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A Life Worth Living

The following is based on a brief interview that Rick Warren conducted with Campus Crusade for Christ's (Cru's) founder, Bill Bright, who died 19 July 2003 at the age of 81.

The most important lesson I've learned is to love God with all my heart and soul and mind and strength, obey His commandments and to trust His promises and relax. I work day and night. I have for 50 years in the Campus Crusade for Christ (now called Cru) ministry and before that I had my own business in other matters.

But I can tell you; God honours a heart that is in tune with His. The number one priority I believe of every pastor - any believer for that matter - is to truly seek first the Kingdom and love God and obey and trust.

When I was young, I was a non-believer and agnostic. I had no God; no Saviour all through college and graduate school. And while I was on the faculty of Oklahoma State University extension, and a businessman in Hollywood, in my early 20's - through the influence of the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood and Dr Henrietta Mears - I received Christ. I fell in love with Him.

I immediately enrolled in seminary at Princeton, later at Fuller. I really loved the Lord from the very beginning. I was overwhelmed with His love. That I - a sinner - while I was yet in my sins, He died for me. My wife and I were growing together and very busy serving the Lord. One Sunday afternoon, God led us to sign a contract - literally to write out a contract of total surrender of our lives to the Lord Jesus Christ - to become His slave. And, of course, He is our Example, our Model - Philippians 2:7 speaks of Him

becoming a Slave. The Creator of a couple hundred billion galaxies became a man, the God-man. The Apostle Paul refers to himself in Romans 1:1 as "a slave of Jesus Christ." We felt that the most important thing we could do was to become as slaves of Jesus - signing a contract to that effect, we laid everything we owned or ever would own on the altar, and we've been slaves now for 50 some years, and I must tell you it's the most liberating thing that's ever happened to me!

I think the most important thing I've learned - in a positive way - is to encourage people to pray. Before we began our ministry at UCLA, we organised a 24-hour prayer chain, dividing the 24 hours into 96 15-minute periods. As a result, in almost every meeting we had at UCLA - faculty, sorority, fraternity and dormitory - people indicated their desire to follow Christ.

In 1994, God taught me the power of fasting and prayer. I think it's the spiritual atomic bomb of all the disciplines.

In responding to criticism, I remember that dead people don't have any feelings. We're supposed to be crucified. As a matter of fact, whenever I get hate-filled letters, I write them and tell them I love them. I'm not stressed over that. I always listen to criticism because I want to learn if there's something I need to know. But I'm never troubled by those things because there's only One in this world I have to please and that's God - the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If I please Him, He'll take care of the rest.

That's the reason I emphasise to all of our leaders - Seek first the Kingdom of God, love God with all your heart, soul, and mind - and God takes care of everything else. People give me credit but I say, "I'm the slave. The Master deser-

ves the credit." When problems arise, the Master carries the load. That's what He wants. "Cast all your cares on the Lord."

I'd say to all the pastors, don't be intimidated by any critics in your church. Just love them. You're commanded to love them whether you want to or not, as you walk in the Spirit. And I must say, one of the most important qualifications to serve God is to do it in the power of the Holy Spirit - anything we do in the energy of the flesh is wood, hay, and stubble.

One of the great lessons I learned early on was to draw upon the supernatural resources of God day by day, moment by moment. For as we all know, our bodies are temples of the living God.

Another lesson I learned: I used to be very, very critical of the church. I saw all these people going to church and doing nothing. As you know, very few people witness for Christ. I saw them living as though they didn't even know the Lord. I became impatient with the church and said, "I don't want to waste my time talking to Christians. From now on I'm going to work with non-believers and when they become believers, I'm going to keep them separated from the old believers so they won't learn this behaviour."

I was wrong. I discovered that these people who were not fruitful for God, and who were living in defeat, were really hungry for help. When I loved them and showed them how they could know the power of the resurrection and the fullness of God's Spirit and the power of God's Word - the cleansing and the blood of Christ - miracles happened!

My life's message is: be a slave of Jesus. And all that involves. Love your Master, trust your Master, and obey your Master. Obviously,

I'm a son of God, heir of God, joint-heir with Christ, and if He was described as a Slave - Paul and Peter and the other apostles were slaves - this to me is the highest privilege anyone could know. I evaluate everything I do in light of what He wants me to do. I try to relate every move, every day, in light of how I can help fulfil His Great Commission and fulfil His commandments.

Every morning before I eat or do anything else, it's been my practice through the years to get on my knees and read the Scripture in a spirit of reverence. The Bible is not just another book. It's God's Word to us: holy, inspired, and inerrant. I read it in that respect. I don't worship the Bible. I worship the One Who inspired men of old to record it. It's not just another book. I don't read it just to get a lesson to pass on to somebody else. I read it for my own nourishment, my own spiritual growth.

We should continue to share the Gospel in a rapidly changing world. We should be culturally sensitive. I would say we should also learn how to write and learn how to speak. You can go to local schools. There are all kinds of extension universities and seminaries around where you can learn how to preach and teach and write. Communication is so crucial. And understanding the culture - why, in some big cities, there are 200 different spoken languages.

I have fibrosis of the lungs, for which there's no cure. I discovered it about three years ago. I began to praise the Lord. That's what James commands us to do - God - through James and through Paul. God commands us in Romans 5 to rejoice. I learned many years ago, in all things to give thanks and rejoice, whatever the circumstances.

Continued on p. 3

Die Ossewa

My gedagtes vloei terug na ‘n gedig van Jan F.E. Cilliers (12 Jan. 1865 – 1 Jun. 1940) wat ek nog op skool geleer het. In daardie tyd het die Afrikaners en Voortrekkers deur die Vryheidsoorlog (Anglo-Boereoorlog, 1899-1902) gekom, deur die Rebelle in aanloop tot die Eerste Wêreldoorlog, en ook deur die depressiejare van 1933 asook die Tweede Wêreldoorlog (1939-1944). Ek meen nie om by die politiek van die dag betrokke te raak nie, maar daar was BAIE smart, pyn en lyding, ook by ons voorsate, vir baie jare. Daarom gryp hierdie digters, soos ook Totius, my diep aan die hart. Let op die gedig van Jan F. E. Cilliers:

Die Ossewa
Die osse stap aan deur die stowwe,
geduldig, gedienstig, gedwee;
die jukke, al drukkend hul skowwe –
hul dra dit getroos en tevreë.

En stille, al stuiwend en stampend,
kom stadig die wa agterna –
die dowwe rooi stowwe, al dampend,
tersy op die windjie gedra.

Die middagson brand op die koppe,
gebuk in hul beurende krag;
hul swaai heen en weer in die stroppe –
en ver is die tog van die dag.

Dit kraak deur die brekende brokke:
die opdraans is ver en is swaar;
die knars in die knakkende knokke,
maar hul beur, en die vrag bring hul daar.

So, stom tot die stond van hul sterwe,
blyf ieder ‘n held van die daad...
Hul bene, na swoeë en swerwe,
lê ver op die velde verlaat.

Bedink dit. Leef jou in in die smart van die Trekkers. Stadig trek hulle voort. Ongerepte landstreek. Reptiele. Wilde diere. Gevare. Hulle moet self kos vind en ook kos vir hul diere. En water. Ek weet, want ek het nog met osse grootgeword, en het ook op skool baie van die idiome van die Voortrekkers geleer rondom osse, jukke, stroppe, en jukskeie. Dit was MAK osse, soos ‘n perd getem. Hulle stribbel nie teë nie. Kom nie in opstand nie. “Geduldig, gedienstig, gedwee.” Let op na hulle getemde gesindheid. Niks van hierdie smarte het verander nie. Net die omstandighede. Mens bly mens. Daarom is die Woord in Jesus se mond relevant, ook vir vandag, wanneer Hy met ons praat deur Sy Gees.

Ons lees in Jes. 10:27, “En in dié dag sal sy las afgly van jou skouer en sy juk van jou nek, en die juk sal tot niet raak vanweë die vettigheid.” Dit was die tyd toe Israel in oorlog verkeer het met die Assiriërs toe God hulle hierdie belofte gegee het. Die juk (van die vyand) word verbreek vanweë die salwing (“anointing”). Die King James Bible stel dit so: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burdens shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing (Shemen).” Dit is ‘n metafoor wat die HERE toepas, en hoe Hy Israel verlos van die Assiriërs. So verlos Hy ons ook deur die krag en Teenwoordigheid van Sy Heilige Gees.

