. 8:30). En vir hulle kom die Woord: *"En Jesus sê vir die Jode wat in Hom geglo het: As julle in My woord bly, is julle waarlik My dissipels"*

(Joh. 8:31). Geloof is dus die sleutel wat handelend optree en Jesus ervaar as die Lig van die wêreld. En dit is die verskil tussen blote intellektuele kennis en ervaringskennis, waar ons God beleef in Jesus Christus.

SAMEVATTING

Die woestyn is onbegaanbaar en 'n harde omgewing. Tog het mense tegnologie ontwikkel om paaie daar te bou. In die geestelike dimensie ervaar ons ook woestynpaaie. Ons sien dat Israel

dit vanouds letterlik en figuurlik ervaar het. Jesus het ook deur die woestyn gekom, maar uiteindelik oorwin. Ons leer geduld, volharding, en beleef God in ons woestyn. Ons leer om fyn te luister, en ons leer Hom van naby ken. Daar is nie 'n kosbaarder geskenk as dit nie! Neem God se Hand, sodat Hy Sy doel in jou lewe kan bereik! Volg Hom deur die woestyn en groei tot ongekende hoogtes deur die krag van Sy Gees!

©JJ Venter



Faith Is More Than Believing Facts

Charles Blondin, the French tightrope walker, successfully crossed Niagara Falls several times in the late 1850s. This is no small feat, considering that the rope spanned 335 metres and hung 50 metres above the raging waters.

It is reported that on one occasion, Blondin pushed a wheelbarrow across the Falls. He then asked how many people in the crowd believed he could push the wheelbarrow across with someone in it. The crowd cheered in affirmation. Given the enthusiasm, he asked a further question: "Does anyone believe enough to get into the wheelbarrow and cross Niagara Falls with me?" No one volunteered.

With no volunteers available, Blondin upped the ante and had his manager climb onto his back. It took 42 minutes, but together they crossed the Great Falls.

Often, when we speak to others about Jesus, people readily admit to believing in Him. But by this, they often mean they believe He lived, that He was a good man,

and that He is worthy of a certain degree of imitation.

Of course, I am glad for that kind of belief, but it still falls short of the belief Jesus asks of us. Rather than mere intellectual assent or even admiration, Jesus seeks the kind of trust that has us climbing onto His back, knowing He is the only Way to bring us safely to God's side of the great divide.

Some of my friends have been wrestling with questions about life, God, and the Bible. Recently, they came to understand that the

biggest question of all is whether to place their trust in Christ as the only Way to be made right with God, now and forever. That's the kind of question we want others to grapple with as well.

So don't be satisfied if your friends are comfortable with a few facts and figures about Jesus but have yet to trust Him to carry them. Keep up the friendly conversations and point them to the One Who is the "resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

- John Hopper, Executive Director of REACH

FINALLY FINISHED!

Ruth Bell Graham was the wife of Billy Graham, both long gone to be with the Lord. Travelling somewhere she once noticed a road sign: CONSTRUCTION FINALLY FINISHED. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE.

Deeply struck by this thought, she decided that those words would one day have pride of place on her final resting place. And would you know, those exact words became the epitaph on her gravestone.

I was equally stirred by those

words when I contemplated how beautifully it could refer to one's Earthly life. Being constantly, as it were, under construction, needing patience as we grow and change, we who belong to Christ are greatly privileged having the greatest Artist of all time as our Potter and Architect.

May I encourage you today not to lose patience with yourself or anyone else enduring the same process. Paul exclaims with great certainty, *"And I am certain that God, Who began the good work within you will continue His work until it is FINALLY FINISHED on*

the day when Christ Jesus returns" (Philippians 1:6). Not a day or a minute sooner.

What is happening to us then? *"The Lord... makes us more and more like Him as we are changed into His glorious image"* (2 Corinthians 3:18, NLT).

It will be worth it all, Beloved, "when we see Jesus. Life's trials will seem so small, when we see Christ" goes the old song. Take heart, anchor your hope anew, strengthen your faith and trust the process.

- Helen du Plessis, 083 332 0895



Helen du Plessis

A Kingdom of Power and Testimony

The Kingdom of God is a "supernatural" Kingdom. It is a "heavenly" Kingdom that directly impacts our Earthly reality. Jesus was very clear about this: it is a Kingdom that must be "preached" to the whole world by us.

In Matthew 24:14 (NKJV), we read: *"And this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."* But what exactly does this "witness" entail?

When we share the Gospel, we are not talking about a distant, passive God, but about a Living God. Miracles and signs are powerful evidence that support this testimony. They show the world that the God we proclaim is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is the only God, and He is more than capable of demonstrating that fact in "might" and "power."

When miracles happen in His Name, something happens in the hearts of people. It breaks through unbelief and religious barriers. It leads people to glorify God and, finally, to acknowledge Him as Lord. **This is why the supernatural is so essential to our mission.** It draws attention away from man and directs it toward the majesty of the Creator. In doing so, we bear fruit for the Kingdom.

Jesus said in John 15:8 (NKJV): *"By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."* By walking in the power of the Spirit, we show

the world the glory of the Father. God becomes visible when the sick are healed and hearts are touched by His tangible power.

DOING THE WORKS OF JESUS
Jesus gave us a promise. In John 14:12 (NKJV), He says: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father."*

Jesus gave this teaching right after emphasising that He will do whatever we ask in His Name, so that the *"Father may be glorified in the Son"* (John 14:13). Jesus literally indicates that they will do the works that He also did. And greater.

