



Challenge

THE GOOD NEWS PAPER

Prison Edition

FREEDOM ON THE INSIDE

BY KATE CAMPBELL AND
STACIA RAY (ABRIDGED)

School was easy for Albert – so easy that he took the importance of his education for granted. Class wasn't very exciting. Gang life at that time, however, seemed anything but boring.

In Albert's east Los Angeles neighborhood, a local multigenerational gang ran the streets. Albert is the oldest son of Mexican-Salvadoran immigrants, who worked hard to pay the bills and to protect their kids from trouble.

But his parents' busy work schedules often left Albert and his two younger sisters unattended at home. Although Albert was a hard worker – he got his first paid job at only 11 years old – he didn't have to work hard to get good grades.

Academics came naturally to him, so he didn't spend much time studying.

During his free time, Albert would hang out with some neighborhood boys he had grown up

with, and some of their older brothers were members of the local gang.

Eventually, Albert also joined the local gang. He felt it was the logical next step for a young man in this neighborhood.

Unfortunately for Albert, gang life was accompanied by criminal activities, from petty misdemeanors to major felonies.

Shortly before his 18th birthday, Albert was under investigation for multiple activities.

When he turned 18, Albert was arrested for what he explains were decisions "that evolved from bad to worse."

The judge handed down a life sentence.

Adding weight to his heavy sentence was the fact that Albert, barely an adult himself, was about to be a father.

He knew incarceration may mean missing out on his child's life.

Six months after his arrest, the mother of his child gave birth to a daughter, whom he would not have the chance to hold in his arms for years.

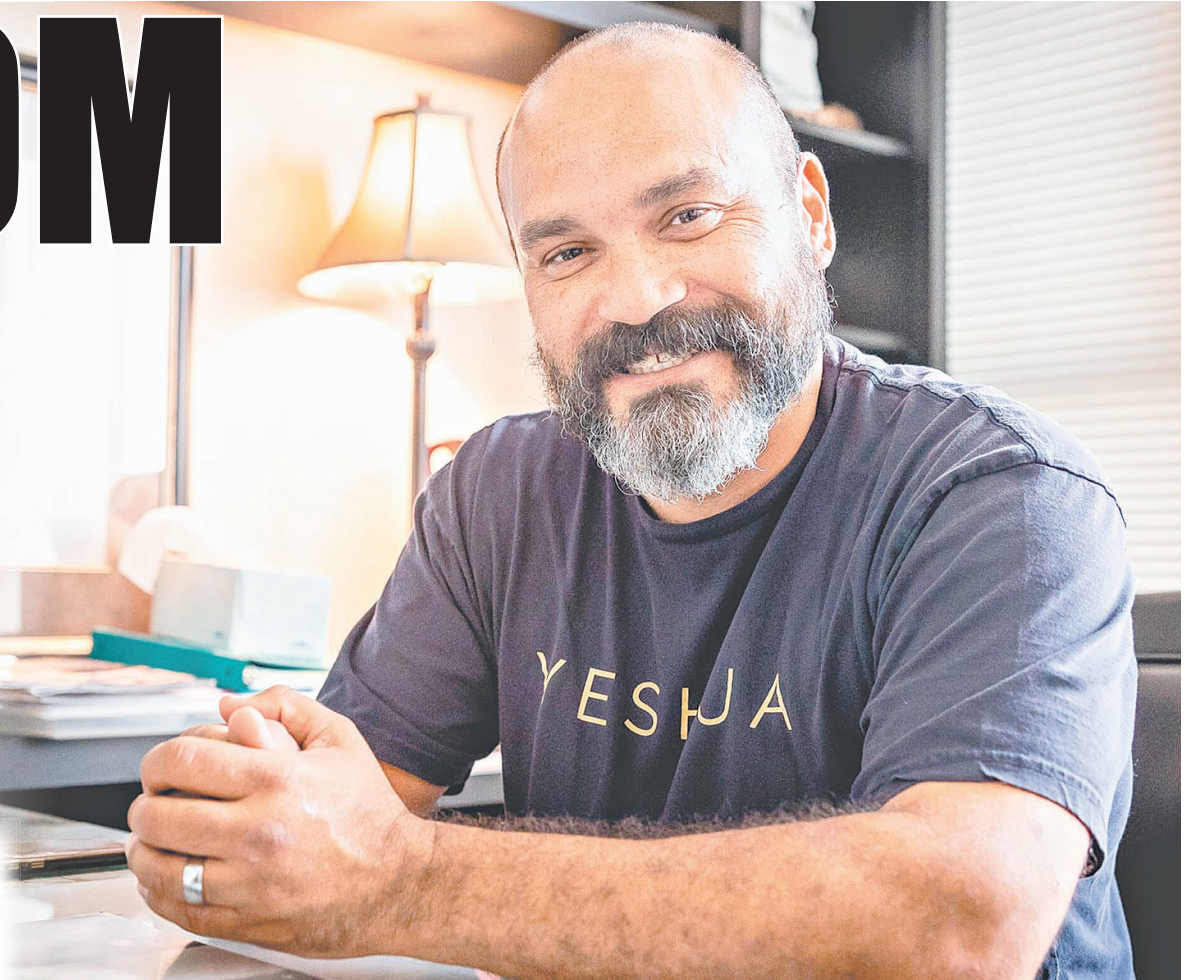
New light

While he was in county jail, Albert ended up going to a chapel service so he could socialize with a friend from another unit.

It was there that Albert heard a man share about how God had become real in his life.

"In that story, I put together some very important things that I had never heard about God and Jesus," says Albert.

Albert had grown up knowing about God, but he didn't really know God. He attended Catholic school as a child and heard teachings that made Jesus sound impressive but rather impersonal. He had never formed a personal connection with his Savior.



"I knew that He died for our sins... I knew He rose from the dead. I knew all the essential things," says Albert.

"I just couldn't make sense of them in a way that played into somebody's real life."

When he heard that man's story in the jail chapel, he saw Jesus in a new light.

He was understanding the gospel (the good news that Jesus Christ came to Earth to die for our sins) for the very first time.

"There was grace, there was mercy, and there was His love for us – a desire to live in the hearts of those who trust and obey Him," Albert explains.

Opening what was closed

A friend had been writing him letters with Bible verses in them. Albert asked her how he could get to know God and the Bible better.

She encouraged him to open his heart as he opened God's Word and to ask the Lord to guide his life.

Albert surrendered his life to God and prayed: "Lord, I know that I cannot ask you to open these prison doors because I'm here for what I did. But if You could just do something to not allow this to be a waste of time, I'll do whatever You want me to do."

After that prayer, he read the whole Bible and began to have hope that God could transform his life.

Albert also became intentional about connecting with his daughter. As he grew in his relationship with her, he saw the parallels of his own spiritual growth.

How do we 'prove' love?

BY JODY BENNETT

LOTS of people say that **God loves you**. What do they mean by that? And is it true? The same people or others may say **I love God**. What do they mean by that? And how can we know whether that is true?

How does the Bible define love? Well, in the original Greek language of the New Testament there are four different words for love. Sexual love (eros), friendship love (philia), family love (storge), and perfect/holy love (agape).

When we talk of God's love that is not a sentimental or sexual love, it is agape – a perfect, unearned, active love, not a feeling-centred sentimentality.

How do we know that God loves us? He demonstrated it by dying (as the God-Man Jesus Christ) on the cross for all our wrongdoings and rebellion, in order to make a way for us to be in relationship with Him.

As the much-quoted verse John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whomsoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

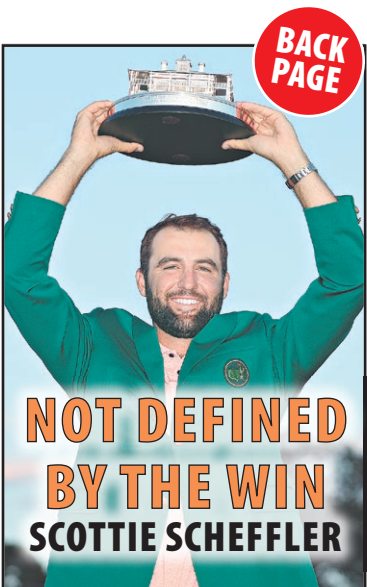
Does God love everyone equally? Yes, in the sense that He has made a way for everyone to come to Him through Jesus. Does that mean that God loves what everyone does, doesn't expect them to change their behaviour or

that He will love them forever and not throw them into hell for their sin? No. God's love is *unearned* but unless it is responded to, it will someday be superseded by God's hatred and wrath for sin.