In die Nuwe Testament nooi Jesus ons uit om Sy juk op ons skouers te neem. Is jy waar die stomme osse was, ingebreek (gebroke), getem of mak gemaak wanneer jy met jou nood voor Hom kom kniel? Het jy al tot ruste gekom aan Jesus se voete, en Sy rus ingegaan, omdat jy jou sorge en laste vir Hom gegee het? Terwyl jy toelaat dat Jesus die ysterjuk van die vyand verbreek, het jy al Jesus se sagte juk op jou nek en skouers geneem? Dit spreek van berusting en aanvaarding, want Hy sê: “My juk is sag en My las is lig” (Matt. 11:30). Hy sê ook: “My gebooie is nie swaar nie” (vgl. 1 Joh. 5:3). Sy gebod is liefde. Liefde vir God en ook my liefde vir my naaste. Selfs ook liefde vir my vyand! Want ons wil nie ons vyand sien verlore gaan en in die ewige verderf beland nie! Ons het ‘n las vir siele soos Jesus gehad het en nog steeds het.

Die Jode het die juk gesien as ‘n juk van onderwerping aan gesag bo jou. Hulle het gepraat van die juk van die Wet, die juk van gebooie, die juk van die Koninkryk van God, wat hulle op die volk geplaas het, en

sorg gedra het dat dit tot die letter toe uitgevoer word. Dit was ‘n ysterjuk, sonder liefde toegepas. Hulle het mense met God gedreig: Hy sal die wetsoortreder straf en vervloek en in vuur van die hel gooi! Maar die ironie is niemand van hulle (of ons) kon die Wet volkome onderhou nie! Maar toe Jesus kom, bring Hy die ganse Ou Verbond met al sy konsekwensies en mensgemaakte reëls en regulasies tot vervulling in die Nuwe Verbond. Jesus sê: “‘n Nuwe (kainos) gebod (entolē) gee Ek julle, dat julle mekaar moet liefhê (agapē); soos Ek julle liefgehad het, moet julle ook mekaar liefhê” (Joh. 13:34). “Nuwe” is die vertaling van “kainos” wat beteken “vernuwe” of “opgebou” of “gerestoureer” of “om iets wat oud is weer nuut te maak.” Jesus het die Ou Verbond kom vernuwe en tot sy volle betekenis en openbaring gebring. Hy het die Wet van Liefde kom instel en kom demonstreer. Dis daarom dat Hy sê dat Sy juk sag is. Hy het die ware gees van die wet kom openbaar, en dit was liefde en respek vir God, en orde en vrede en ‘n weg tot God. In 2 Kor. 5:17 skryf Paulus: “Daarom, as iemand in Christus is, is hy ‘n nuwe (kainos) skepsel; die ou dinge het verbygegaan, kyk, dit het alles nuut geword.” Jy het nog jou karakter, persoonlikheid, jou eie menswees, maar God het jou nuutgemaak! Jy is “gerestoureer!” Hy het jou ook kom vernuwe. Jy is gewederbaar deur die Heilige Gees! Niemand se verstand kan dit uitdeneer nie!

Jesus het die Wet dus tot voltooiing gebring. Hy sê in Matt. 5:17, “Moenie dink dat Ek gekom het om die wet of die profete te ontbind nie. Ek het nie gekom om te ontbind nie, maar om te vervul (Grieks = plēroō; tot volle ontplooiing bring).” “He came to fulfil the law, to reveal the full depth of meaning that it was intended to hold” (McNeile). Ons sien die praktiese toepassing hiervan in Matt. 5. Ons sien hóé Hy die wet tot voltooiing gebring het, en nie tot vernietiging nie. Hy plaas die wet op ‘n hoër vlak, met groter vereistes, en dan gee Hy ons die Heilige Gees, as Trooster en ook as Helper om aan hierdie vereistes te voldoen, sonder veroordeling. Want die grondslag van die Nuwe Verbond in Jesus Christus, is liefde (Joh. 13:34). En nou verklaar Hy: “Kom na My toe, almal wat vermoeid en belas is, en Ek sal vir julle rus gee. Neem My juk op julle, en leer van My, want Ek is sagmoedig en nederig van hart, en julle sal rus vind vir julle siele” (Matt. 11:28-30). Vra Hom om die menslike en soms demoniese ysterjuk af te gooi, en neem Jesus se juk op.

Dit mag wees dat Jesus die beeld van die juk in Sy vader Josef se werkwinkel gekry het. Hy het immers daar gewerk tot en met Sy roeping op dertigjarige ouderdom. Die legende loop so: Buite die werkwinkel van Jesus en Sy menslike vader Josef het daar ‘n uithangbord gehang met die woorde: “My yokes fit well.” In daardie tyd het elkeen sy os na die skrynwerkerswinkel toe geneem om ‘n handgemaakte, pasgemaakte juk te maak wat die os nie sal seermaak of skaaf nie. En daarom kon Jesus sê: “Neem My juk op julle en leer van My... My juk is sag en My las is lig...”

Wanneer jy een oggend wakker word en jy voel van God verwyder, is dit dán dat jy in die geloof moet optree. Want ons wandel deur geloof en nie deur aanskouing nie (2 Kor. 5:7). Staan dan op, en begin die Lewende Woord bely in gebed. Vra die Here om Woord in jou gees op te wek. Dan breek die salwing van Jesus bewustelik deur in jou gees. Jy raak bewus van die RUS waarin Hy jou lei. Werp al jou sorge op Hom, waarvoor jy geen antwoord het nie. Dit is die salwing wat die ysterjuk verbreek!

Neem nog vandag Sy juk op jou. Gee oor aan Hom. Kyk na die verwonde mens wat stukkend langs die pad lê, bebloed en hyg na asem. Is jy ook so ‘n mens? Jy dien die Here al sóveel jare. Só lank op die pad. En nou lê jy langs die pad - verwond en stukkend geslaan en hyg na asem en wens jy is nie meer hier nie! Ek weet, ek was ook al daar. Verskeie kere. So ‘n mens het liefde nodig. Nie ‘n wet nie. Nie veroordeling nie. Net die Wet van Liefde. En dit wat ek hier skryf, is nie bloot ‘n mite of ‘n mooi bemoedigende storie nie, maar ‘n belewenis van God die Almagtige en van Sy salwing.

Kom net soos jy is. Jesus verwydt jou nie. Jesus sal jou wonde verbind en jou vergewe as daar sonde in jou hart is. Hy sal jou heelmaak soos die verwonde man wat langs die pad lê in die gelykenis van die Barmhartige Samaritaan. Wy jou aan Hom toe sodat Hy jou kan nuutmaak. God stel belang in jou. Hy wil jou help, al is jy gebroke, moeg en met al jou foute en gebreke. Neem Sy liefdesjuk op jou en ervaar die salwing van Sy Heilige Gees, wat jou sal vrymaak van alles wat te swaar is om te dra. Kry klaar met die verlede en die seer, en beleef Sy vrede vandag!
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A Life Worth Living

Continued from p. 1
So I began to rejoice and praise God that I'd soon see Him. Then miracles began to happen. The just shall live by faith, that which is not of faith is sin, without faith it's impossible to please God. **When you're praising and worshipping Him, even with a broken heart, that releases God's power because He honours faith.**

Jesus said in John 14:21-23, "If you obey Me, I will manifest Myself to you." I think one of the greatest lessons I've ever learned is to praise the Lord, rejoice, give thanks no matter what the circumstances. I can tell you that the last two years or so of my life have probably been the most delightful and most productive of my entire 80 years.

I'd like to encourage everyone, no matter what your problems - financial problems, physical problems - if you're having marital problems, take it all to Him. Cast it all on Him and rejoice in the certainty that if you trust Him and obey Him and love Him, He will take care of you.

In the last 50 years, my number 1 priority - as an expression of my love and act of obedience - has been to do like Christ came into the world to do - to seek and save the lost. I've tried to dedicate my life to seeking and saving the lost and helping fulfil the Great Commission, winning and discipling people around the world.

And in the process we've helped take the Gospel to over 6 billion people. But in the last two years, we've helped take the Gospel to over 2.5 billion. No telling how many of those have come into the Kingdom. Most important is - after they become believers - is to make disciples. We need a million new pastors - at least - to help take care of all the new converts worldwide.

To God be the praise! He gave me the vision. I was a brand-new Christian, a businessman who had a great interest in communication and promotion - that was the nature of my business. So when I became a Christian, I looked around and saw then the church of 6 500 (the church in

Hollywood) - most of the people didn't do anything. God gave me a vision to do a film on the life of Jesus. We took everything Hollywood had to offer and finally 33 years later, God was waiting for Paul Eshleman to be born and reared so he could take it over. God has used him and, of course, all of our staff all over the world. We partner with probably 2 000 different Mission groups.