Let's look at the "works" that Jesus did. He turned water into wine as the beginning of signs, by which His glory was revealed and His disciples believed in Him (John 2:11). He healed the sick, cleansed lepers, raised the dead, and cast out demons. These were not tricks, but expressions of the glory of God. He promises these signs and wonders to us as well. He says that we will "also" do these if we believe in Him.

The reason for this is crucial to understand. It is not intended so that we ourselves are thought of as great or can boast, saying, "Look at what I can do!" On our own, we can't even "resurrect" a fly. **No, these works are intended to glorify God in our lives, just as Jesus did.**

In John 17:4 (NKJV), Jesus says: *"I have glorified You on the earth. I*

have finished the work which You have given Me to do."

When we do the works He gives us, we fulfil our calling and God becomes visible. It is an invitation to step out in complete dependence on Him. Miracles are evidence of God. **Miracles are meant to be part of the life of a believer.**

Miracles show us that we serve under an open heaven and that the resources of heaven are at our disposal to magnify the Father.

MIRACLES ARE A CONFIRMATION
If the Gospel is shared without signs and wonders, it may miss its mark. It can be intellectually interesting, but if no one is touched, convicted, encouraged, healed, delivered, or saved, the question is whether the power of the Kingdom was actually present. For God has chosen to "confirm" His Word with signs and wonders!

In Mark 16:20 (NKJV), we see this principle in action with the first disciples: *"And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen."* **The signs, therefore, are not the goal in themselves; the goal is that people will believe and glorify God. It is about Him and His Kingdom.** Jesus constantly walked in this reality.

In Acts 10:38 (NKJV), we read about *"how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, Who went about*

doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." Because God was with Him, lives changed.

Think of the paralysed man who was let down through the roof. Jesus forgave his sins, but to prove He had that authority, He performed a miracle. He said: *"But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on Earth to forgive sins"* - He said to the paralytic, *"I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."* The reaction of the bystanders was as follows: *"...so that they all were amazed and glorified God"* (Mark 2:12, NKJV).

Today, Jesus says to us: "Follow Me!" He says that multiple times in the Bible. That doesn't mean passively walking behind Him, but doing what He did.

1 John 4:17 (NKJV) reminds us: *"Because as He is, so are we in this world."* Jesus had compassion; we must also. Jesus loved; we must also love. Jesus healed and cast out demons; we must also walk in healing and cast out demons. Jesus raised the dead; we must also raise the dead in Jesus's Name.

God is all-powerful. And He wants to work through you today! He wants you to proclaim the Kingdom with power! Trust Him to empower you for your task and to work with and through you to confirm His sacred message. Arise, get moving, and do what God says you can do, so that He will be fully glorified in your life as well!

<https://oneinhimfoundation.com/>

Serving God, Others, AND Yourself

Continued from p. 1
never be shaken. How long will you assault me? Would all of you throw me down - this leaning wall, this tottering fence?" (Ps. 62:2-3 NIV).
"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10 NIV).

"The enemy wants us to live on the defensive, always fearful of his next attack. God wants us to mount a counteroffensive of love and compassion in the world, fully trusting His strength and protection."

If you're struggling emotionally, mentally, physically, or spiritually right now, you might feel like you're an easy target for the enemy. Exhaustion, worry, anxiety, fear, guilt, shame, loneliness, and bitterness are weapons the enemy uses to keep us feeling helpless and paralysed. But we have the power to launch a counterattack. We have God Almighty on our side. He's given us an entire arsenal of battle weapons in the form of Scripture, prayer, fasting, praise, and worship. Plus, as believers, we have access to the full armour of God.

The results can be transformative when we pair these spiritual tools with self-care practices such as eating a balanced diet, exercising, getting adequate sleep, and taking time to enjoy God-given interests, hobbies, and friendships. By using the tools God gives us to take care of ourselves, we can be better prepared for attacks on our spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

If you feel particularly vulnerable to attacks from the enemy during this season, consider making a list of tactics the enemy often uses and strategies you can leverage to launch a counter-attack.

- Reflect on the last time you participated in a life-giving activity, interest, or hobby.
- If you can't remember the last time you spent time doing something you love, make a plan to do so in the next few weeks. If responsibilities prevent you from enjoying certain hobbies or interests, consider asking a close friend or family member to help so you can schedule time to be refreshed.

5. Pushing Reset
"I waited patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to

our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in Him" (Ps. 40:1-3 NIV).
"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom. 12:1-2 NIV).

"It's okay to say, 'God, it's been a difficult few years. I'm weary, and I need Your help.'"

Despite how much we love the Lord and try to walk in obedience to Him, there will be times when we are tired, cranky, and restless. Hopefully, those times are few and fleeting. When discouragement takes residence as a long-term tenant in our spirit, we have three options:

1. Ignore
2. Isolate
3. Investigate.

Ignoring the issue and isolating ourselves might feel like quick solutions... but the only way to gain lasting peace is to investigate and address the root cause of our discouragement. If you're feeling constantly depleted, you may have debris that obstructs your view of all God has for you. Now is the perfect time for a spiritual reset.

Like David modelled many times throughout Psalms, cry out to the Lord and ask for His help. Ask the Holy Spirit to renew your mind and spirit. Foundations matter, and your heart is the foundation God will build upon. If you don't address its cracks and instability, the flaws will grow over time, ultimately limiting your effectiveness for the Kingdom.

Think about the last time you spent significant uninterrupted time with the Lord. Was it days, weeks, months, or years ago?