And how do we know that we love God? Well the Bible is clear about that too. "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.'" (John 14:23-24)

If we love God, we obey Him. Obey Him how? Jesus said that all the many laws of the OT were summed up in the greatest commandment — to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind, and to love others as yourself. Loving God and doing what He said are vitally linked together. True love is shown by our actions, not in feelings and words. A cheating or abusive husband may say he still loves his wife, but she won't feel loved, and he is not doing to her what he would like her to do to him. That is not love.

A person who claims to love God and yet is selfish, bitter, immoral and rude, is showing by their actions that they don't in fact love God. It doesn't matter what they say or think they feel.



SOMETHING CHANGED INSIDE ME

Mike's addiction to drugs and alcohol began in 1981, when he was a soldier in Angola.

"I was just 18 years old and away from my father, who was very strict," Mike explains as he looks back on his life. He says when his fellow soldiers introduced him to drugs, "My mind exploded into different directions." Drugs gave him the escape he had been looking for since he was a child.

Mike says he had a mostly happy and stable childhood but his father was an alcoholic.

"Eventually he stopped drinking but I witnessed the wrongs that alcohol abuse brought into the home. I grew up without self-confidence. Rejection was embedded in me. If I look back now I recognise that's why my mind was open for an escape when I grew up."

Mike was homeless for 17 years and stole to supply his drug habit,

which landed him in prison.

"My sentence was four years but I was in and out of many prisons in South Africa where I was waiting trial during my 30 years of drug addiction."

As well as addictions, Mike says he also struggled with anger, pride, lying, jealousy, unforgiveness, ungratefulness and sexual immorality.

Mike was released in 1995 but two years later he was arrested again for theft. Around this time he also met a pastor of a church, who had a big impact on his life.

"He asked me if I wanted to surrender my life to Jesus Christ and I did. My life changed but I soon went back to my old ways again. But Jesus always kept his hand over my life and in 2015 I totally surrendered everything to Jesus Christ."

"I decided to put all my hope, trust and faith in Jesus Christ, to have peace and freedom and to be set free from the bondage and shackles I was bound to. I prayed to God for forgiveness and said sorry for all the wrong things I've done and for hurting Him and the people around me. I invited Jesus into my heart, to take up full residence and to be my Lord and Saviour of my life."

Mike says although he walked away from God after he first became a Christian in 1997, he knew something had changed inside of him.

"I knew He was with my all the time and I knew He had a plan for my life. Sometimes God takes time

to form you, and I think after 1997 I was still holding onto me, myself and I. And I think I wasn't ready back then to commit totally to God. But in all the time God was always protecting me and He was waiting for me to fully surrender to Him and I did. I give God all the honour and glory."

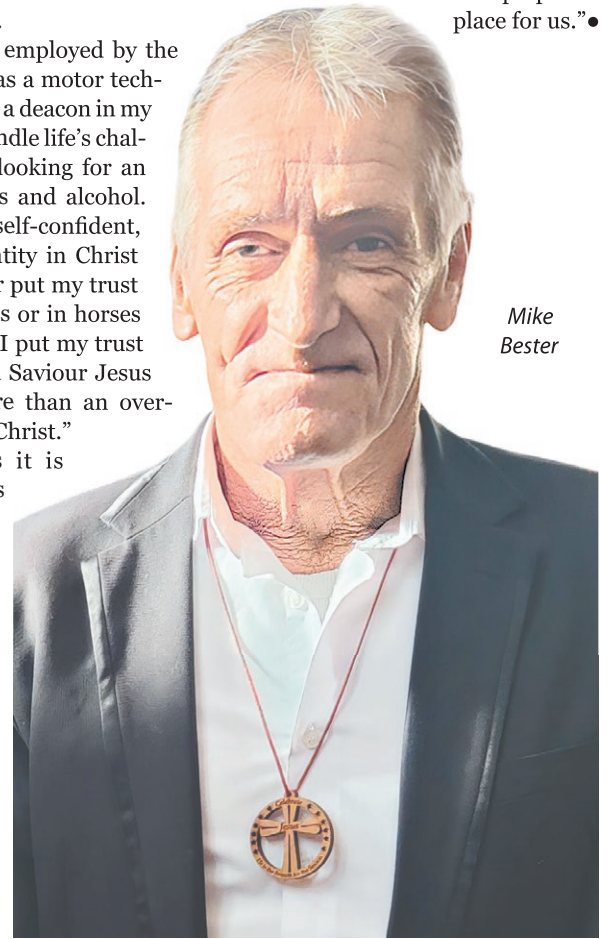
Mike is now married and has a beautiful family.

"I'm 12 years employed by the same company as a motor technician. I serve as a deacon in my church. I can handle life's challenges without looking for an outlet like drugs and alcohol. I have become self-confident, I know my identity in Christ now. I no longer put my trust in worldly things or in horses or chariots, but I put my trust in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I'm more than an over-comer in Jesus Christ."

Mike admits it is sometimes hard to walk the "narrow road" that is Christianity.

"The best part about being a Christian is knowing that God is with me on that narrow road and I'm never alone because He will never

leave me nor forsake me. And I know I will receive my prize when the race is over. Jesus is our only hope and our only way out of an immoral life and without Him there's no eternal life. For the only way to heaven and to receive eternal life is through Jesus and He promised us that He went to prepare a place for us." •



Mike Bester

Freedom on the inside

● From page 1

He credits his connection to her with his deeper understanding of his connection to God, in how deeply a father loves a child.

A new lease on life

More than two decades into his life sentence, Albert stood before the parole board for the fifth time – and was finally approved for parole. Six months later, he was released.

Albert says he believed the promises God revealed in His Word, "that He would restore me, He would restore my life, and He would make me the kind of person that people would trust."

Upon his release, Albert connected to a Bible-based church and began faithfully serving there. He kept a reliable and positive attitude, and he felt God confirming that this was the right church to plant his roots.

After about a year, his pastor offered him a position on staff as the church's community resource director, overseeing operations, which is still his role today.

At age 45, Albert married a wonderful woman who is the mother of two young children. He and his wife are about to celebrate their five-year anniversary. Albert and his daughter also continue to have a great relationship. They live near each other and enjoy spending time together.

If Albert could give advice to someone who is newly incarcerated, he'd tell them, "The best thing they could ever do is just turn their attention to the God that's probably trying to get their attention. If they didn't die out there, then there's gotta be something else for them that's better." •

The original of this story can be found at www.prisonfellowship.org and it is used with kind permission.

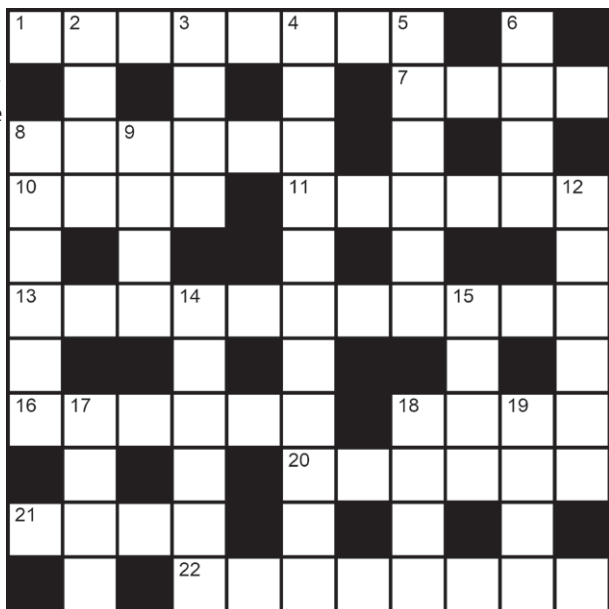
Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

ACROSS

- 1 Trickster, scammer
- 7 Microscopic amount
- 8 Slow graceful dance
- 10 Situated atop
- 11 Socialise upwardly
- 13 Quick beginning (6,5)
- 16 Carsick feeling
- 18 Big shiny car, in short
- 20 Electron opposite
- 21 Small sheltered valley
- 22 Engine part (3,5)

DOWN

- 2 Indiana Jones prop
- 3 "Thing" word
- 4 A printing process
- 5 Warren maker
- 6 Olympic water sport
- 8 Small domed sponge cake

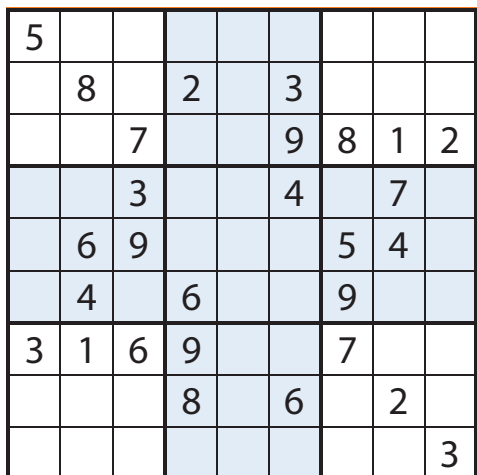


- 9 Very inquisitive
- 15 'That didn't hurt ___' (1,3)
- 18 Ness is one
- 12 Jacket fastener
- 17 Sunday finale
- 19 Sulk aimlessly

SOLUTIONS PAGE 11



"Can't take my dog? I don't even know HOW to run without my dog."