Let us pray: Father, Holy, Holy Father, we bow in reverence and awe before Your majesty. You're the omnipotent Creator of all things. You sent Your only begotten Son, the Creator under Your leadership to be our Saviour, our Lord, our Master, our King. We ask in His Name, the Name to Whom You've given all authority in heaven and on Earth, to prepare millions of young men and young women to serve You on the front lines of spiritual warfare, to be men and women who seek first Your Kingdom, who love You with all their heart, soul and mind, who trust Your Word and obey Your commandments and are faithful to You, Father.

I pray in the Holy, Holy Name of Jesus for a continued spiritual harvest that will bring billions into Your Kingdom and liberate them out of the darkness and gloom of Satan's kingdom and bring them into the glorious Kingdom of light of Your Holy Son. In His Name, we worship and praise You. In Jesus' Name, we give You praise together. Amen.

William R. Bright (October 19, 1921 - July 19, 2003) was an American evangelist. In 1951 at the University of California, Los Angeles, he founded Campus Crusade for Christ as a ministry for university students. In 1952 he wrote The Four Spiritual Laws. In 1979 he produced the Jesus film. In 1996 Bill Bright was awarded the \$1.1 million Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, and donated the money to promote the spiritual benefits of fasting and prayer. In 2001 he stepped down as leader of the organisation and Steve Douglass became president. He died in 2003 (Wikipedia).

Esele e tlišetswa Jesu! (A donkey for Jesus!)



DITEMANA
"Barutwa ba ya, ba dira fela ka fa Jesu a ba laetseng ka teng. Ba tsisa ese le eselana, ba baya dikobo tsa bone mo go tsona, mme Jesu a e palama. Foo bontsi jwa batho jwa ala dikobo tsa bone mo tseleng; mme ba bangwe ba kgaola dikala mo ditlhareng, ba di ala mo tseleng. 9Mme batho ba ba mo eteletseng pele le ba ba mo setseng morago ba tlhaba mokgosi ba re: "Hosana go Morwa Dafita!" (Mathaio 21:6-9).

Mme tsotlhe tse, di ne di diragala gore go diragale se se builweng ke moporofeti mo Sagaria 9:9 a re: "Bolelelang Morwadie Sione lo re: 'Bona, Kgosi ya gago e tla go wena, e le bonolo, e palame ese,

e bong eselana, ngwana wa ese.'"

DIKGOPOLLO
Baebele e bontsha dipolelo di le mmalwa tse di tlhomologileng tse di amanang le ditonki, tse gantsi di tshwantshetsang boikokobetso, kagiso le go tsereganya ga Modimo. Sekao ke nako ya Paseka mo Jesu a ne a tsena kwa Jerusalema a palame ese.

Go Tsena ga ga Jeso go ne go le ka Phenyo. Jeso o diragatsa Sagaria 9:9 ka go tsena mo Jerusalema a palame ese, a tshwantshetsa boikokobetso le kagiso (Matheo 21:5).

Jesu o tšile ka mowa wa boikoko-

betso mme ga a a tsena ka ntwale ka go tla a palame pitse e kgole e tshweu. O ne a tla ka kagiso e seng ka ntwale. Gape ka tiragalo e go bontshiwa gore Jesu o itse gotlhe.

O ne a itse jang gore a kgone go roma barongwa go ya go tsaya tonki. O ne a itse jang? Jesu o itse gotlhe. Jesu a ka dirisa selo se sennye mme a se dira kgole. Esele fa o e leba go tswa kwa godimo ke phologolo e e nang le sefapaano mo mokwatleng. Go raya gore Jesu a ne e setse a tsena mo Jerusalema mo sefa-paanong.

Esele kgotsa tonki ke seruiwa se se sa bonweng se le bothokwa thata. Gape tonki e bonwa e le seruiwa se se bonwang se se bothale thata mme se sa tshwane le pitse. Tonki e e ne e golegilwe mme e ne e tshwana le batho ba bantsi mo bophelong. Nako e nngwe batho le bana ba Modimo ba bonwa ba se bothokwa mme ba nyatswa ke batho. Mme Jesu fa a leba motho kampo tonki ga a nke a na le lenyatso.

Wena le fa o inyatsa kgotsa o golegilwe ke mathata mo bophelong Jesu a ka go dirisa. A ka romela barutwa ba gagwe gore ba go golole mme a dirise wena go



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dira tiro e kgole. Bona tonki e e ne e pegile Kgosi wa Dikgosi, Morena wa Barena. Le wena Modimo a ka go tsholetsa mme a go godisa. Se inyatse. Modimo a ka go dirisa jaaka o ntse.

THAPELO
Ntate wa rona re leboga o re ruta gore re se inyatse mme re dule re ipona re le bothokwa le fa batho ba ka re nyatsa. Re kopa o re thuse mme o re dirise mo o re tlhokang teng. Re leboga o ikokobetse gore rona re tle re bone pholoso.

Re leboga o tsamaila tsela e o e tsamaileng gore rona re bone Mopholosi mme re kgone go amogela bophelo jo bo sa khutleng. AMEN.



Oftentimes, we look at things with natural eyes. We use human logic and we find it hard to trust God when He asks something of us that does not make sense. Let us consider some examples of when God's math is different to ours, but when it makes spiritual sense!

1. TITHING

Have you heard the term "girl math"? It's trending on social media, where girls humorously justify shopping splurges. For example, buying something on sale means you basically earned money or paying cash makes it "free" because the money was already taken out of your bank account. Silly? Definitely! And hilariously leading to great frustration of the more logical-thinking boyfriends and husbands.

When it comes to finances, God's math is particularly mind-blowing. He generously gives us everything: *"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, Who does not change like shifting shadows"* (James 1:17). In return, He asks us to honour Him with our tithe, which is ten percent of our income. *"A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord"* (Leviticus 27:30).

Ten percent of your income may feel like a lot, especially when you're already struggling to make ends meet. But when we consider that God gave everything, holding nothing back - not even His Son (John 3:16), it really isn't all that much! When we give back a portion of what He's already entrusted to us, God makes an incredible promise: *"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this," says the Lord Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it'"* (Malachi 3:10). If you haven't given tithes yet, I encourage you to start today and watch God's promises unfold in your life!

2. FORGIVENESS

My husband hates being late; he's the exception to the stereotype that Indians are always late. Early in our marriage, this difference led to plenty of arguments. I've improved a lot since then, but my husband had to forgive my poor time management countless times.

Have you ever had to forgive

someone repeatedly for the same thing? Jesus had an interesting math formula about forgiveness when Peter asked Him: *"Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?"* 'No, not seven times,' Jesus replied, *'but seventy times seven!'"* (Matthew 18:21-22). This is a perfect example of "God's math". What are the odds of the same person offending you 70 x 7 = 490 times? Some translations say seventy-seven times. But even so, that's a lot of forgiveness!

Jesus didn't mean that we must keep an exact account of how many times we forgive each person. Instead, what He is teaching us here is to embrace an ongoing attitude of forgiveness. *"Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you"* (Ephesians 4:31-32). Are there people you need to forgive today?

3. LITTLE IS MUCH IN GOD'S HANDS

If I told you to prepare for war, wouldn't you try to gather the largest army possible? Especially if your enemy far outnumbers you? In Judges 7, we can read the story of Gideon and his army preparing to face a massive enemy force: *"The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore"* (Judges 7:12). You'd think this would be an excellent time for God to do a multiplication miracle, right? But God's math was quite the opposite. He told Gideon: *"You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, 'My own strength has saved me'"* (Judges 7:2).

God made Gideon reduce his army from 32 000 to 300 men - but still gave them the victory! This story is a great reminder that absolutely nothing is impossible for God and that He alone deserves the credit for every victory in our lives.

Are you facing an impossible situation right now? Does it feel like God is stripping away your support instead of adding to it? Take heart - He hasn't forgotten you! Like Gideon, trust that God is in control, setting you up for victory.

4. TAKING THE GOSPEL TO THE WORLD

In the New Testament, Jesus has a

special plan to "conquer" the whole world. He sends His disciples out two-by-two! *"Calling the Twelve to Him, He began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits"* (Mark 6:7). Their mission? To advance the Kingdom of God to all nations (Matthew 24:14).