- Plan a time to reconnect with your Creator. Mark it on your calendar. Consider going for a long walk or hike, planning a solo picnic, or scheduling a retreat at a campground or hotel to get spiritually refreshed.
- Prepare for your time away. Make a list of topics you want to pray through. Bring your Bible or audio Bible, a notebook, writing utensils, a Bible study, and reference materials. Prepare a playlist of your favourite worship songs.

6. Yelling "Ouch!"
"...but the Face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to blot out their name from the earth. The righteous cry out, and the Lord

hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all" (Ps. 34:16-19 NIV).

"When difficulties come, we can acknowledge that they are both painful and valuable. They help shape us into powerful people of God."

Most of us believe God has a good plan for our lives... but it can be difficult to reconcile our faith against a devastating medical diagnosis, broken relationship, financial hardship, or unexpected death. And what makes matters worse? Well-intentioned friends who say, "Don't worry. Everything happens for a reason."

But that expression is very different from Romans 8:28 (ESV), which says, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." We may never understand why we go through tough times, but everyone who has placed their faith in Jesus can be assured that the Lord will work everything for good.

But working through pain requires a partnership with God. Sometimes, He instructs us to simply wait and trust Him. Other times, He may prompt us to apologise to someone we've hurt, seek a counsellor, start a Bible study, or walk away from a tough situation altogether.

Today, maybe you need to say something like, "Lord, it's been a difficult season. I'm weary. I need your help." When life hurts, it's okay to yell, "Ouch!" God desires our honest and authentic communication, and He can use our brokenness and pain for good.

If you identify any painful experiences that are still causing you to feel overwhelmed or paralysed, consider seeking wise spiritual counsel from a faithful friend, counselor, mentor, ministry leader, or Christian therapist. But realise that you don't have to be "on the other side" or completely healed from painful experiences for God to use you.

- Is there anyone in your life who went through or is going through a similar situation - someone who could help speak life and truth to you? Or someone you could invest in and help mentor? If so, reach out to them this week.

7. Next Question
"For this reason I kneel before the Father, from Whom every family in heaven and on Earth derives its

name. I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:14-19 NIV).

"God doesn't call us to tasks we can't complete. He calls us to tasks we can't complete without Him."

Nowadays, it's not uncommon for people actively involved in ministry to be on the edge of burnout. How are we supposed to serve others while caring for ourselves selflessly?

Sometimes, the world's problems seem too overwhelming. But Jesus isn't asking us to meet everyone's needs. Only God can do that. The reality is that God doesn't need us. Rather, He allows us to partner with Him to serve a hurting world. But it's an opportunity - not an obligation.

Like the Good Samaritan, we should be perceptive to the needs around us and ask the Lord how He wants to demonstrate His compassion through us to those who are hurting. As we partner with God, we should also allow Him to restore and replenish us continually.

What really matters to God, more than anything you can do or offer Him, is simply and beautifully you. If you can be intentional about giving yourself quick checkups throughout the year, you are more likely to make corrections before issues escalate into bigger problems.

- Create your own "spiritual wellness questions" list using the examples below as inspiration. Am I taking care of myself? What is my spiritual temperature lately? What am I holding on to? Am I happy and content? How am I defining success? Am I leading with kindness? What am I worried about?
- Choose one day each month to prayerfully review and honestly answer the questions.
- If you find it easy to have compassion for others but challenging to have compassion for yourself, consider finding a trusted accountability partner who can help you identify strategies to practice self-care regularly.

From: *What Really Matters*, Hal Donaldson, convoyofhope.org

ONBEGRYPLIKE VREDE

Daar is 'n lied wat ons soms sing wat by my opkom:

“Die vrede wat Christus gee
Ervaar ek nou in my gemoed
‘n Soete vree, ‘n stille vree
Wat net Hy vir my kan gee
U maak my bly, Christus
U maak my bly, my Vredevoors...”
Dit bring ons by die wondergawe van vrede. Ons lees die volgende kosbare woorde in Fil. 4:7, “*En die vrede van God, wat alle verstand te bowe gaan, sal julle harte en julle sinne bewaar in Christus Jesus.*” Kom ons wissel enkele gedagtes hieroor.

1. VREDE IS ‘N VRUG VAN DIE GEES

In Galasiërs 5 moedig Paulus die gelowiges aan om deur die Gees te wandel. Hy skryf dat die vlees en die Gees reglyning teenoor mekaar is en teen mekaar begeer. Maar wanneer ons deur die Gees leef, sal ons in vryheid leef en nie onder die juk van ‘n wet nie. Ons sal van nature doen wat reg is, en nie hoef te veg en te probeer en menigmaal in eie krag te faal nie.

Paulus gaan voort om die werke van die vlees te bespreek en te kontrasteer met die vrug van die Gees. In teenstelling met al die sondige en slegte vrug van ‘n vleeslike lewenswandel wat die dood as uiteindelijke slotsom het, lees ons dat “*die vrug van die Gees is liefde, blydschap, vrede, lankmoedigheid, vriendelikheid, goedheid, getrouheid, sagmoedigheid, selfbeheersing*” (v. 22). Hier tref ons onder andere vrede aan. Dit is ‘n vrug, iets waarvan die saad in ons gees geplaas is, maar wat moet groei en tot volle wasdom moet kom.

Om God se vrede daaglik te ervaar, moet ons dus daaglik in en met die Gees wandel. In Sy instaatstellende krag. In Sy genade. Onder Sy beheer en liefdevolle invloed en leiding. Ons moet tyd saam met Hom deurbring in gebed en aan Hom oorgee.