JAIL SAVED MY LIFE

BY AMY CAIN

Alexis grew up in a Christian home, but at 16, she began to act out and rebel.

"I decided to start doing what I wanted. I stopped going to church and started partying," Alexis recalls.

At 21, she had her first baby with a boyfriend. After he got her pregnant again, they decided to get married – "more out of obligation than love," she notes.

"We attended church, but I was just going through the motions of life. I became a workaholic and put work and drugs before my family," Alexis recalls.

"My husband verbally, mentally, emotionally, and physically abused me. I chose to walk away because of the toxicity, and I didn't want our kids thinking it was acceptable. I continued down a bad pathway as a functioning addict."

Unfortunately, her addiction soon overpowered her and led to accidental tragedy. Her arrest filled her with regret but also gratitude to God.

"When I hit rock bottom and ended up in jail, it was God's way of saving my life," Alexis shares.

"Had I not ended up in jail, I would be dead from drugs and alcohol. My rock bottom ended with me on my knees in my jail cell, begging God for forgiveness."

In jail, Alexis's cellmate introduced her to Crossroads, and she signed up to receive lessons and a Bible. She also decided to get baptized [a symbol of dying to your old life] a few months later. However, her addiction was still holding her back.

"I struggled off and on with my addiction while in county jail," she admits. "When I was shipped to prison, it was a wake-up call."



STOCK PHOTO

While serving her time in prison, she got serious about sobriety and her relationship with Jesus.

"The more I look back over my last four-and-a-half years of incarceration, the more God moments I see," says Alexis. "All I can say is my God is amazing and has saved me from the hell I was living in."

Reflecting on her time behind bars, she also recognizes and appreciates the spiritual support she received from her Crossroads mentors.

In October 2022, Alexis was released on parole. She is now readjusting to her new life on the outside, grateful for the second chance God has given her.

"I am thankful to be granted parole and be given the chance to show the change God has made in my life and live the rest of my life living for God and sharing my story with others," she says. •

Used with kind permission of Crossroad Prison Ministries (CPM).

CPM instructors from churches across the world guide students in their walks with Christ through correspondence Bible studies and letters of encouragement. For more information, visit cpministries.org.

"I put work and drugs before my family."

Warlock drug dealer finds the light

Richard Lorenzo Jr was making a hundred grand a month but he still felt empty and depressed. To find fulfillment, he trained to be a warlock.

BY ZOE GEORGE (ABRIDGED)

Richard Lorenzo Jr was raised in Fort Lauderdale to Puerto Rican parents. His mom took him to Catholic mass, but the violence of his neighborhood pulled him down.

"I loved women, I loved partying, I loved drinking and smoking. I loved robbing," he says. "It wasn't because I needed the money. It was because I wanted acceptance from my peers. I'm a product of my environment. If you do these things, you're accepted and they look at you like you're more of a man."

In college, he and his friends were reckless; some even got shot. At his ex-girlfriend's apartment, he had an experience in his sleep in which he fought off a demon by reciting the Lord's Prayer. He remembered the prayer from his childhood.

Thinking he needed a "change of scenery," he moved to New York City, becoming a bouncer at clubs in Manhattan. The change of scenery didn't bring a change of heart.

"I was still robbing, finessing anything – clothing from department stores. I was credit-card-scramming. It was an adrenaline rush," Richard explains. But after the rush came guilt, depression and suicidal broodings.

"I cut off everybody in my life because I was so depressed," he says. "I had so much paranoia and lived in so much chaos that I just cut everybody off. I thought it was better to die."

Despondent one day in his apartment, he heard a supernatural voice break through the darkness. Even though he didn't recognize the voice, it encouraged him, and he decided not to take his life.

Friends were going to jail and getting killed in New York, so Richard decided to flee the city and join the Navy as an air traffic controller. He spent a lot of his deployment in Greece.

In the military, Richard didn't reform. As a matter of fact, he began selling marijuana.

Still, he was depressed, so one day on a beach in Crete, while his friends were in the club, he went to the beach alone to cry out to whatever higher power might be out there.

"I didn't know anything about the Bible. I was crying profusely, just screaming, 'Who are You? What's the purpose of life?'" he recalls.

He heard the same voice he had heard in New York. "I'm going to show you now."

He was stunned.

Though the supernatural encounter was overwhelming, he was still very lost. He diversified his trafficking to cocaine, ecstasy, pills and 'lean' (codeine cough syrup mixed with soda).

A friend recommended he try LSD; the psychedelic experience in the spiritual realm would help him become less reckless, he was told. The hallucinatory trip did indeed awaken a spiritual curiosity in him, and he started reading books about the New Age, yoga and spiritual journeys.

Back in the US, Richard became a weed supplier. He trained friends in trafficking and opened sales points across the country. He supplied his buyers through the mail, a risky delivery method because if you get caught, you get charged with additional crimes.

When one shipment of weed disappeared in the mail in 2019, Richard became obsessed with finding the culprit.

He connected with a Haitian voodoo practitioner who promised to unveil the thief. There was only one catch: Richard had to fly to Haiti and meet him in the voodoo mecca Jacmel. Richard was so obsessed over the package that he purchased tickets.

The voodoo priest told Richard he would find out who stole his package when he returned to the US.

The visit had inspired him and Richard now felt called to become a warlock. He would make money divining spirits, he thought.

He bought crystals and beads, bought books, set up altars around his house and dipped in

sage baths. He consulted with prominent mediums, shamans, Reiki healers, and psychics. He spent days in a cemetery and prepared himself to be tortured by whipping – all initiation rites.

In his foray into witchcraft, he forgot about the package.

With his girlfriend now pregnant, Richard moved to Florida, to be near family. That's where Christians started popping up in his life.

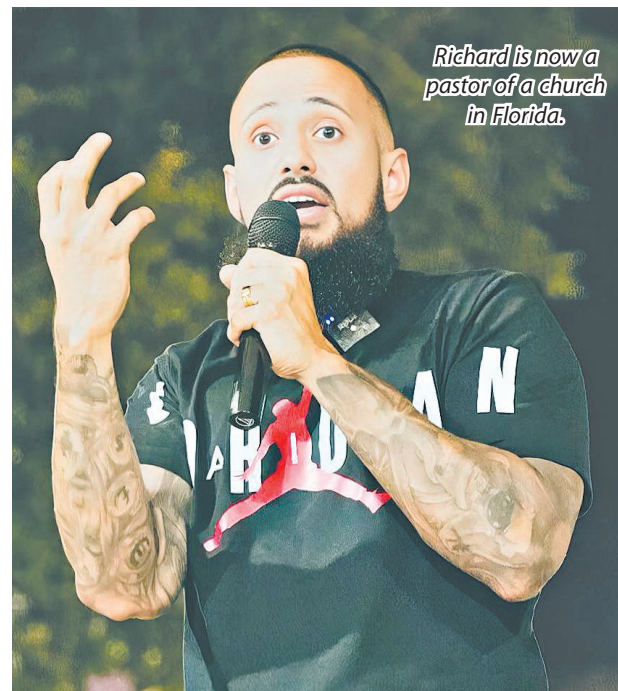
The first was a multimillionaire at a liquor store who bubbled over with the joy of Jesus. He invited Richard to his house for Bible study and fellowship.