Throughout history, we see attempts of military leaders trying to dominate the world; think of the Romans in Biblical times, Napoleon Bonaparte in the 19th century or Hitler with Nazi Germany during the Second World War. All of them used violence, oppression and force to establish their rule. God's math is establishing a Kingdom without an army by making disciples and sending them out. And guess what? The Kingdom of God is the largest, longest-lasting, and most powerful Kingdom the world has ever seen! It's a special kind of kingdom: *"Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, My servants would fight to prevent My arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now My kingdom is from another place'"* (John 18:36). *"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit"* (Romans 14:17).

You and I are called to be a part of this incredible Kingdom and to share its Good News with the world: *"He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.'"* (Mark 16:15). What an honour to be part of God's divine plan!

5. MULTIPLICATION, NOT SUMMATION

"Husband math" is ordering a double portion of food even though your wife says she isn't hungry! When we were newlyweds, we'd go to a food court, and my husband would ask, "Are you hungry?" I'd reply, "No," trying to avoid junk food. But when he'd bring back KFC chicken strips, my cravings would kick in, and I'd end up taking a few bites. He would exclaim, "You said you weren't hungry. I counted how many strips I wanted and ordered accordingly, but now you're eating half of my meal!" It's become a running joke - my husband now orders extra as a matter of principle, and I ask, "Did you count, or can I take some?"

Jesus had some pretty interesting math when it came to food, too. In Matthew 14:13-21 a massive crowd had gathered in a remote place to hear Jesus teach. When it got late, and the crowd became hungry, the disciples came to Jesus: *"Send the crowds away,*

so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.' Jesus replied, *'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.'* *'We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,' they answered. 'Bring them here to Me,' He said."* (Matthew 14:15-18). Five loaves and two fish... to feed 5 000 men plus women and children? This does not make sense! Yet, Jesus gave thanks, broke the loaves and fish and fed everyone. And not just barely - there was plenty for everyone, with twelve baskets of leftovers (Matthew 14:20)! This story is not just about food - it's a reminder that our God can take whatever is given to Him in faith and multiply its impact in unfathomable ways!

6. GOD IS BEYOND TIME

Have you ever noticed how ten minutes of scrolling on your phone fly by, but ten minutes of silence feels like a lifetime? God doesn't have that problem; with God's math, a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. *"A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night"* (Psalms 90:4). *"But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day"* (2 Peter 3:8).

As humans, we try to understand God with our mortal minds to the best of our capacity. But God is so much bigger, greater and more powerful than we could comprehend! His perception of time is a great example of that. How can a thousand years be like a day and vice versa? It is simply unfathomable for our human logic.

God stands above everything - including time. He invented it! Our concept of time and our calendar are based on the movements of the earth, the sun, and the moon, all of which are created by God! What is even more mind-blowing is that He already had us in His mind, even before the beginning of time. *"He has saved us and called us to a holy life - not because of anything we have done but because of His Own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time"* (2 Timothy 1:9).

Let us consider how great God is, but also how trustworthy He is. As we get to know Him, we learn to trust Him. Take a risk when you feel Him prompting you to do something that seems illogical. He is the God of the impossible! Praise and worship God for his incomprehensible greatness!

Slowing Down May Just Save Your Ministry

Pastoral ministry and care are in danger of faltering under current pressures. Many spiritual workers are facing fatigue and burnout. In the past five years alone, how many of you reading this article have questioned your calling, lost ministry friends and co-labourers, or have grown generally weary? Perhaps there is a growing awareness of discontent within your congregation, and you are tempted to ignore the issue or throw in the towel altogether. If you are still hanging in there, you might be tempted to find temporary relief in unhealthy habits or otherwise mindless distractions. Intimacy with God, quietness of soul, and the pursuit of contemplation will significantly impact our spiritual health and the spiritual lives of those we are called to serve.

I (Shawn) remember where I stood, who was with me, and the season when I finished reading Gregory's the *Great's Pastoral Rule* and Eugene Peterson's *The Contemplative Pastor*. They were simple reads, and I remember finishing them in a single day. It was a favourite theme of C.S. Lewis that only lazy people work hard. By lazily abdicating the essential work of deciding and directing, establishing values and setting goals, other people do it for us; then we find ourselves frantically, at the last minute, trying to satisfy half a dozen different demands on our time, none of which is essential to our vocation, to stave off the disaster of disappointing someone.

But if I vainly crowd my day with conspicuous activity or let others fill my day with imperious demands, I don't have time to do my proper work, the work to which I have been called. How can I lead people into the quiet place beside the still waters if I am in perpetual motion? How can I persuade a person to live by faith and not by works if I have to juggle my schedule constantly to make everything fit?

As I read this, my soul grew unsettled, and I knew something was happening. Of course, we need to plan for our day. Of course, we have plenty of ministry planning meetings. Of course, we have projects to finish, people to visit, and phone calls to make. But how do I create space in my schedule for my piety and stave off the demands of stuff?

For days afterward, Peterson's line reverberated throughout my soul: [How can I lead people into](#)

[the quiet place beside the still waters if I am in perpetual motion?](#) Psalm 23 depicts God as a shepherd to David. He nurtures us. He leads us. He guides us. God is the One Who leads us to still waters to drink deeply from the Father's Presence, the goodness of the Son, and the peace of the Spirit.

We all know a frantic person chasing something they can never fully grasp. We see their tired soul, fatigue in their eyes, and (if we look carefully) their disordered inner life. They exude a sense of restlessness. Maybe this is what some of us see every morning in the mirror. Does your life feel chaotic, running from one thing to the next? Are you leading people to the goodness of Christ while doubting His goodness yourself? Are you finding your soul fatigued while you perform good deeds? Do you neglect to cease from your labour and internal spinning to rest in God? In ministry, we do many good things in a single day or week - we pray, teach, counsel, tend to the needs of others, and care for widows. We may feel frantic because we have said yes to many good but perhaps unnecessary ministry duties.

Working in God's Kingdom can be good and noble; we should labour for people's souls. [Yet, to labour without rest may be idolatry.](#) It may also be a ministry lacking spiritual depth, as we can care for others while empty, chasing fulfilment. The veneer of busyness and the drive for acceptance can govern our identity, clouding our well-being, our pursuit of spirituality, and our times of reflection.

Augustine likened human life to a pilgrimage that joins one's soul to God: we are constantly "called home from the noise that is around us to the joys that are silent. Why do we rush about... looking for God Who is here at home with us, if all we want is to be with Him?" [By slowing down, we draw closer to God.](#)

The point is not to cease all ministerial duties but to place limits on ministerial work because we are human. [We must find time to rest in God to minister effectively.](#) "The contemplative life is to rest from exterior action and cleave only to the desire of the Maker, that the mind may now take no pleasure in doing anything, but having spurned all cares, may be aglow to see the Face of the Creator" (Gregory the Great). Gregory stood between two worlds - ascetic contem-

plation of God and public ministry to the Church; the double love was important to this vision for a bishop. On the one hand, a pastor is to love God, and part of loving God is contemplating God. On the other hand, Christians must love their neighbours and thus cannot remain in an ascetic life.

George Demacopoulos explains that Gregory "believed that successful pastoral leadership required a balance between the contemplation of the isolated ascetic and the action of the well-trained administrator. The 'active-contemplative' was not only a more effective leader, he was also a better Christian than either the recluse or the administrator." The two forms always go together - [no one can adequately minister to](#)

Oupa se Fout, Kleinseun se Wonderwerk

"Daarna het hulle gaan sit en eet, en toe hulle weer sien, kom daar 'n klomp Ismaelitiese handelaars uit Gilead aan. Hulle was op pad na Egipte toe en op hulle kamele was daar gom, balsem en hars gelaai" (Genesis 37:25 NV).

As Abraham en Sara bereid was om net 'n bietjie langer te wag, sou Isak gebore word en God se belofte vervul gewees het. Hulle het egter ongeduldig geword en gevolglik is Ismael gebore.

Een van die name wat aan God in die Skrif gegee word, is 'Verlosser' omdat Hy jou van jou foute kan verlos en dit in 'n leerervaring kan verander; Hy kan die gemors wat jy maak in die wonderwerk wat jy nodig het, verander.

Dit het drie generasies geneem, maar God het die gemors wat Abraham gemaak het in die wonderwerk van bevryding wat Josef nodig gehad het, verander. Josef se lotsbestemming was om oor Egipte te heers en sy familie en die wêreld in 'n tyd van hongersnood te red.