Wanneer ons naby aan God leef, sal ons lewe die vrug daarvan wys. Ander sal sien dat ons liefde, blydschap, geduld, ens. openbaar. Ons sal ook duursame vrede as kenmerk van ons lewenswandel hê. ‘n Rus. ‘n Vertroue. ‘n Kalmte. Dit is die vrug van ons gemeenskap met die Gees.

2. VREDE IS UIT JESUS, ONS VREDEVORS

Paulus skryf dat Jesus ons vrede is, omdat Hy versoening gebring het aan die kruis vir alle nasies, insluitend heidene en Jode: “*Onthou dat julle in daardie tyd sonder Christus was... sonder hoop en sonder God in die wêreld. Maar nou, in Christus Jesus, het julle, wat destyds ver weg was,*

naby gekom deur die bloed van Christus. Hy is immers ons vrede - Hy wat albei één gemaak het, en die middelmuur van skeiding, die vyandskap, deur Sy liggaam afgebreek het. Hy het die wet met sy eise en reëls tot niet gemaak, sodat Hy, deur vrede te maak, in Homself die twee tot een nuwe mens kon skep, en sodat Hy albei in een liggaam met God kon versoen deur die kruis, deurdadig Hy daaraan die vyandskap vernietig het.

En Hy het vrede as goeie boodskap aan julle kom verkondig, aan julle wat ver was, en ook vrede aan diegene wat naby was. Want deur Hom het ons albei toegang tot die Vader deur een Gees” (Ef. 2:12-18 DV).

Die grootste geestelike herbelyning kom wanneer ons Jesus as Saligmaker aanvaar. Dan beweeg ons uit ‘n toestand van rebellie en sonde en skeiding (geestelike dood) na ‘n nuwe lewe, een vol vrede en versoening en genade! En Jesus, ons Vredevoors, het dit bewerkstellig!

Wanneer ons dus in daaglikse stryd en versoeking kom, moet ons dink aan die vrede wat ons reeds op grond van ons redding met God het. Ons was sonder hoop, maar Hy het hoop gebring. Ons was geestelike weeskinders, maar Hy het ons aangeneem om in Sy gesin te woon en as bewys hiervan die Heilige Gees aan ons gegee (Rom. 8:15).

Die vyandskap het verander in ‘n liefdesverhouding - die dimensies hiervan sluit in God-mens en mens-mens. ‘n Nuwe skepping. Vanuit hierdie ongelooflike verhouding vloei alle geestelike gawes en seëninge van God (Ef. 1:3). God het selfs nie Sy Seun gespaar nie, maar Hom vir ons oorgegee sodat ons duursame vrede kan smaak. Hy sal aan ons saam met Hom en in Hom ook alle gawes gee (Rom. 8:32). Watter gawes? Dit wat tot godsvrug dien, in vrygewigheid en seën. Alle genadegawes. En dit sluit daaglikse vrede in.

3. VREDE HET VOORWAARDES

Ons lees in Fil. 4:6, “*Wees oor niks besorg nie, maar laat julle begeertes in alles deur gebed en smeking met danksegging bekend word by God.*” Daarna volg die belofte van vrede. Ons moet dus eers al ons bekommernisse, vrese en angste na die Here bring. Alle begeertes. Alles wat pla. Alles wat ons vrede wegneem. In gebed en smeking - soms dringend en aanhoudend.

Ons sien nie uitkoms nie. Daar is geen rede om, menslikgesproke, ons bekommernisse prys te gee en rus te vind nie. Maar dan lees

ons van dank-segging. Ons sê dankie dat die Here in ons warboel van emosies intree! Dat Hy toetree tot ons onoplosbare saak. Die gebroke verhouding. Die finansiële druk. Die groot lys van verantwoordelikhede. Selfs onbelyde sonde wat pyn en skeiding bring, maar verligting en seën wanneer dit bely word (Ps. 32:3-5). En in geloof begin ons reeds dankie sê dat Hy dit sal oplos. Hy sal vergewe en herstel.

Ons gee alles in Sy Hande oor en vertrou Hom daarmee. Dit is dán dat ons die gawe van Sy onbegryplike vrede ontvang. Ons hoef nie verstaan of uit te pluus of die uiteinde of oplossing reeds te sien nie. Ons weet nie hoe ‘n saak sal afloop nie. Maar ons weet Wie in beheer is. Want ons het die beheer aan Hom oorgegee. In ruil daarvoor gee Hy vir ons Sy kosbare vrede. Wat ‘n gawe!

Maclaren skryf dat die Groot Moskee van Konstantinopel (die Hagia Sophia in Istanboel) eens ‘n Christelike kerk was. Binne die Moskee is daar steeds ‘n koperplaat gegraveer met die volgende bekende woorde, “*Kom na My toe, almal wat vermoeid en belas is, en Ek sal julle rus gee*” (Matt. 11:28). Vir meer as vierhonderd jaar het die skares geveg, geweeklaag en hul bekommer. Maar hulle harte het nie ag gegee op die geduldige belofte van Jesus wat steeds tot ons gerig word nie. Jesus bied ons vrede, maar ons moet tot Hom nader (Jak. 4:8).

Nog eens skryf Maclaren dat ons gewete, passie, begeertes, rede, intellek, oordeelvermoë en versigtigheid of vrese ons in verskeie rigtings trek en om ons aandag veg; maar dit is net God wat die harmonieuse balans van vrede in ons lewe kan bewerkstellig - wanneer ons in nederigheid tot Hom nader. Hy eindig dan met die woorde: “*Trust is peace. Submission is peace. Communion is peace.*”

Soms los die Here die saak anders op as wat ons dit sou wou hê. Soos iemand uitgewys het - ons gee ons begeertes oor aan Hom (Fil. 4:6), maar Hy sal elke behoefte vervul na Sy heerlikheid deur Christus Jesus (Fil. 4:19). As ons God vertrou, sal Hy besluit wat die beste vir ons is. Sy wil is beter as ons wil, want Sy insig en wysheid en gedagtes is oneindig hoër as ons s’n.