Then Richard's new barber talked to him about Jesus. The coincidences started mounting.

Bored one night, he clicked on a video of a local woman who had been delivered of evil spirits. Richard contacted her and arranged to meet her.

She prayed for Richard and invited him to follow Jesus as his Lord and Saviour. He agreed. When he attended church with her, his barber was playing bass guitar in the worship team. He started reading the Bible and burned all his demonic paraphernalia behind his house in a huge bonfire.

"I came to the revelation that Jesus Christ is the highest power," he says. He describes an encounter with Jesus in his apartment where



a light came and knocked him to the ground. "I curled up in a ball and I was shaking," he recalls. "I was manifesting demons. I was crying profusely, and coughing up. I felt like things were coming out of me, it was in my spirit and my soul, I just knew it was Jesus. I got a peace I'd never felt before. I felt fulfillment."

He stopped watching porn and stopped sleeping with his girlfriend, who was seven months pregnant. A week later, his girlfriend also became a Christian. The pair married not long afterwards and Richard is now a pastor of a church in Florida.

This article was first published on GodReports.com and is used with kind permission

“ I cut off everybody in my life because I was so depressed. ”

Ask Y: Peter Meadows answers your questions about God



QUESTION: I'M AN ATHEIST – WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT?

THANKS for even asking what I think. And for giving me the opportunity to ask you a few questions myself.

So you are an atheist – a word taken from the Greek and which roughly translates as 'no God'. And you are not alone. There is no shortage of highly intelligent people who have the same conviction.

Which brings me to my first question if I may. Out of all the vast knowledge existing in the universe, how much of it do you personally possess? What do you reckon - five percent, one percent, perhaps only 0.001 percent? Or even less?

One thing seems sure. However much you know can only be the merest fraction of all there is to be known. Which leads me to other question. Is it remotely possible for God to exist somewhere in that vast area of knowledge that is not yet yours?

Let me put it another way, is there a spider in your room right now? I assume you can't see one, hear one, or smell one. But despite all that, who would be so bold as to say, with absolute certainty, 'This room has no spider'? Because there might just be one outside the limited knowledge they have.

In the same way could, just possibly, God

exist beyond your present understanding, knowledge, and experience? What you don't know is vastly bigger than what you do know – and isn't it just possible God could be there too?

If you are honest to say 'yes' then you are not actually an atheist at all but an agnostic – a word that comes from the Greek and simply means 'not knowing'.

And it's a highly respectable name for anyone to have. There is nothing wrong with saying 'I don't know' – unless you are a man driving and needing directions.

So here's my final question – what kind of agnostic are you? I ask because there are two kinds. There's the ornery agnostic who says, 'Not only do I not know if there is a God, neither do you or anyone. And nor will you know, now or for ever.' It's a kind of open mouth and closed mind approach.

In contrast, the ordinary agnostic says 'I don't know – but I'm open to knowing, should the right information come my way.' If that's you then keep asking the questions – and reading this column month by month – to see what clues there might be.

Peter Meadows is the co-author with Joseph Steinberg of The Book of Y the basis for the eight week Y Course that explores life's biggest questions.

World Hope Ministries Mzansi

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BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP 1

The lessons in this course will help the student engage the scriptures. This course consists of 4 books: Relationship with God, Fellowship with God, Responsibility to God and Accountability to God. Upon completion of all 4 books, one is issued with a bible in a language of his/her choice, and a certificate.

THE JESUS FILM

This film which is based on the biography of our Lord Jesus Christ, from birth to His ascension, is screened by a World Hope facilitator as part of our course.

BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP 2

This course builds on the foundation laid by Discipleship 1 and provides a deeper understanding of the word of God in the Christian walk. This course consists of two books A and B, each 13 lessons. A certificate is awarded upon completion of each of the books.

GODS ANSWER TO AIDS

The purpose of this course is to enlighten and educate individuals of how to overcome the scourge of HIV/AIDS, based on what the Word of God says. This course consists of six lessons six weeks, engaging a DVD and a resource workbook. It is taught by a World Hope Ministries facilitator.

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Post to: PO Box 96176, Brixton 2019

A white flag and a second chance

BY LOU HAVILAND

As Brandon stood with his older brother and cousins on a Florida corner asking passers-by for spare change, he looked for someone to blame for his circumstances.

“How did we get to this place where we’re panhandling on the street?” he asked himself.

Brandon had faulted God through most of his life when things didn’t work out – even as a child, when the weather wasn’t windy enough to fly his kite.

He also blamed God for his family’s choices that had claimed his parents’ marriage as well as the lives of beloved family members.

But Brandon would come to realize that the One he had been blaming was actually orchestrating a second chance that would open doors to a new life.

In dad’s footsteps

Brandon was the baby of his family, which consisted of his parents and a brother who was 10 years older.

There was seemingly nothing Brandon wished for that his father wouldn’t give him.

“It was an adventure when I was a kid,” Brandon remembers.

“I was kind of spoiled. My parents bought me the first Nintendo when it came out. I had a go-kart. I had a pool in the backyard. All my friends would come over and we would play football and baseball.”

Brandon idolized his father, a construction company owner and kickboxing state champion. He longed to be just like him.

But at the age of nine, Brandon discovered another side to his dad.

He realized his father was operating a side business selling drugs to all his employees. By his early teens, Brandon had experienced drugs firsthand.

“I remember the very day that I started to smoke pot with my dad,” Brandon says.

“He was soft-spoken and said, ‘I’d rather you smoke with me than go out and do it.’”

Soon, Brandon and his father were joined by his brother and his father’s two younger brothers, who lived with them from time to time.

Marijuana wasn’t the only drug being misused by the family, as Brandon eventually grasped when both of his uncles died of overdoses.

The dark side of the habit that had drawn his family together had reared its head.

Not only had it taken his uncles’ lives, but it also prompted Brandon’s mother, who did not use drugs, to seek a divorce from his father.

Brandon, his brother, and their father were on their own. They lived and worked together – and eventually, ended up homeless together.

A message of hope

Brandon had completed community service as a teen for possession of marijuana, but it wasn’t until his 20s that he began to face longer prison sentences.

“I began stealing to support my habit,” Brandon says.

“I ended up going to prison for a year and a day.”

After serving his sentence, Brandon was reunited with his father and brother.

“There was no other place to go, and we just took our things and we lived in the woods,” he recalls. “That was two years of being on the streets.” Then Brandon visited a local church, which welcomed those without a home to come refresh themselves with a shower, a bed, and the news of God’s love for them.

“I hated it because everybody was singing and they were happy,” Brandon remembers.

“I was miserable because I was homeless, and I was a drug addict.”

Brandon continued stealing, this time resulting in a five-year sentence. Though he would read the Bible from time to time, he was still using drugs behind bars.

Surrender behind bars

While smoking marijuana in a prison community room with his headphones on and Bible open, Brandon says that God reached out to him through the haze of smoke – specifically as a song, *White Flag*, by Christian artist Chris Tomlin, played on the radio.

“It talked about this battle that rages in our rebel heart, this fight that we cannot win. We wave our white flag. We surrender all,” Brandon says of the lyrics.

“I felt it was God’s way of telling me I need to surrender.”

Brandon obeyed.

Shortly after he decided to follow God, volunteers began coming into the prison – one of whom was from Prison Fellowship.

Pastor Doug Ryan led Bible studies at the prison. As he saw Brandon grow in his faith and desire to serve, Doug asked him to lead a Bible study.

During this season of new beginnings, Brandon received a call from his mother.

His brother had overdosed and died. Earlier in life, Brandon would have blamed God for this devastating news. But he wasn’t the same man.

“I just had to trust that God was good,” he says.

“At that time, because of my relationship with God, I knew God was good.”

Doug was there to pray with Brandon through his grief.

“I’ll never forget that moment, because I realized that it was God reaching out to me through him,” Brandon recalls.

Persevering to a second chance

After his release, Brandon found part-time work at a paint franchise, and thanks to his hard work, eventually earned a promotion to warehouse manager.

He was grateful for his work, but his heart couldn’t forget those he left behind bars.

He was eager to return, this time as a minister of the gospel. Initially visiting prisons as a volunteer, Brandon now works full time for Prison Fellowship as a field director.