Omdat sy broers egter wrokkig oor hom gevoel het, het hulle hom as slaaf aan 'n groep Ismaelitiese handelaars verkoop. Hulle was die nageslag van Ismael, wat vir Abraham en Hagar, Sara se slavin, gebore is. Waarheen was hierdie Ismaeliete op pad? Egipte toe!

'Net toe hulle gaan sit... sien hulle... 'n groep Ismaelitiese handelaars wat gom, balsem en hars vanaf Gilead na Egipte toe neem... Toe die handelaars by hulle verbykom, trek die broers vir Josef op uit die put. Daarna verkoop hulle hom vir twintig stukke silwer. Die Ismaelitiese handelaars het hom saamgeneem Egipte toe' (verse 25, 28 NLV).

Dis nie verby nie totdat God sê dis verby. Hy kan die gemors wat jy in die verlede gemaak het in 'n wonderwerk wat jy in die toekoms gaan benodig, omskep. Hierdie wonderwerk sal nie net jou nie, maar ook ander mense seën. Miskien sal daardie ander mense jou eie familie wees, net soos in Josef se geval.

- Bob & Debby Gass

[others if the quiet life is all-consuming, and no one can fully contemplate if ministry is all-consuming.](#) Gregory thus called those entering the pastoral office to slow down and pursue a balanced life of contemplating God and ministry to others.

By paying attention to the interior life through prayer and contemplation, pastors and spiritual workers are more equipped to deal with their busy schedules. Slowing down is essential for pastoral effectiveness. Listening to Gregory's wisdom helps us understand that the active life of ministry is fueled, not fizzled, by cultivating the interior life of contemplation.

- Coleman M. Ford & Shawn J. Wilhite

Konflikhantering: Genade én Waarheid

Ons het al dikwels gehoor dat iemand sê: “Die waarheid maak seer.” Dis gewoonlik wanneer iets wat moeilik is, oorgedra moet word en die ander party dit nie noodwendig wil hoor nie. Maar daar is gewoonlik ook ‘n bietjie van ‘n geniepsige byt agter hierdie woorde. So ook in die uitdrukking, “Sit dit in jou pyp en rook dit.” Maar dan weet ons ook “‘n Mens vang meer vlieë met heuning as met asyn.” Daar is baie sulke sêgoed in die volksmond wanneer dit by die hantering van konflikte kom. Maar watter wyse raad het die Bybel vir ons wanneer ons ‘n konflik-situasie moet ontloot?

1. ONDERSOEK EERSTENS JOUSELF

Wanneer ons ‘n konflik beleef, is ons eerste reaksie om kwaad en veronreg te voel. Iemand tas my regte aan, verneder my, of weier om my opinie in ag te neem. Paulus se gevolgtrekking, wanneer hy skryf oor ‘n verskil in opinies oor watter dag of watter voedsel om as heilig te ag, is dit: “Want niemand van ons leef vir homself nie en niemand sterf vir homself nie. Want as ons lewe, leef ons tot eer van die Here; en as ons sterwe, sterf ons tot eer van die Here; of ons dan lewe en of ons sterwe, ons behoort aan die Here” (Rom. 14:7-8 NV). Paulus maak dit duidelik dat ons God se eer moet soek, en nie ons eie nie. Dit gaan nie oor ons gekrenkte ego nie, maar oor wat Godsverheerlikend is. Dit gee ons perspektief: ons moet fokus op die “groot dinge”, nie klein sake nie. Paulus sluit af, “So sal elkeen van ons dan vir homself aan God rekenskap gee” (Rom. 14:12 NV).

Ons moet dus seker maak dat alles wat ons doen, in liefde geskied (1 Kor. 16:14). Ons harts-motief is allerbelangrik, en dit is bekend by God. Ons moet dus ons kant skoonhou, die minste wees, en ons getuieis bewaar. Indien ons ontdek dat ons iets verkeerd gedoen het, moet ons om vergifnis vra. Wanneer ons God se eer najaag, en nie ons eie nie, is ons al ver op die pad van versoening. “Of julle eet en of julle drink of wat julle ook al doen, doen alles tot eer van God” (1 Kor. 10:31 NV). Ken Sande skryf dat hoewel dit soos ‘n paradoks klink, kan konflik lei tot God se ver-

heerliking. Mense hou ons dop wanneer ons in ‘n moeilike situasie is. As ons kies om anders op te tree as wat die gewoonte is, en nie ons eie belange na te jaag nie, maar God s’n, sal dit op ‘n getuie-nis uitloop.

2. BEKLEEU JOU MET GENADE

Hoewel dit moeilik is, moet ons besef dat die ander persoon dalk ‘n goeie beweegrede het om te doen wat hulle doen. Die Franse gesegde lui, “To know all is to forgive all.” Dit is soms waar - dit verwys daarna dat indien ons ontdek hoekom iemand optree soos wat hulle optree, kan daardie begrip ons help om die konflik op te los. Ken Sande skryf dat daar gewoonlik vier redes is waarom konflik ontstaan: swak kommunikasie wat lei tot misverstande, verskille in waardes en prioriteite, kompetisie wanneer daar beperkte hulpbronne is, en sondige gesindhede en gewoontes. Dit is basies onvervulde verwagtinge wat iemand koester (en nie alle verwagtinge is edel of realisties nie). Ons weet nie altyd wat iemand se beweegrede vir hul optrede is nie. Ons moet iemand dus die voordeel van die twyfel gee totdat ons die situasie goed verstaan.

Paulus herinner ons, “Die liefde is lankmoedig en vriendelik; die liefde is nie jaloers nie; die liefde praat nie groot nie, is nie opgeblase nie, handel nie onwelvoeglik nie, soek nie sy eie belang nie, word nie verbitterd nie, reken die kwaad nie toe nie, is nie bly oor die ongeregtigheid nie, maar is bly saam met die waarheid. Dit bedek alles, glo alles, hoop alles, verdra alles” (1 Kor. 13:4-7 OV). Ryan Leak skryf, “Notice how stubbornly love tries to believe the best about people... When God’s love dwells in our hearts, it helps us see people through a different filter, a better filter. It helps us see people the way God sees them.”

Wat ‘n kragtige voorbeeld van vergifnis sien ons aan die kruis afspel: “En toe hulle op die plek kom wat Hoofskedel genoem word, het hulle Hom daar gekruisig, en die kwaaddoeners, een aan die regter- en een aan die linkerkant. En Jesus sê: Vader, vergeef hulle, want hulle weet nie wat hulle doen nie” (Luk. 23:33-

34). Die mense het nie Jesus se vergifnis verdien nie - hulle het Hom beskinder, bespot, gesmaad, verag! Maar in hierdie geweldige omstandighede van verraad, verwerping en pyn het Jesus Hom tot die Vader gewend en vir hulle vergifnis gebid. Ons word uitgedaag om Sy voorbeeld na te volg.

3. BID OM ONDERSKEIDING

Baie keer tree mense vreemd op. Hul gedrag maak nie sin nie en is nie aanvaarbaar nie. Hulle stoot ander weg, is ongeskik en tree soos ‘n boelie op. Dit is dan wanneer dit nodig is om die Here om geestelike onderskeiding te bid. Ons moet besef dat daar baie keer pyn en verwerping agter iemand se optrede is, wat weer pyn in ander se lewe veroorsaak. Soms is dit selfsug en ongebreidelde ambisie en kompetisie - ‘n vleeslike gesindheid, ‘n sug na mag en beheer en status. Maar dit is baie keer dieper, komplekser. Iemand put hul waarde uit ‘n bepaalde beeld wat hulle voorhou, en hulle wil nie dat enig iemand in hul pad staan nie.

Hoe dit ook al sy, bid die Here vir onderskeiding, maar meer nog, vir ‘n geestelike sleutel om die slot van iemand se hart te ontsluit. So iemand is eintlik ‘n gevangene wat bevry moet word. As diensknegt wat onder die leiding van die Heilige Gees funksioneer, kan ons ‘n besondere rol speel om iemand los te maak van die leuens van Satan en die pyn van hulle verlede. Paulus bid ‘n besondere gebed vir die Filippense, “Ook bid ek dat julle liefde al hoe meer sal toeneem in begrip en fyn aanvoeling, sodat julle die dinge sal kan onderskei waarop dit werklik aankom. Dan sal julle op die dag wanneer Christus kom, onberispelik en sonder blaam wees, en deur Jesus Christus sal julle geheel en al in die regte verhouding met God wees, tot Sy lof en eer” (Fil. 1:9-11 NV). Ons moet bid dat ons liefde sal toeneem, asook ons onderskeiding, en dan vir die wysheid van die Gees, sodat ons sal weet hoe om in elke situasie op te tree.