Ons moet daardie geestelike eksperiment doen deur te kies om Hom teen logika en ander raad in te vertrou (mits ons seker is dit is wat Hy van ons vra in ‘n bepaalde situasie) en dan sal ons die vrug pluk - eerstens die vrede in ons gemoed, maar daarna ook die

uitkoms soos wat Hy dit bewillig. Op Sy tyd en op Sy terme.

4. VREDE SE GEVOLGE

Laat ons terugkeer na Fil. 4:7, “*En die vrede van God, wat alle verstand te bowe gaan, sal julle harte en julle sinne bewaar in Christus Jesus.*” God gee aan ons onbegryplike vrede. Midde-in die mediese diagnose. In die oorlog wanneer skote klap en bomme bars. En die gevolg? Hierdie vrede sal ons harte en ons sinne bewaar. ‘Bewaar’ is ‘n militêre begrip en effe onverwags binne die konteks van vrede. Een kommentator stel dit so: “*The peace of God is the garrison of the soul in all the experiences of its life, defending it from the external assaults of temptation or anxiety, and disciplining all lawless desires and imaginations within that war against its higher purposes. Christ Jesus is the sure Refuge and the atmosphere of security.*”

God se vrede bewaar ons van versoeking, angs, vrees, en sondige begeertes. Wanneer ons rus vind in Hom, vind ons beskerming en vryheid van alle aanslae. Ons totale innerlike mens en lewe vind kalmte en rene vrede. Rus en berusting. Wat sou mense betaal vir so ‘n voordeel? Hoeveel spa’s en afrigters is daar wat self-help-boeke skryf en programme uitdink om balans en rus en kalmte te probeer bewerkstellig. Dalk kry hulle vlietende oomblikke daarvan wat hul dissipels kan beleef. Maar niks kom by die duursame en standhoudende vrede wat God aan Sy kinders gee nie!

SAMEVATTING

Paulus moedig ons aan om deur die Gees te wandel, dan sal ons lewe die vrug van die Gees openbaar vir almal om te sien. Hulle sal sien dat ons in vrede met God en met mekaar leef. Die basis hiervan is ons versoening met die Vader deur die bloed van Jesus wat Hy vir ons aan die kruis gestort het. God het hierdie soenoffer aanvaar en ons in vrede laat woon. Ons moet in onderdanigheid en geloof alle probleme en begeertes na God bring, dan sal Hy aan ons dié vrede skenk. Laat ons dan in kinderlike opregtheid en aanvaarding glo dat Jesus ons onbegryplike vrede as geskenk gee: “*Vrede laat Ek vir julle na, My vrede gee Ek aan julle; nie soos die wêreld gee, gee Ek aan julle nie. Laat julle hart nie ontsteld word en bang wees nie*” (Joh. 14:27). Ons grootste gawe is God Self. Wanneer ons in Sy Teenwoordigheid woon en wandel, sal Sy lig alle duisternis uitdryf, en Sy vrede alle vrees en ongemak ongedaan maak. Lééf in Sy vrede! © C Venter

Be Strong and Courageous

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13 NIV).

When Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthian church, he was writing to believers experiencing intense division. Power and politics within the church community were causing Christians to stray from Jesus’s teachings and compete with each other. Because of this, the poor were suffering, people were confused about theology, and immorality was being tolerated.

After calling out their mistakes and showing them how to live Spirit-filled lives, Paul summarised his desire for the Corinthians with these words... *“Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong. And do everything with love”* (1 Corinthians 16:13-14 NLT).

Be on guard... Paul uses this phrase to remind his friends to keep watch over their lives, their community, and their choices. He knew that if they didn’t stay aware and awake, they wouldn’t notice the lies, tricks, or deceptions the devil was using to infiltrate their

community.

Stand firm... Immorality was a major issue in the Corinthian church. But instead of addressing this problem, Corinthian Christians were tolerating it. So Paul reminded them that they are one body. If one person was allowed to disrespect God, then they were all part of the problem. They needed to learn how to stand firm in their faith so that their ultimate desire would be to please God, not people.

Be courageous. Be strong... In order to resist spiritual attacks, the Corinthians needed to stand strong together. They needed to courageously use their gifts and talents to strengthen their church community and help it grow - even when it seemed counter-cultural and uncomfortable.

And do everything with love... In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul writes that if he could be perfect, do everything right, never sin, and always keep God’s commands - but he didn’t have love, it would mean nothing. Strength, courage, and commitment - none of it matters if God’s love isn’t at the centre of



everything we think and do.

If God’s love doesn’t define us, standing firm can become self-righteousness, strength can turn into stubbornness, and courage can become arrogance.

So, what steps will you take to stand firm in what you believe with strength and courage? As you determine what choices you need to make, remember that God fights for you, and His Spirit is with you. He can empower you to

boldly share His love.

Prayer: God, I need You. You’ve given me everything I need to live a godly life, but that doesn’t mean that it’s easy. Please help me to not waiver in my faith. Help me to be on guard against any attacks and lies from the devil. Give me the courage to be strong and stand firm in my belief in You, and to live for You every day. In Jesus’s Name. Amen.

- Selected

Waar is die Hemel?