Breaking generational cycles

Brandon met his wife in church where he had been serving as an usher and she as a children’s min-

istry coordinator. They have been married over four years and have two young children.

Brandon is close to his mother and prays with her regularly.

He’s also close with his father, who suffered a stroke but is now free from the drugs he once used.

“Now the joy that I have is helping somebody else in the position I was in to overcome the same circumstances and trials.”

Brandon gives thanks for God’s mercy and the second chances that made his new life possible.

The original of this story can be found at www.prisonfellowship.org and it is used with kind permission.

Brandon now works for Prison Fellowship Academy and helps guide prisoners through biblically based curriculum.



RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

BY JANICE TEO

Abdul Hadji learned the hard way about fair-weather friends.

The gang of “street brothers” he had bonded with from the time he was 16 and considered to be his family deserted him when he went to jail at 23 for crimes including grievous bodily harm and drug dealing.

When he came out of prison two years later, he found himself alone, a drug addict with nowhere to go and no-one he could count on.

Abdul didn’t start out on the wrong side of the tracks. Moving to Western Australia from Somalia with

his mother when he was two, he tells *Challenge News* he had “a great childhood, even though my father was never in the picture”. He did his primary education at the Australian Islamic College. When he was 12, his mother sent her increasingly rebellious son to Egypt for three years to be further immersed in Muslim studies and culture.

“I was a good Muslim boy. I prayed five times a day and learned my Koran. I had a lot of freedom, but my life there was quite disciplined because I had family friends who looked after me.”

He returned to Western Australia in 2010. Tragedy struck the following year when his mother, who was pregnant and planning to get married, died suddenly. Her baby died too.

Abdul was 16. Heartbroken, lonely and without any parental supervision, Abdul began hanging out with the wrong crowd – the gang was the closest thing to a family he could find.

“I tried to numb myself with drinks and drugs. Nobody would help because the Muslim community frowned on my behaviour.”

Soon he was not only taking drugs, but became “a functioning addict” hooked on meth.

“Meth makes you crazy. You lose all your morals, your self-respect. That’s what happened to me.”

His path became “very dark” as he drifted into more and more crime – drug-dealing, break-ins, robberies and assaults.

His crimes led to several short stints in prison, but he faced a much lengthier sentence in 2017 when he was arrested on a charge of grievous bodily harm.

He spent six months in remand while his case was investigated and was very relieved when he was handed a suspended sentence for the crime.

The time he spent in remand taught him one thing – “I realised I didn’t have any real friends or family,”



Abdul Hadji

he says. “My gang family deserted me. After my arrest and sentencing I knew I needed to change. I honestly thought I would be dead by 30 if I didn’t change my life.”

However, without the resources or contacts to change his environment, he drifted as a “functioning addict” for the next five years working odd jobs and still dealing drugs.

Then, while getting high at a friend’s house one day, he met Ian, a young Christian who dropped in occasionally.

Ian invited Abdul to church and he agreed to go.

“Why did I go? I wanted to go somewhere where there weren’t any drug people. I knew I couldn’t change if I

stayed in the same environment.” Abdul began going to church. “The music was awesome, the people were friendly. There was no judgement. Also, I saw that Ian was always so joyful and at peace. I wanted what he had – and he said all of that came from Jesus.” He was, however, still hopelessly hooked on drugs. So when a friend told him about Teen Challenge, the international Christian rehabilitation organisation, he jumped at the chance and enrolled in its residential program in October 2021.

“When I first got here, I wasn’t the nicest person,” he admits. “I was hostile and disagreeable.”

But within six months Abdul changed completely and committed his life to Jesus Christ.

What made the difference?

“I was loved as I had never been loved before. The people here loved on me without anything to gain. They just accepted me, even with my bad attitude.

“And I learned about Christ. The biggest thing for me was the concept of grace – of His freely given salvation. Growing up my faith had been very works-based. I had to earn God’s favour. But Jesus gives it freely. You just have to accept it.

“I saw that same quality in the people here.”

Today Abdul is on staff at Teen Challenge. He completed his studies as a support worker and works as a mentor and student leader.

“Jesus has changed everything about me. I no longer carry around all that anger and resentment.

“Today I can think about getting married and having a family one day – it’s a miracle that I can actually think of doing that. I used to think I was too far gone to be fixed but that’s just not true. God can change your life if you’re willing to obey Him and do the work.

“Nothing is wasted in His kingdom. Everything you’ve been through can be a lesson for other people so they won’t have to go through what you did.”

START

A WOMAN VISITING A MAN IN JAIL

MAZE

END

YES, EVEN ME!

FALLEN VERSE

N								C				
S												
			T									
			G			.						
R	M					8	:	3	9			
F	R	O	T	F	R	H	G	E	L	A	V	E
	R	O	P	A	N	N	O	8	C	U	S	
	N	E	O	A	I	A	E	D		O	N	
	S	O	M	H	T	S	T			3	9	
			M				G					

The letters are jumbled directly beneath the box they are to go in. Place the obvious letters first, then the remainder. Cross them out as you go. Christians in prison would certainly be encouraged by this Bible verse!

LETTER SKIP

Though in jail for their beliefs, Paul and Silas told others about Jesus Christ.

To find out what they told their jailer, start at the ➔ and write a letter on every other blank. Then go to the ▶ and again write a letter on every other blank.

➔ B L E E N H L R J S S N Y U I L E A E
▶ E I V I T E O D E U A D O W L B S V D

. Acts 16:31

SPIRAL OF THE WORD

Go around the circle, crossing out the words in the box below with a bright crayon. The words that are left will show you a special Bible verse.

WORDS TO CROSS OUT	
HAD	SAID
TO BE	CAN
BE	ME
CAN	SEEN
VERY	BEFORE
OPEN	SKY
STAR	FOR
	NOT

God's man for me!

I WAS VISITING South Africa with a team of Christians from Australia. Our visit saw us enter several prisons, telling the prisoners that Jesus Christ was reaching out to them so that they might believe in Him, Jesus, as the One who would forgive their sins if they entrusted their lives to Him.

Our team was accompanied inside each prison by people who had, prior to our visit, already become Christians, and were desiring that their fellow inmates might also trust in Jesus.

In one particular prison our team had arrived at a time of day when the prisoners were permitted to gather on a sports oval. The oval was surrounded by a tall wall, on which were placed several guard towers. The enclosed area had several marked out soccer pitches; games were already in play when we arrived. There were also exercise and open areas larger than the soccer pitches for the prisoners to mingle, walk, chat, and just perhaps be away from their cell blocks for a time. There was much shouting and noise from soccer games.

The entry to this large area was through a narrow gate, allowing one person through at a time. As our team of visitors and prison Christians gathered together on the edge of the oval, Thabo, the leader of the prisoners, spoke directly to me, telling me go forward [to hand out Challenge Good News Paper]. I asked him, "how far should I go away from our main group, even to the far end?" He said "Yes, and God will go with you".

I handed out newspapers, greeting men, shaking hands, looking into their faces for a brief second. The papers were going like hot-cakes as I continued walking among the groups of men.

Then I felt someone brush my side. He quickly assured me that Thabo had directed him to stay with me.

This was such a simple but powerful lesson for me. Thabo had cared enough about me that he had provided a "guardian angel of sorts" to look after me as I walked here and there in a very unfamiliar place. It spoke to me very deeply of the power of God to change a person's heart to care about others.

God was caring for me at that moment. That's something I never want to forget!

- BOB

Prison words SEARCH

LEFT OVER LETTERS WILL COMPLETE A BIBLE VERSE

T N O I T N E T E D Y O U S W
N I N C A R C E R A T E I E D
E S C H A I N S I L L V N P
M F N M C B E F R D A I U C E
N F S O A O E E E S T O I U T
R U H N E N N T D P P E P S E
E C A S E G A F A M D + R T R
T D C T + I N C I J + P I O +
N N K O N + S U L N + A S D +
I A L C + + R + D E E U O Y +
+ H E K D N A M E R S L N + +
+ + S S + + B + R E L I A J +

- BARS
- CAPTIVE
- CHAINS
- CONFINE
- CUSTODY
- DETAIN
- DETENTION
- DUNGEON
- HANDCUFFS
- IMPOUND
- INCARCERATE
- INTERNMENT
- JAILER
- MANACLES
- PAUL
- PETER
- PRISON
- REMAND
- SHACKLES
- SILAS
- STOCKS

If the Son sets you free, _____

John 8:36

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Deuteronomy 31:8

Afrikaans translation

Van Godsdienste tot verhouding

“Om in ‘n motorhuis gebore te word, maak nie van jou ‘n kar nie, net so min as om in ‘n Christen familie gebore te word, van jou ‘n Christen sal maak.”