4. KOMMUNIKASIE IS NOODSAAKLIK

Om mekaar beter te verstaan, is dit noodsaaklik om ‘n saak uit te pluus en al die perspektiewe te

bespreek. Sodoende kom ons nader aan ‘n oplossing. Dit is maklik om kommunikasie te vermy en te hoop dat die konflik vanself sal verdwyn. Ander is weer veglustig. Dit is egter moeiliker om in nederigheid ‘n oplossing te soek en kommunikasie te inisieer. ‘n Berader het genoem dat dit ‘n belangrike stap is om ‘n huwelikspaar om ‘n tafel te kry en probleme uit te praat. In baie gevalle begin die een die ander een beter verstaan, en maak dan die nodige aanpassings om konflik op te los.

Dit is egter uiters moeilik as iemand weier om te praat oor ‘n moeilike saak. As die deur ferm toe is, moet ons bid vir ‘n oop deur. Ons moet iemand soms konfronteer, maar ander kere in sagtheid wys op ander perspektiewe rondom ‘n bepaalde saak. Ons moet ons egter eers in gebed voorberei op so ‘n moeilike gesprek. Ons moet bid om insig, wysheid, en kalmte. As ‘n mens net instorm en “feite” neerlê sonder om te luister of te probeer om die ander persoon te kant in te sien, kan dit meer skade as goed doen.

5. BID OM ‘N HARTSVERANDERING

Wanneer ons die kernoorsaak van ‘n bepaalde konflik in gebed onderskei het, iemand gekonfronteer het daarvoor, in liefde en genade (of soms in frustrasie) opgetree het en die saak nog nie opgelos is nie, moet ons bid vir ‘n hartsverandering. Nie net by die ander persoon nie, maar ook by onself. Ons met die Here vertrou - Hy verander harte. Mense is dalk nie gereed om te luister en aan te pas nie. Dit is dan dat ons moet terugstaan en tyd moet gee.

Paulus het aan Timoteus geskryf, “Sommige het dit [die boodskap van die saligheid] van hulle weggestoot en aan die geloof skipbreuk gely, onder wie daar is Himenéüs en Alexander, wat ek aan die Satan oorgegee het, sodat hulle kan leer om nie te laster nie” (1 Tim. 1:19-20 OV). Na talle waarskuwings en mooipraak is dit soms nodig om uit die pad te kom en dat mense die gevolge van hulle eie sonde moet voel. Ons moet vir die Here vra om Sy doel met mense te bereik. Ons moet

Vervolg op p. 7

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Konflikhantering: Genade én Waarheid

Vervolg van p. 6

ook vir hulle bid dat hulle tot inkeer sal kom.

6. KIES JOU KONFLIKTE

Daar is 'n Engelse spreekwoord wat lui, "Pick your battles". Ons kan nie 'n bohaai maak oor elke ding wat verkeerd is nie. Dan sal ons heeldag besig wees om konflikte uit te sorteer of mense op hulle foute te wys. Verder gebeur dit baie keer dat 'n beuselagtige verskilletjie kan eskaleer tot 'n groot konflik. Mense wil nie noodwendig op hulle foute gewys word nie. Dit neem geweldig baie emosionele energie om met iemand in konfrontasie te staan. Ons hoef ook nie altyd reg te wees nie. Soms moet ons maar net iets laat verbygaan. Dit beteken nie dat ons dit goedkeur nie. Maar dit beteken dat ons nie die aas neem en dan ingesleep word by 'n bakleiery nie. Ryan Leak skryf, "I've learned the hard way that the success rate of reactions in conflict is not very high. Reactions are often defensive, offensive, or both. They are accusatory, villainising, and emotionally charged. They point fingers, find faults, and cast blame. But they don't really resolve the conflict. They just exaggerate it or bury it." Ons moet vir die Here vra of dit nodig is om 'n bepaalde saak op die spits te dryf. Ons moet vrede najaag, maar in die proses moet ons soms die aftog blaas. Ons lees in Spreuke 19:11 AMP, "Good sense and discretion make a man slow to anger, and it is his honour and glory to overlook a transgression or an offense [without seeking revenge and harbouring resentment]."

Neem Jesus se voorbeeld: Hy het definitiewe aksie geneem by die reiniging van die tempel (Matt. 21). Hy het mense gekonfronteer omdat hulle Sy Vader se huis, wat 'n huis van gebed moes wees, in 'n rowerspelonk omskep het. Dit was nodig dat Hy hulle verkeerde gedrag moes uitwys. Natuurlik het die rebelse harte van die Fariseërs Hom teëgestaan. Hy het hierdie konflik dus teen 'n hoë persoonlike prys geïnisieer. Maar Hy het gevoel dat dit ononderhandelbaar was. Op 'n ander keer (Joh. 8) wou die Fariseërs Hom betrap dat Hy nie die Wet nakom nie, of dat Hy mense aanmoedig om iemand te stenig. In beide gevalle sou hulle Hom kon aankla van 'n misdad. Hulle het dus 'n sondares voor Hom gebring en Hom gevra wat om met haar te maak. Hy het op die grond geskrywe en wou Hom nie laat intrek in die konflik nie. Hy het hier dus anders opgetree. Hy het egter die saak ontloft deur te sê, "Laat dié een van julle wat sonder sonde is, die eerste 'n klip op haar gooi"

(v. 7). Die punt is dat Jesus Sy optrede aangepas het na gelang van die saak wat voor Hom op die tafel was. So moet ons ook staatmaak op die leiding van die Heilige Gees en vir Hom wysheid vra om reg op te tree, gegee die probleem waarmee ons gekonfronteer word.

7. STAAN STERK

Soms is dit nodig, nadat 'n mens alles gedoen het om versoening te bewerk, om te staan by jou beginsels. Indien jy seker is dat jy reg optree en dat jy in die Here se wil is, en mense jou steeds teëstaan, dan moet 'n mens "instem om te verskil" ("agree to disagree"). Ons hoef nie vrede ten alle koste na te jaag en in die proses ons eie waardes te kompromiteer nie. Dit is nie maklik om van iemand te verskil nie, maar soms is dit nodig tot 'n getuienis vir baie. As daar sonde in iemand se lewe is, is dit soms nodig om iemand skerp aan te spreek en by hulle aan te dring om reg te maak. Ons moet dit in nederigheid doen sonder om iemand te verneder. Ons moet dit egter ook sonder vrees doen, omdat ons God meer as mense eer.

Paulus skryf dat, sover as dit van ons afhang en vir ons moontlik is, om in vrede met alle mense te leef (Rom. 12:18). Die frasering dui egter daarop dat dit soms, ten spyte van alle pogings en moeite van ons kant af, steeds nie moontlik is om vrede te bewerkstellig nie. Paulus skryf dat dit soms nodig is om voort te gaan om reg te doen, ten spyte van teëstand, omdat ons geroep is tot lyding, "Aleenlik, gedra julle waardig die evangelie van Christus, sodat, of ek kom en julle sien dan wel of ek afwesig is, ek van julle omstandighede kan hoor dat julle in een gees vasstaan en, een van siel, saam stry vir die geloof van die evangelie, en dat julle jul in geen opsig laat afskrik deur die teëstanders nie. Dit is vir hulle wel 'n bewys van verderf, maar vir julle van redding, en dit van God; omdat dit aan julle ter wille van Christus genadiglik gegee is om nie alleen in Hom te glo nie, maar ook vir Hom te ly, terwyl julle dieselfde stryd het as wat julle in my gesien het en nou van my hoor" (Fil. 1:27-30 OV). Ons moet die Here bid om genade, sodat ons sal opstaan vir wat reg is, ten spyte en te midde van teëstand, sodat Sy Naam verheerlik sal word in ons optrede.

8. SOMS MOET ONS SKADE LEI

Ons leef in 'n tyd waar elkeen opstaan vir sy of haar regte. Dit is ook goed so - ons moet regverdig wees en ook opstaan vir dié wat nie vir hulself kan opstaan nie. Maar Jesus leer ons dat daar 'n perk is. In Sy Bergpredikasie,

waar Hy die Joodse wet geïnterpreteer het, leer Hy ons: "Julle het gehoor dat daar gesê is: Oog vir oog en tand vir tand. Maar Ek sê vir julle dat julle 'n slegte mens nie moet weerstaan nie; maar as iemand jou op jou regterwang [in minagting] slaan, draai ook die ander een na hom toe. En hy wat met jou na die gereg wil gaan en jou onderkleed wil neem, laat hom ook die bo-kleed kry. En elkeen wat van jou een myl afdwing, loop met hom twee myl saam. Gee aan hom wat jou iets vra, en wys hom nie af wat van jou wil leen nie" (Matt. 5:38-42).