Een Maandag kry ‘n man sy dominee in die dorp. "Dit was ‘n baie goeie preek wat u gister oor die hemel gebring het," sê hy. "Maar u het nooit vir ons gesê waar die hemel nou eintlik is nie."

"Het ek nie?" vra die dominee. "Dan sal ek jou sommer nou daarheen beduie. Sien jy daardie woonstelblok?" Die dominee wys na ‘n verwaarloosde gebou op die hoek van die straat. "In woonstel nommer elf is ‘n gesin wat baie swaar kry. Gaan koop vir hul ‘n pakkie vleis, brood en melk. Neem dit vir hulle en sê dat jy dit in Jesus se Naam bring. Vra ook of jy vir hulle Psalm 23 kan lees en vir hulle kan bid. As jy dit gedoen het en jy voel of jy nie in die hemel was nie, sal ek jou elke sent terugbetaal wat jy spandeer het."

Die volgende dag klop die man aan die pastorie se deur. "Dominee" sê hy met ‘n stralende gesig, "ek was gistermiddag in die hemel! Ek wil u net graag bedank dat u my daarheen gestuur het. Ek besef nou dat die hemel nie net ‘n plek is waarheen die Here se kinders eendag sal gaan nie, maar dat ‘n mens reeds hemelse vreugde op aarde kan smaak!"

"Kom binne," nooi die dominee. "Ek wil jou ‘n teksvers wys, wat ek in my beursie bêre. Dis die padkaart na hemelse vreugde."

Op die kaartjie wat die dominee uithaal, staan Spreuke 11:25, *"Wie ‘n ander voorspoed gun, sal self oorvloed hê, wie die dors van ander les, sal self genoeg kry as hy dors is."*

"Dis baie waar," sê die besoeker terwyl hy dit in sy notaboekie skryf. "Toe ek gister die arme mense se vreugde oor ‘n bietjie kos sien, het my beker van vreugde oorgeloop!"

Is dit nie presies wat Jesus vir ons gedoen het nie? Hy het ons ewige dors kom les en dit was Sy vreugde om aan ons die ewige lewe te gee!

Verhoog die Standaard

"In nog ‘n geveg teen die Filistyne in Gat was daar ‘n baie groot man met ses vingers aan elke hand en ses tone aan elke voet, saam 24. Hy was ook uit die geslag van die Refaïete. Hy het Israel uitgedaag. Maar Jonatan seun van Dawid se broer Samma het hom doodgemaak" (2 Samuel 21:20-21 NLV).

Nadat Dawid vir Goliat doodgemaak het, het vier ander mans, insluitend sy neef Jonatan, reuse doodgemaak wat teen die Israëliete in opstand gekom het. Dawid het die standaard verhoog. Goliat se nederlaag, wat almal vroeër gedink het onmoontlik was, het hulle geïnspireer om hul eie reuse te oorwin.

Tot en met 1954 het niemand al ooit ‘n myl in minder as vier minute gehardloop nie. Op 6 Mei 1954 het Roger Bannister egter die afstand in 3 minute en 59.4 sekondes afgelê. Hy het die reus verslaan! Twee maande later het die Australiër, John Landy, Bannister se rekord gebreek en bewys dat die vier-minuut-myl net soveel ‘n sielkundige as ‘n fisiese uitdaging is. In die eerste helfte van die twintigste eeu het baie



mense probeer om Mount Everest te klim en misluk. Op 29 Mei 1953 was Edmund Hillary en sy Sherpa-gids, Tenzing Norgay, die eerste mense wat die kruin bereik het. Sederdien het meer as ‘n duisend klimmers die ekspedisie voltooi.

Dawid, Bannister en Hillary het almal reus van hul tyd oorwin en ander geïnspireer om hul prestasies te ewenaar en daarin uit te blink.

Jy doen jouself en ander ‘n onreg aan wanneer jy van jou reus wegvlug. Jy moet ophou bang wees om moeilike take aan te pak en jouself herinner: "As God dit voorheen gedoen het, kan Hy dit weer doen, en as Hy dit vir ander gedoen het, kan Hy dit vir my ook doen."

-Bob & Debby Gass
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Two Defining Truths of the Christian Life

“Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for ‘The righteous shall live by faith’” (Gal. 3:11).

Understanding what it means to live by faith is foundational to the Christian life.

“No one is justified before God by the law.” These words from Galatians 3:11 challenge our natural thoughts and inclinations. Christianity is not a meritocracy; we don’t earn a place in God’s family based on our track record of righteousness. Our standing with God does not depend upon our obedience.

Keeping the law has no power whatsoever to purchase the most important thing in life: a relationship with God. No one keeps the law perfectly. No one is perfectly righteous all of the time and in

every way. This verse devastates all forms of human pride, self-righteousness, and self-sufficiency.

My level of biblical literacy and understanding of theology does not determine my righteousness before God. My faithful participation in a local body of Christ does not secure my good standing with the Lord. Though I am called to be generous and kind, my treatment of others does not, on its own, merit God’s favour. My Christian heritage and commitment to ministry do not secure my adoption as God’s child.

These nine words of Galatians 3:11 crush my pride in achievement and knowledge. They confront my skewed assessment that I am one of the good guys and “those people” are the bad guys.

You cannot be self-righteously self-assured and thankful for redeeming grace at the same time. You cannot erect self-atoning arguments that make you look more righteous than you really are and also be thankful for God’s rescuing and empowering mercies.