Die pastoor se woorde het Cathrine Jack tot in haar diepste geskok. Sy het in ‘n godsdienstige gesin in Chegutu, Zimbabwe grootgeword, en sy het deur al die mosies gegaan soos voorgeskryf word deur die denominasie, om as ‘n Christen beskou te word. Was dit nie genoeg nie?

Ses jaar vroeër, in 1982, het Cathrine verlief geraak en getrou met ‘n aantreklike jong man. Hy was ‘n wedergebore Christen (iemand wat van hulle sondes bekeer is, en hulle tot Christus wend vir hulle redding.) “Hy het my gevra of ek Jesus as my persoonlike Here en Verlosser aan-geneem het, en ek het vir hom verduidelik dat ek in ‘n godsdienstige gesin gebore is, ek het niks in die lewe verkeerd gedoen nie, ek was ‘n baie nederige en gehoorsame meisie, en dit kwalifiseer my om ‘n kind van God te wees,” verduidelik sy.

“**Gebed is ‘n wapen of gereedskap waarop ek gedurende beproewings staatmaak.**”

“My man het God se plan van verlossing met my gedeel. (God het Jesus aarde toe gestuur om vir ons sondes aan die kruis te sterf).

“Dit het nie vir my sin gemaak nie, aangesien ek myself as ‘n Christen beskou het as gevolg van die inwydingssakramente waardeur ek as kind gegaan het. Ten spyte van hulle verskille het Cathrine saam

met haar man kerk begin bywoon.

Toe in 1988 het hulle ‘n herlewingsbyeenkoms bygewoon.

“By daardie byeenkoms het die besoekende pastoor oor die woord van verlossing gepreek. Hy het die vraag gevra of ‘n kind wat in ‘n motorhuis gebore word, beteken dat hy/sy ‘n kar is? Daar het ek besef dat om in ‘n Christen gesin gebore te word, kwalifiseer nie ‘n persoon om ‘n Christen te wees nie.

‘n Bekerings - uitnodiging is aan die einde van die diens gemaak, (‘n uitnodiging van die pastoor om Jesus te volg.) Ek het my vorentoe gehaas en Jesus as my persoonlike Verlosser aanvaar.”

Cathrine onthou dat die Bybelvers Johannes 3:16 gedeel, wat sê: “God het die wêreld so lief gehad dat Hy Sy enigste Seun gegee het, sodat dié wat in Hom glo, nie verlore sal gaan nie maar die ewige lewe sal hê. Want God het Sy Seun in die wêreld gestuur, nie om die wêreld te veroordeel nie, maar dat die wêreld deur Hom gered kan word. Hy wat in Hom glo, word nie veroordeel nie ; maar hy wat nie glo nie, is alreeds veroordeel omdat hy nie geglo het in die Naam van die eniggebore Seun van God nie.”

Sy het ‘n gebed gebid, soortgelyk aan die gebed wat op bladsy 7 is, en haar lewe aan die Here toegewy.

“Dit was die draaipunt in my lewe. Van toe af tot nou toe het ek God gevolg.”

Cathrine het meer van God geleer deur die Bybel te lees en geestelike konferensies, Sondag kerkdienste, en selgroepe by te woon. “Tans is ek ingeskryf by ‘n plaaslike Bybelskool om ‘n beter begrip van die Bybel te kry,”deel sy. “Net om te weet dat ek ‘n kind van God is, dat Christus vir aan die kruis gesterf het, troos my.”

Nou 58, en die vrou van ‘n pastoor, ‘n inwoner van Chinhoyi, kan sy sien dat baie mense by kerke aansluit om verkeerde redes, soos om ‘n vriend of vriendin te volg, of deur ouers geforseer te word, of vir ‘n begrafnisvereniging.

Sy moedig sulke mense aan om werklik Jesus te volg en verwys na Romeine 6:23 : “Die loon wat die sonde gee, is die dood; die genadelewe wat God gee, is die ewige lewe in Christus Jesus ons Here.”

“Jesus Christus is die weg , die waarheid en die lewe vir die mensdom. Wanneer ek deur moeilike tye gaan, beskerm en vertroos Hy my altyd. Hy gee my krag om voort te gaan. Gebed is ‘n wapen waarop ek staat maak gedurende beproewings. Jesus Christus – God homself – was deur die duiwel versoek, maar Hy het deur gebed en vas oorwin, so om Jesus te volg is my enigste hoop om uitdagings te oorkom.”

English translation

From religion to relationship

“Being born in a garage doesn’t make you a car, just like being born into a Christian family doesn’t make you a Christian.”

The pastor’s words shocked Cathrine Jack to the core. She was raised by a religious family in Chegutu, Zimbabwe and had undergone all the procedures required by the denomination to be considered a Christian. Wasn’t that enough?

Six years earlier, in 1982, Cathrine had fallen in love with and married a handsome young man who was a born again Christian [someone who has repented of their sins and turned to Christ for their salvation].

“He asked me whether I had accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Saviour and I explained to him that I was born in a religious family, I had not done anything wrong in life, I was a very humble and obedient girl so that qualified me to be a child of God,” she explains. “My husband shared with me

God’s plan of redemption

[sending Jesus to earth to die for our sins on the cross]. To me it did not make any sense since I considered myself a Christian through [the initiation sacraments I completed as a child].”

Despite their differences, Cathrine started attending church with her husband.

Then in 1988, they attended a revival meeting.

“At that meeting the guest pastor preached the word of salvation. He gave an example that if a child is born in a garage, does it mean he/she is a car? From that point I realised that being born in a Christian family does not qualify one to be a Christian. An altar call [an invitation from the pastor to follow Jesus] was made at the end of the service. I rushed to the front and accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour.”

Cathrine remembers John 3:16-18 was shared, which says: “For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”

She prayed a prayer similar to the one on page 7, dedicating her life to God.

“That was the turning point in my life. Since that time I have been following God.”

Cathrine learned more about God by reading her Bible, attending spiritual conferences, Sunday services and home groups.

“Right now I am enrolled at a local theological college to get more understanding of the Bible,” she shares. “Just knowing that I am a child of God, that Christ died for me on the cross comforts me.”

Now 58 and a pastor’s wife living in Chinhoyi, she can see that many people join churches for the wrong reasons such as following a friend, being forced by parents/guardians or for a burial society. She encourages those people to truly follow Jesus and refers to Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

“Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life for mankind. When I go through difficult times He always protects and comforts me. He gives me strength to soldier on. Prayer is a weapon or tool I depend on during trials and tribulation. Jesus Christ – God Himself – was tried by the devil but He conquered through prayer and fasting so taking a leaf from Jesus Christ’s life is my only hope to overcome challenges.”



Zulu translation

Ukusuka enkolweni kuya ebuhlotsheeni

“Ukuzalelwa egarage akukwenzi imoto, kufana nokuzalelwa emndenini okholwayo kungakwenzi ikholwa.”

Lawomazwi kamfundisi amnyakazisa u Cathrine Jack ekujuleni. Wakhuliswa umndeni okholwayo e Chegutu, kwelaseZimbabwe wayenza yonke imigomo yebandla yokuthi abe umKristu. Kwakwanele na?

Emnyakeni eyisithupha edlule, ngo1982, uCathrine waqoma ibhungu ashada nalo futhi lingumKristu (umuntu ozelwe kabusha ophendukile ezonweni zakhe wanikela impilo yakhe ku Kristu).

“Langibuza lelibhungu ukuthi ngimamukele uJesu Kristu njengeNkosi noMsindisi wempilo yami ngathi ngiphuma ekhaya elikholwayo, angekenzi isiphambuko emolweni yami, ngiyintombazane ezithobile futhi elalelayo lokho kungenza ngibe umKristu.” Esichazela.”

Umyeni wami wangichazela ngohlelo lukaNkulunkulu lokuhlangwa (Lokuthumela uJesu emhlabeni ukuzofela izono zethu esphambanweni). Kumina akungiphanga ngqondo ngoba ngangazazi ngingumKristu (ngezifundo zesakramente azenza esakhula).”