As ons mooi gaan kyk, "verdien" ons nie noodwendig regverdige behandeling nie. God is wel genadig en regverdig, maar nie almal is so nie. 'n Mens sou hoop dat almal vredeliewend en ordentlik en regverdig is; maar daar is tye wat dit nie baat om teen 'n selfsugtige en slegte mens op te staan nie, maar om eerder skade te ly en 'n konflik te vermy. Soms is die kool die sous nie werd nie, en moet ons terugstaan. Dit is wysheid, eerder as lafhartigheid. Ons moet die Here bid vir onderskeiding vir wanneer om so op te tree.

9. OORWIN DIE KWAAD DEUR DIE GOEIE

Paulus het besondere raad opgeteken in Romeine 12, veral m.b.t. die hantering van konflik: "Laat die liefde ongeveins wees; verafsku wat sleg is; hang die goeie aan; wees hartlik teenoor mekaar met broederlike liefde; die een moet die ander voorgaan in eerbetoning; verbly julle in die hoop; wees geduldig in die verdrukking; volhard in die gebed. Seën die wat julle vervolg, seën en moenie vervloek nie; wees eensgesind onder mekaar; moenie na hoë dinge streef nie, maar voeg julle by die nederige; moenie eiewys wees nie; vergeld niemand kwaad vir kwaad nie; bedink wat goed is voor alle mense; as dit moontlik is, sover as dit van julle afhang, leef in vrede met alle mense. Moenie julle wreek nie, geliefdes, maar gee plek vir die toorn; want daar is geskrywe: Aan My kom die wraak toe, Ek sal vergeld, spreek die Here. As jou vyand dan honger het, gee hom iets om te eet; as hy dors het, gee hom iets om te drink, want sodoende sal jy op sy hoof vurige kole ophoop. Laat jou nie deur die kwaad oorwin nie, maar oorwin die kwaad deur die goeie" (v. 9,10,12,14,16-21).

Die liefde is die basis van alles; ons moet 'n rein motief hê, die goeie najaag, nederig wees, geduldig, eensgesind en biddend, mekaar seën, ons oog gevestig op Jesus, nie wrokkig of eiewys nie, en kwaad met goed vergeld. "Want die hele wet word vervul in

een woord, naamlik: Jy moet jou naaste liefhê soos jouself. Maar as julle mekaar byt en opeet, pas op dat julle nie die een deur die ander verteer word nie. Maar ek sê: Wandel deur die Gees, dan sal julle nooit die begeerlikheid van die vlees volbring nie" (Gal. 5:14-16 OV). Dit eggo die woorde in Filippense 2: "Julle moet nie elkeen na sy eie belange omsien nie, maar elkeen ook na die ander s'n. Want hierdie gesindheid moet in julle wees wat ook in Christus Jesus was." Paulus gaan voort om Jesus se gesindheid te beskryf: Hy die Sondelose, het Homself vir sondige mense oor-gegee uit nederige liefde en gehoorsaamheid. Daar is nie 'n kragtiger Voorbeeld om na te volg as dit nie.

10. VERTROU DAT DIE HERE ALLES TEN GOEDE SAL LAAT MEEWERK

Soos genoem, kan die Here alles in Sy Hand gebruik, veral ook konflik. Nadat ons mooigepaard het, gebid het, hard gepraat het, opsygestaan het... kom daar 'n tyd om alles in die Here se Hand oor te gee en Hom te vertrou om dit ten goede te laat meewerk. Hy kan die onmoontlike doen. Hy sal ons eer as ons aan Hom oorgee.

Dit is so dat elkeen die vrug van sy dade sal pluk. Gal. 6:7-9 herinner ons, "Moenie dwaal nie; God laat Hom nie bespot nie; want net wat die mens saai, dit sal hy ook maai. Hy wat in sy vlees saai, sal uit die vlees verderf maai; maar hy wat in die Gees saai, sal uit die Gees die ewige lewe maai. En laat ons nie moeg word om goed te doen nie, want op die regte tyd sal ons maai as ons nie verslap nie." Ons moet vertrou dat die Here regverdig is en aan ons reg sal laat geskied, en dat Hy in elke saak die goeie na vore sal laat kom.

SAMEVATTING

Dit is onvermydelik dat ons konflik in hierdie lewe sal ervaar. Wanneer dit gebeur, moet ons seker maak dat ons die Here se wil soek en dat Hy die eer sal kry. Ons moet ons kant skoonhou, genade aan 'n ander gee, bid om geestelike onderskeiding, konflik deurpraat, bid, vrysprek, prysgee, ons losmaak van wat agter is, opstaan teen wat verkeerd is, en die kwaad deur die goeie oorwin.

Daar is dus verskeie Bybelse voorskrifte wat ons kan navolg in 'n konfliksituasie, en ons moet die Gees vertrou om wysheid sodat ons in elke situasie reg kan optree. Laastens kan ons alles aan die Regverdige Regter oor-gegee, omdat ons weet dat Hy alles ten goede sal laat meewerk. Laat ons dan vredemakers wees, soos ons Vader in die hemel ook is! © C Venter

Cultivate What Matters Most

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience” (Col. 3:12 ESV).

Colossians 3:12 tells us to “clothe ourselves” in traits that match our identity in Christ. In other words, we need to cover ourselves in actions and attitudes that result in us looking more like Jesus every day.

The more you intentionally pursue actions that lead to humility, compassion, and kindness, the more those traits will become a

natural part of your life.

The apostle John said that we can’t claim to love Jesus if we hate each other (1 John 4:20), so a life that reflects Jesus is going to embody love. And according to 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, love is *“patient and kind... It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged... Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.”*

If we want to live like Jesus, then we need to receive the new life He’s given to us and accept His

unconditional love. We need to grow spiritually in the power of the Holy Spirit. Only then can we begin to reflect His love to others by showing people compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Prayer: God, I am Your child. You have set me apart and adopted me into Your eternal family. So please shape my heart. Teach me how to act in a way that honours You. Remove any patterns of behaviour in my life that displease You, and replace them with characteristics that show how much I love You. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.
- Selected



We are His Children!



“I will bestow upon them within My household both an honoured place and an honoured name, even better than the honour that comes from having children. I bestow upon them my everlasting favour; you will never be forgotten” (Isaiah 56:5 TPT).

As believers, You and I have been given the honour of carrying His Name. We are royalty.

We’ve been granted a seat at the Lord’s table, not at the children’s table beside it. He wants us right next to Him so He can lean close and share His secrets. He wants

us in on His plans.

When we remember that we were created because God longed to share Himself with us like a parent who desires children, we gain a sense of belonging. Being in this family is empowering and perfect in every way.

With this Papa, we are known, desired, and cherished in ways we never knew possible. We are given everything we need to thrive in our identity and purpose. In this family, we stand humbly confident because we are fully known and fully loved.

Prayer:
Father, I want to pause and ponder the wonder of being Your child. I want this truth to permeate into the deepest part of my soul: I am wanted!

No parent on Earth, no friend, sibling, or spouse could ever love me the way You do.

Thank you for the great price you paid so we could be together for eternity. I love You and thank You that You first loved me! Amen.

From: The Vision, Brian Simmons and Gretchen Rodriguez

SAAI NET DIE SAAD

“Wie is Apollos of Paulus nou eintlik dat julle so oor ons verdeel is? Ons is tog net diensknegte deur wie julle tot die geloof gekom het. Elkeen van ons het maar net die werk gedoen wat die Here aan ons toevertrou het” (1 Korintiërs 3:5 NLV).

Een dag toe Charles Colson geskeduleer was om vir driehonderd gevangenes by die San Quentin tronk te preek, is daar ’n inspeksie uitgeroep en die meeste van die gevangenes is tot hulle tronkselle beperk. Colson het besluit om voort te gaan en vir die paar gevangenes wat toegelaat was om sy preek by te woon, die boodskap wat hy voorberei het, te gee.

Later, toe hy sy teleurstelling uitspreek dat die driehonderd gevangenes nie sy preek kon bywoon nie, is daar vir hom gesê:

‘Ons het jou boodskap opgeneem en gaan dit verskeie kere vir die meer as tweeduisend gevangenes in die tronk wys.’