When I am tempted to trust in my own righteousness, the end of Galatians 3:11 sets me straight: “The righteous shall live by faith.” These six words must follow the first nine; otherwise we would have no hope. Just as we physically cannot live without oxygen, so we spiritually cannot live without faith. To give your body life and vitality, God provides both oxygen and your capacity to breathe it in. In the same way, God meets us in our sin with divine grace, and He empowers us to take it in by faith. Both grace and

faith are gifts from God; He gives us humility, willingness, and belief so that we can breathe into our hearts what He has provided.

These two truths define our standing with God and the nature of the Christian life: “No one is justified before God by the law” and “the righteous shall live by faith.” May God give us faithfulness, humility, and steadfastness so that we might live in light of these Gospel words that he has recorded and preserved for us. May they shape the way we think about ourselves and how we live. And may they fill us with awe, gratitude, and surrender.
- Paul David Tripp, *Crossway Daily Devotional*. He is a pastor, an award-winning author, and an international conference speaker. He has written numerous books, including *Lead*; *Parenting*; and *New Morning Mercies*.

Look Up - and Bow Down

WHAT IS REVERENCE?

Reverence, simply put, “implies a profound respect mingled with love, devotion, or awe.” Reverence can be shown to a leader you respect, a set of ideals you hold to, or a certain establishment you believe in. We should revere the institution of marriage, for example. Even non-religious people show reverence for people and ideas when they sacrifice their time and resources for them.

Let’s define Christian reverence as follows: Reverence is a humble faith in and submission to the reality of God’s holiness, splendour, and goodness.

Reverence toward God is more than mere respect. It involves a fundamental humility and self-forgetfulness - a sense that God is more important and greater than we are. [Reverence is not just a nod; it’s a bow.](#)

Is reverence vital to the life of a believer? Jonathan Edwards says that “a true and faithful Christian does not make holy living a mere incidental thing, but it is his great concern. As the business of the soldier is to fight, so the business of the Christian is to be like Christ.” This Christian business includes reverence toward God.

RENEWING A FORGOTTEN VIRTUE

What does such bowing look like in a culture that prizes self-exaltation and autonomy? No matter how you define reverence, it’s easy to see that we live in an

increasingly irreverent time. Paul Woodruff writes about reverence from a secular perspective, but he still lends great insight: “Reverence begins in a deep understanding of human limitations. From this grows the capacity to be in awe of whatever we believe lies outside our control - God, truth, justice, nature, even death... Reverence is the virtue that keeps human beings from trying to act like gods.”

One of the reasons we see reverence on the decline is our culture’s mantra, “Be anything you want to be.” It’s almost offensive in our current day to suggest that we might be created with any sort of limitations or obligations. [But this recognition is the first step of reverence.](#)

Woodruff continues to identify all that falls apart whenever reverence fails, citing everything from the disappearance of the ritual of family dinner to the devaluing of life and the endless warring between countries. But it’s not just the larger things such as warring nations. We see irreverence in the wedding guest who shows up without sending in an RSVP or the blind date who disappears after months of online chatting. We see irreverence in the way people disrespect their parents, the elderly, or anyone else in authority over them. We see irreverence in the ease with which many people break off their commitments or refuse to make them in the first place. We have no obligations to others, and we

expect no common courtesy of ourselves. With no social conventions to live by, no obligation except our personal fulfilment, there is nothing that compels us to show reverence.

Studies have shown a decline in reverence toward God and His Word. According to the American Bible Society, while around 50% of adults read their Bibles at least three times a year in 2011, only 38% reported doing so in 2024. In the same survey, only 37% of those polled believe God’s Word to be inerrant, with 24% believing the Bible to be “just another book of teachings... and advice.” These studies, combined with another showing that only 44% of US adults believe that “there are clear standards for what is right and wrong,” reflect our culture’s lack of respect for the authority of Scripture.

Do we have a deficit of reverence in our day? Yes. But is this deficit the root problem? Sure, many of us miss the good old days of chivalry, common courtesy, and respect for the elderly. Many good things result from a culture of reverence, but a lack of these cultural habits is only the outward symptom of a greater internal problem. [Unsurprisingly, the root problem is a heart issue.](#)

Consider Woodruff’s words from earlier: Reverence “keeps human beings from trying to act like gods.” Irreverence is rooted in idolatry. [The solution to idolatry is a pursuit of the Lord.](#) In Jeremiah

24:7, God offers this solution to Israel: *“I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be My people and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.”* [When we genuinely seek to know God as He is revealed in Scripture and to love Him rightly, reverence is the result.](#)

Our most irreverent moments are those in which we are trying to possess virtues and abilities that belong solely to God. Though this dynamic shows up in many areas, let’s consider two examples of how we fail to revere God by trying to be God: our desire for adoration and our desire for control.

LONGING FOR ADORATION

How respectful are you? Maybe you’re someone who wears a suit jacket to church every Sunday and takes off your cap as soon as you sit down at the dinner table. Perhaps you always hold the door open for the elderly lady walking behind you. Maybe you’re bristling a bit at even the mere suggestion that you might be less reverent than you think. But consider this question: Do you long to be recognised? Does it fill your emotional tank every time a prominent person mentions your name or someone brings up something positive about you in a conversation that causes others to say, “I didn’t know you were so smart” or “accomplished” or “successful” and so on? And then you get to brush it off as

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though you are embarrassed, but inside, you’ve been waiting for that “attaboy” for months! What is it about us that longs for adoration? Can it be idolatry? Irreverence?

GRASPING AT CONTROL

Maybe you aren’t someone who likes being in the limelight. Perhaps the way you express heart irreverence is clamouring for control over your life and the lives of others that should belong to God alone. Consider the rich young ruler of Mark 10. He asked Jesus what he needed to do to inherit eternal life, and Jesus responded by pointing out God’s law, reciting commandments such as not stealing, not lying, and honouring parents. The rich young ruler replied, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth” (Mark 10:20) - which I think was a pretty generous assessment of himself. Then Jesus hit him where it hurt: “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me” (Mark 10:21).