Noma babengaboni ngaso linye, uCathrine waqala ukuhamba nomyeni wakhe esontweni labo. Ngonyaka ka 1988, kwabakhona imvuselelo abaya kuyona.”

Kulezonkonzo umfundisi owayemeyiwe washumayela izwi lensindiso, wenza isibonelo sokuthi uma umtwana ezalelwa egarage lokho kumenza imoto na?

Kwahlwa kimina ukuthi ukuzalelwa ekhaya lamaKristu akukwenzi umKristu.

Isimemo (senziwa umfundisi uma eqeda ukushumayela sokulandela uJesu) wasenza ngaphuthuma ngaya phambili ukuyokwamukela uJesu Kristu njengomsindisi wempilo yami.”

Uyakhumbula uCathrine ukuthi bavula uJohane 3:16-18.”

Ngokuba uNkulunkulu walithanda izwe kangaka waze wanikela ngeNdodana yakhe ezelwe yodwa ukuba yilowo nalowo okholwa iYona angabhubhi kepha abe nokuphila okuphakade. UNkulunkulu akayithumelanga iNdodana yakhe ukuba yahlulele izwe kepha ukuba izwe lisindiswe ngayo.

Okholwa iYona akayikulahlwa, kepha ongakhohla iYona usehliliwe ngoba engakhohla egameni leNdodana kaNkulunkulu.” Wathandaza umthandazo ofana nalona osekhasini 7, ukuze amukele iNdodana kaNkulunkulu.

“Kwaba ushintsho empilweni yami. Kusuka ngalelola ngisamlandela uNkulunkulu.”

UCathrine wafunda ngoNkulunkulu ngokufunda ibhayibheli, ngokuya kumaconference, nangokukhonzisa nasenkonzweni zasemakhaya. “Manje usebhalise eskoleni sebhayibheli ukuyofunda kabanzi ngebhayibheli,” esitshela.”Ukwazi ukuthi ngingumKristu nokuthi uJesu wangifela esphambanweni kuyangiduduzela.”

Useneminyaka ewu58 manje ushade nomfundisi uyababona abantu bengena emasontweni ngezizathu ezingaphusile njengokulandela umngani, kwenziswa abazali nomasngwabisansane.

Ukhuthaza labobantu ukumlandela ngempela uJesu esinika kwabaseRoma 6:23 “Umvuzo wesono ungukufa, kepha isipho sikaNkulunkulu singukuphila okuphakade ngoKristu uJesu iNkosi yethu.”

“UJesu uyindlela , neqiniso, nokuphila kwabantu. Uma ngihamba ekhaya ekhathini ezinzima uyangivikela futhi uyangiduduzela. Unginikezela amandla okoqhubeka. Umkhuleko uyisikhali engincika kuso ngesikhathi sobunzima. UJesu Kristu onguNkulunkulu isibili walingwa usathane kepha wanqoba ngomthandazo nokuzila , ngokufunda kuYena ngiba nethemba lokunqoba.”

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WORDS FOR THE HEART

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Welcome to this Bible Study. Read slowly what I have written. If you have a Bible, look up the reference verses given, and allow the Holy Spirit to minister to your soul through them. – ALAN BAILEY

Mark 2:1-17

INTRODUCTION

WE have seen already how Mark's Gospel is full of action. Chapter one saw John the Baptist in action, the baptism and temptation of Jesus, the calling of first disciples and Jesus healing a number of sick ones. We can see plainly that the focus of Mark's record is on the Lord Jesus, helping us to understand who He was and is. Someone very different. A man with no equal.

As we move on we will see more and more evidence of a life that was unique. And a life that cannot be ignored. It had a goal and purpose which concerns us intimately.

Chapter 2: Verses 1-2 "A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that He had come home. So many gathered

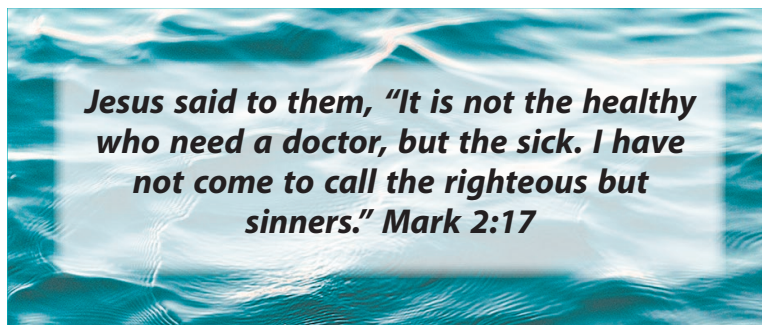
that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and He preached to them."

Jesus came back from His journeys and the townsfolk gathered around to hear Him speak. They over-filled someone's house and spilled outside. We can imagine the scene.

Verses 3-4 "Some men came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralysed man was lying on."

These men must have been determined to bring their friend to Jesus. And they must have been convinced that Jesus could heal him. Eastern houses had flat roofs as a rule and steps up the side of the house leading to the roof where they could sit.

Being made of tiles, these men simply dislodged enough of them to allow the mattress to be lowered, perhaps with lengths of rope. They



were able to place it right in front of Jesus. What a surprise for all the onlookers! It would have caused quite a stir.

Verse 5 "When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'"

Jesus recognised that these men must have had strong faith in Him to go to this trouble. But His words are surprising. Obviously, the man wanted and needed to be healed. But Jesus spoke about sin. In Jesus' view, the greatest need the man had was forgiveness.

Maybe the man had a longing for forgiveness that he didn't express. No doubt the Lord knew what was in his heart.

It is the same for us. Being forgiven and knowing it is a powerful thing and thankfully is available to us today.

Verses 6-7 "Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 'Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?'"

The critics were wrong about Jesus blaspheming but they were right in asking who can forgive sins but God only. Forgiveness can only be given by the one sinned against.

A man cannot forgive sin because it has been committed against God. But Jesus spoke that way because He is God by nature.

Verses 8-9 "Immediately Jesus knew in His spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and He said to them, 'Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven', or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk?'"

To blaspheme was very serious thing so Jesus needed to explain what He had said. His question "which is easier?" was hard to answer.

Forgiving someone and healing someone were things out of reach, impossible. Except to Him.

Verses 10-12 "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins... He said to the paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' He got up, took his mat and walked out in the full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'"

The whole incident revealed the authority and power of the Lord Jesus. Who could contradict Him in the light of what happened in front of them?

Probably the critics were silenced but maybe still held to their unbelief. The Gospel record shows continual refusal of leaders to believe even in the face of clear evidence.

Verses 13-14 "Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to Him, and He began to teach them. As He walked along, He saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed Him."

We could well wonder at the call of this man. We know that he was also known as Matthew and that he became a disciple.

But how amazing that the Lord picked him out, gave the call and immediately he obeyed.

Surely, Jesus was a man who could not be ignored. Other disciples had responded in a similar way.

Verses 15-16 "While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and 'sinners' were eating with Him and His disciples, for there were many who followed Him. When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw Him eating with the 'sinners' and tax collectors, they asked His disciples: 'Why does He eat with tax

collectors and sinners?'"

We need to understand that tax collectors were most despised and hated generally. The Romans ruled and it was to them the tax was paid. But Jesus showed favour toward 'sinners' and spent time with them. The Pharisees would never be seen in such a situation.

They thought that to be holy meant keeping away from lower classes of people. But Jesus had come to save the lost as He goes on to say.

Verse 17 "On hearing this, Jesus said to them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners.'"

We can understand His statement but there could be more behind it. Did He think there were certain good people who didn't need Him? Not so. His teaching is very plain.

All people are sinners and the ones who thought they weren't, were condemned strongly by the Lord on various occasions.

So, His answer on this occasion was enough to silence the critics and to show His concern for the outcasts of society.

CONCLUSION

We have used the word 'unique' with regard to Jesus. He certainly is, and these events we are reading about make that plain. He is doing things that are impossible to others. He speaks in a way that shows deep wisdom and yet with love and compassion. His three years of ministry appear to have a number of goals. To save the lost through His death and resurrection. To teach about God and His Kingdom.

Also, to raise up a group of people who know and love Him who will take the Gospel to the world. Of course, He was able to achieve all His aims. It is our privilege to observe it all happening in His Word.

How can I become a Christian?