If you are familiar with this story, you know that the young man walked away from Jesus at that moment, sorrowful and unwilling to follow his request (Mark 10:22). What kept this man from giving away all he owned? And what plagues each of us who struggles with tight fists when it comes to our resources? Money appears to satisfy our longing to be in control - of our futures, our retirement plans, our quality of life, and soon.

But how is clamouring for control a form of irreverence? When we seek control over our lives, we elevate self and demean God. We crave control because we forget the only One Who is actually in control. We think if we don’t have control, then no one will. But when our view of God is great, we can rest in His constant love and care. We can be radically generous with our time and resources for His glory, knowing that even if we lose everything, our true gain is greater.

THE OBJECT OF OUR REVERENCE

Whenever I have the opportunity

to talk with younger worship leaders about service planning, I often share my story of visiting the Hope Diamond. This 45.52-karat gem resides in the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC. I visited it for the first time back in college and was truly captivated by its size and beauty. If you worked at this museum and were tasked with displaying this diamond, what would you do? Maybe set up a big neon sign that reads, “Hope Diamond! This Thing Is Awesome!” Or would you perhaps put it in a very colourful enclosure that sparkles? Maybe use strobe lights or a disco ball to make it glisten? Of course not. We don’t need to add to the splendour of this spectacle. The Hope Diamond is displayed in a simple, clear case with basic lighting, enough to merely facilitate its viewing. You don’t need to bedazzle the Hope Diamond; it’s the Hope Diamond!

Jesus Christ is the Object of our reverence and worship. When we see the Lord as He is revealed in His Word and are willing to know Him as He is, reverence will be our natural response. When we are leading others to worship God, we don’t need cute gimmicks. We merely point directly and clearly to Him - no filters needed. Reverence becomes the only logical response for a believer both in worship and in life.

LOOK UP; BOW DOWN

So what is reverence? Let me restate our definition before we move on: Reverence is a humble faith in and submission to the reality of God’s holiness, splendour, and goodness.

Reverence ought to characterise the Christian life as a whole. It is both the entry point to relating to God rightly and the sustaining fuel of our faith. We can summarise this in four short words: **Look up. Bow down.** We look to God to see Him as He is, as He has revealed Himself in Scripture, and then we respond with adoration, faith, and surrender. We see how holy He is and recognise how unholy we are. We see how mighty are the works of His hands, so we submit our hands, hearts, and lives to His purposes. **The whole of the Christian life is**

looking up to His greatness and responding in reverence.

May this ever be our posture and our practice. Reverence isn’t just one of the many virtues that God desires to grow in His people; it’s the starting point for any true and lasting work God longs to do in and through us.

- Laura Story (MATS, Covenant Theological Seminary) is a Grammy- and Dove Award-

winning singer-songwriter, known for her certified platinum song “Blessings.” She serves as a worship leader at Perimeter Church and is also a Bible teacher and author of several books, including *Stand in Awe: How Reverence Transforms Our Worship and Our Lives*, and *When God Doesn’t Fix It*. Laura lives with her husband, Martin, and their four children in Atlanta, Georgia.

10 Gebooie - 10 Beloftes

Eerste belofte: As Ek die eerste plek in jou lewe inneem, sal jy geen ander gode wil dien nie, want Ek sal die ereplek in jou lewe hê!

Tweede belofte: As Ek in jou hart woon, sal dit nie nodig wees om gesnede beelde van My te maak nie, want jy sal self My beeld dra!

Derde belofte: As jy My liefhet, sal My Naam nooit ’n vloekwoord oor jou lippe kan wees nie, maar in alle omstandighede deur jou eerbiedig en gerespekteer word!

Vierde belofte: As Ek die ereplek in jou lewe het, sal die rusdag die hoogtepunt van die week vir jou wees. Dit sal vir jou ’n vreugde wees om in die gemeenskap van die gelowiges My te aanbid. ’n Dag om na uit te sien, nie om teen op te sien nie!

Vyfde belofte: As Ek in jou lewe is, sal dit vir jou ’n voorreg wees om jou ouers te eer en lief te hê. Dit sal nie vir jou moeilik wees nie, want agter hulle sal jy My sien wat hulle vir jou uitgekies het!

Sesde belofte: As jy My liefde jou eie gemaak het, sal jy nooit iemand wil seermaak of haat nie, wat nog te sê doodmaak!

Sewende belofte: As jy My liefhet, sal dit nie moeilik wees om aan jou lewensmaat getrou te wees nie. As Ek ’n ereplek in jou huwelik het, sal julle vir mekaar lief wees en julle geluk sal ek in My Hande bewaar en vashou!

Agtste belofte: As Ek op die troon van jou lewe sit, sal jy daaglik vra: ‘Aan wie en waar kan ek iets gee?’ en jy sal nooit iets van ’n ander wil neem nie.

Negende belofte: As Ek in jou lewe is, sal dit nie meer vir jou lekker wees om van ’n ander kwaad te praat nie. Deur My Gees sal jy ’n mens wees wat van ’n ander niks sal sê as dit nie iets goeds is nie!

Tiende belofte: As jy een met My is, sal My Gees jou tevredenheid gee om vergenoegd te wees met wat jy het. God gee soos wat jy nodig het en Hy gee altyd genoeg, sodat jy niks sal kortkom nie!



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-KOFFIE KAFEE-
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