Anyone can gain the eternal life offered through Jesus Christ

We read in God's word: "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16)

OUR PROBLEM:	Separation from God "Everyone has sinned. Nobody is good enough because God's standards are perfect" (Romans 3:23)	ADMIT
GOD'S REMEDY / SOLUTION:	Jesus died on the cross "God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8)	BELIEVE
OUR RESPONSE:	Trust Jesus by receiving Him "To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12)	COMMIT

Here is an example of how you can pray.

Dear Father in Heaven. I come to you now because I want to be saved. Please, forgive me of my sins. I believe that you sent your Son Jesus Christ to die for me and that you have raised him from the dead. I now ask Jesus Christ to come into my life as my Saviour and Lord. Take control of my life. Please make me the person You created me to be. In Jesus Christ's name. Amen

The Lord Jesus says: "I tell you the truth. Everyone who believes in me has eternal life." (John 6:47). He gives life of a wonderful quality that continues forever.

AS A NEXT STEP :

<p>If you prayed the above prayer, tick this box</p> <p>I have prayed this prayer. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please send me:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bible portion</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Some 'starting off' literature</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Information on a helpful church</p>	<p>If you have not prayed the prayer at this stage, tick this box</p> <p>I would like to think about this. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please send me:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bible portion</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> More information as I am inquiring about being a Christian.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have a problem (see attached letter)</p>
---	---

* Please tick and write clearly *

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Age and occupation (it helps) _____

Send to:
World Hope Ministries,
PO Box 96176, Brixton, 2019

Out of South Africa enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

nudge WITH KARL FAASE

Broken pots

IF YOU have ever come across a broken pot or plate, you will know that you can actually still see what it was before it was smashed. If you look closely and reconstruct some of the pieces of the original pot, its shape, colour and form are apparent. This is not a bad way of thinking about humanity. God's original purpose for humanity was to live unbroken lives. But history demonstrates that humanity has not been able to live like this. Like a smashed pot, we are a poor reflection of our original state.

Looking closely though and you can see our original state. Humanity is spiritual. We long for more in life.

It is not enough for us just to go through the motions of living. We ask questions about purpose and meaning and the future. Why do we do this? Because this is how we were designed. Like a broken pot, we struggle to hold life together and we wonder why it's so hard. Turn to God today and discover afresh the life you were designed for.

In jail with Jesus

By Kenny

Alone one night
In shame and despair
I looked for my help
But no one was there,
No future...but prison
No past...but pain
I looked in the mirror
My tears...the rain
By justice condemned
In time to die
My only hope God's Mercy
For his grace I cry...
Then a seed planted
Somewhere long ago
In the midst of my sorrows
Began to grow...
This seed was Christ
Who died for me
In jail with Jesus
I am set free...
No longer in the hell
Of my sinful ways
He has made me a new person
Who loves and prays
Though seasons come
And holidays pass
In jail with Jesus
My hope does last...
So, I do share
With you my friend
In jail with Jesus
It's not the end!

Scottie Scheffler of the United States plays his second shot on the 11th hole during the final round of the 2024 Masters Tournament at Augusta National Golf Club on April 14, 2024 in Augusta, Georgia. (Photo by David Cannon/Getty Images)

**Challenge
SPORT**



NOT DEFINED BY THE WIN

World number one golfer and now two-time Masters champion Scottie Scheffler says his “identity is secure forever”. But his identity isn’t in winning – though he admits he does enjoy that – it’s in the fact that his “victory was secured on the cross”.

The 27-year-old won his second Masters Tournament in three years on April 14 and says he’s “trying to glorify God” through his golf career, giving all the credit to the Lord when speaking with reporters after his wins. This is something he does a lot, having also won back-to-back Players Championships in 2023 and 2024.

When asked how he balances his desire to golf competitively without letting it define him as a person, he says, “That all goes back to my faith... The reason why I play golf is because I’m trying to glorify God and all that He’s done in my life.”

Before his first Masters win, Scottie’s wife, Meredith, reminded him that his “identity isn’t a golf score”.

“If you win this golf tournament today, if you lose this golf tournament by 10 shots, if you never win another golf tournament again, I’m still going to love you, you’re still going to be the same person; Jesus loves you, and nothing changes,” Scottie recounts his wife’s reassurance.

“All I’m trying to do is glorify God, and that’s why I’m here, and that’s why I’m in this position.”

Scottie says his wife regularly prays for him.

“Every day when we go out there, Meredith always prays for peace, because that’s what I want to feel on the golf course, is peace and have fun and just feel [God’s] presence,” he says.

Scottie says his wife helps him to remember: “God is in control, and the Lord is leading me, and if today’s my time, then it’s my time.”

Scottie says he doesn’t expect to win. “You don’t expect things to come to you in this life, you just do the best that you can with the hand you’re dealt and just go from there. I never really thought I was that good at golf, so I just kept practising and working hard.”

Scottie’s caddie, Ted Scott, is a veteran in the game who was on the bag for Bubba Watson for nearly 15

years previously.

Ted had been planning to retire until he got Scottie’s call, and knows the Augusta Course better than almost any one.

“You know, I can’t speak highly enough of Ted as a person, and as a caddie,” Scottie told a press conference after his win.

“I respect him so much just as a person. He’s such a fun guy to be around, he’s a man of faith and I love him. I can’t say enough about him. The qualities you look for in a person, Ted embodies pretty much all of them.”

One of the biggest reasons Scottie wanted to work with Ted was because they’re both Christians. They first met through a Bible study about a year before they teamed up.

The caddie told Sports Spectrum Podcast in 2018, “People a lot of times think, well, if you become a Christian, God’s just gonna make everything easy for you, and that’s not the case.

“But having the God of the universe, the Creator, on your side just makes things a lot easier to deal with. And the principles of the Bible are something that, when you use them, you can see it manifest in your life.”

“[Ted] keeps things loose,” Scottie says.

“We have a lot of fun together. I respect him a lot as a person, and I respect his work ethic as a caddie. And so, for me, it’s been a pretty easy relationship so far, just because I respect him so much.”

Scottie believes it is faith,

family and friends that give his life meaning.

“I’m a Christian guy, so that’s important to me,” he said in a 2019 interview with PGATour.com.

“But even if you’re not a Christian, it is important to spend life with people you enjoy. If you don’t have close, quality friends, I don’t think whatever you’re doing is important. So that would be my most important advice to someone. Find something you enjoy doing, and enjoy doing it with other people.”

The person Scottie enjoys spending the most time with is his best friend since high school, his wife, Meredith, whom he married in 2020.

Meredith told Golf Digest: “At the beginning of high school I always thought he had a super humble ambience about him, that he was just a really down-to-earth guy that doesn’t take himself too seri-

ously. Even when he had amazing accomplishments, that wasn’t the most important thing about him.”

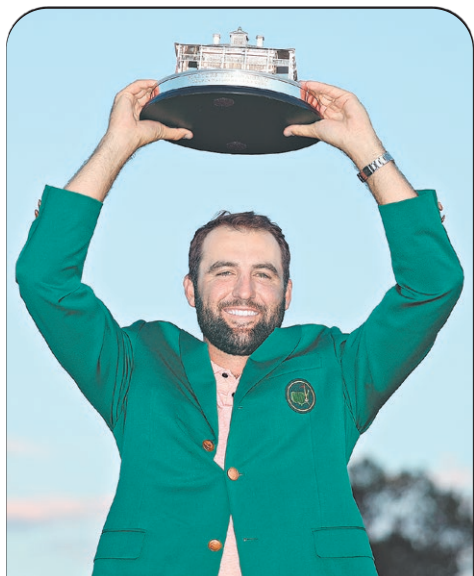
Speaking to reporters after his recent Masters win, Scottie admitted he was keen to return home to Meredith, especially as they are expecting their first child in a few weeks.

Before the competition he even shared that if she went into labour mid-tournament, he’d leave the Masters, even if he was in the lead!

One of the regular golfers at Scottie’s home golf course of Royal Oaks Country Club in Dallas concurred: “As good a golfer as Scottie is, he is an even better person and the membership here certainly knows that.”


“My faith affects all aspects of my life, not just my life on the golf course,” Scottie explained.

“The Lord has given me a skill and I’m trying to use it for His glory. Outside of that, I’m just out here trying to do my best.”



Scottie Scheffler holds aloft the 2024 Masters trophy. (Photo by Warren Little/Getty Images)

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