Wat sou gebeur Colson tot sy teleurstelling ingegee het en net ’n kort toespraak gebring het in plaas van die volle evangelistiese boodskap wat hy voorberei het? Meer as tweeduisend gevangenes sou dan nie die evangelie gehoor het nie!

’n Geleentheid mag dalk opduik waar jy die enigste persoon beskikbaar is om namens God te praat. Sal jy betroubaar in so ’n oomblik wees? Jy speel ’n uiters belangrike rol wanneer jy die een is wat God geroep het om iets vir Hom te doen.

Die boodskap is egter belangriker as die boodskapper. Paulus skryf: *“...Ons is tog net diensknegte*

deur wie julle tot die geloof gekom het. Elkeen van ons het maar net die werk gedoen wat die Here aan ons toevertrou het. My werk was om die saad te plant. Apollos moes dit natgooi. Maar God het laat groei. Wie plant en wie natgooi, is nie belangrik nie. Die belangrike Een is God, want dit is Hy wat laat groei. Die een wat plant en die een wat natgooi, werk saam en het een gesamentlike doel, alhoewel elkeen sy eie beloning sal ontvang in ooreenstemming met sy eie harde werk” (verse 5-8 NLV).

- Bob en Debbie Gass

Laat ons dus getrou wees in die kleine en God vertrou om te gebruik wat ons aan Hom oorgee. Hy sal ons verbaas en ons getrouheid beloon. Ons moet net die saad saai, Hy sal die groei op wonderbaarlike maniere bring!



Lay Down Your Staff

“Now the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ‘When Pharaoh says to you, ‘Work a miracle [to prove your authority],’ then you say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh, so that it may become a serpent.’”
So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, and did just as the Lord had commanded; Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh called for the wise men [skilled in magic and omens] and the sorcerers [skilled in witchcraft], and they also, these magicians (soothsayer-priests) of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts and enchantments. For every man threw down his staff and they turned into serpents; but Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs. Yet Pharaoh’s heart was hardened and he would not listen to them, just as the Lord had said” (Exodus 7:8-13 AMP).

Have you ever heard seasoned saints share the Bible’s wisdom? You can taste in their stories the God-given “life seasoning” as they toss details from memory into the pot and let them simmer

with God’s Word.

Sometimes the stories are bitter, sometimes tangy and spicy, sometimes pleasantly sweet. Life has its own way of flavouring what Scripture has already revealed to be true.

Years ago, I sat at the kitchen table of a wisened missionary. He and his precious and stalwart wife once smuggled Bibles behind the Iron Curtain during the cruelest days of the Soviet Union. He had certainly seen the good, bad, and ugly humanity of clergy and lay leaders in his day!

His eyes sparkled with faraway stories obviously playing on the screen behind his eyes, a screen that was out of view for everyone except him. Then those same eyes, full of memories, suddenly fixated on us at the table.

He began to talk about the time when Moses and Aaron locked horns with Pharaoh’s sorcerers in Exodus 7. He preached to us on God manifesting His glory and power in the faces of those who hated Yahweh and His people. He

discussed the prophetic warning given that Pharaoh foolishly ignored.

And then... his eyes danced as he spoke of Aaron’s staff. “You see, when Aaron threw his staff down in Pharaoh’s court as Yahweh had told him to do, he discovered the serpent that Yahweh said would be there.” Yes and amen. If God says it, it is so, and you can believe it with all your heart!

Then the moment came when all the staffs in the court scene were thrown down, revealing serpents within. The snakes writhed and battled each other, until Aaron’s staff devoured those of the sorcerers. What a terrifyingly tense scene that must have been!

Our brother leaned forward and lowered his voice to continue the story, nearly whispering: “Now, up until that moment, Aaron had been helping to lead God’s people, carrying the staff around, and completely unaware there was a serpent in it - until Yahweh told him.” He went on. “Because Aaron’s staff was given by Yahweh, the serpent He promised

was under Divine command to show His glory and power in Pharaoh’s court. But because the magicians’ staffs were in the service of idols and false gods, they were defeated and consumed by the display of glory of the One True God.”

And when Aaron picked that staff back up, now likely several times heavier with the weight of the others ingested, what object lesson was he left with? Our brother concluded: **“There’s a snake inside every leadership staff, and that snake will do the bidding of whatever god we serve - false or true.”**

Wisdom’s takeaway from Aaron’s staff is this: We can be our own biggest obstacles to ministry and Kingdom advance. Be careful with whatever measure of leadership God gives you. Whether it’s at home in our family, with friends, in ministry, the workplace, the world, whatever. Lay it down constantly for Yahweh’s purposes and take it up with confidence... knowing whose house it serves.

- KA Ellis, *Wisdom’s Call*

“Don’t Live Worried”

When I was a kid, I used to hear my dear dad remind people, "Don't Live Worried". Even in seasons of intense stress, he would constantly smile and say, "God created us to trust in Him!" As I got older, anxiety troubled me, too, so he would leave sticky notes on my door, car, or window that just said, "DLW!" with a happy face.

Can we really do that? Just not live worried by all the troubles around us? Yes! We can be aware, prepare, and yet not be weighed down, anxious, and distressed because God is in control and He's good!

The world around us can swirl with unrest about what's going on, what looks like it'll happen, and what's rumoured to be coming down the pike - that's normal for unbelievers - but, as followers of the one, true, living, powerful Rock of Ages, we were created to trust in Him and live joyfully!

If we haven't already, let's memorise Philippians 4:6-7: *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus”*

- Laurie McClure, Editor, Faith Gateway

Make a decision today to trust God! Entrust your future to Him - your family, your plans, your possessions, your ministry. Cast all your burdens on Him, for He cares about you. Trust Him and leave the consequences to Him. You will find that He is indeed trustworthy and an ever-present Help in times of need!

Wait on Me

“Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord” (Genesis 18:22).

Sometimes I simply want you to stand before Me rather than move. Inaction is not a sign of inactivity if I call you to wait on Me.

Such was the case for My son Abraham. Rather than rushing to choose for himself, he gave his nephew the choice of land when they were forced to part ways (Gen 13:8-9). Lot chose the way of the world by choosing Sodom, but My son Abraham entrusted his future to Me. He acted in faith, not knowing where he would land.

Strangely, he landed at a place called Mamre, which means “place of strength.” What we perceive as weakness in the world's eyes, I turn into a place of strength. And literally, this was a place of strength; some of My greatest oak trees flourish in this area. This too was symbolic of my son Abraham who was like a mighty oak in faith. He was an oak of righteousness before Me (Is. 61:3).

Abraham and I became true friends (Is. 41:8). This is My desire for you and Me, too. That I not only be your Father, but we would be really good friends. Learn to wait on Me, and in the silence of patient and trusting faith, you will learn to trust Me and you will see the fruit of this intimacy in your life!

- Os Hillman

Strength in Every Season

"I know what it means to lack, and I know what it means to experience overwhelming abundance. For I'm trained in the secret of overcoming all things, whether in fullness or in hunger. And I find that the strength of Christ's explosive power infuses me to conquer every difficulty" (Philippians 4:13 TPT).

Philippians 4:13 is a popular Bible verse that you may have seen posted on signs, social media, stickers, or cars. Maybe you've heard someone recite this verse before a sporting event or while trying to accomplish a difficult task.

Unfortunately, this verse is often misunderstood. This verse is not saying that we can accomplish whatever we want. Paul isn't talking about winning a sports game or having the courage to do something daring.

Instead, Paul is actually talking about his time in prison. He is referencing the power of God that was with him during this difficult time of ministry.

In Philippians 4:12 he talks about the power he has to live content in every situation in life. He learned how to live with abundance and with nothing. He learned to live with very little food and resources, and also with a lot of food and resources.

Paul found that regardless of his circumstances, God continued to supply him with the power to do the work of God. He never lacked the strength and resources to tell others about the good news of Jesus - even while he was stuck in a prison.

Paul could live in every season of life and accomplish all that God asked of him through the strength that God gave him.

So, instead of God giving us strength to do anything we want, He gives us the strength we need to endure various circumstances and accomplish the mission that He has given us. This means that you will never lack any resource to live a growing and godly life, or to share the good news of Jesus with others.

If you're in a season of abundance or a season of lack, remember that God is the One Who gives you the strength to endure every season. If you find yourself in a difficult situation, ask God to supply you with the strength that only He can give.

- Selected

"Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace."

- Jerry Bridges

Jer. 20:11

★★★ **B&B** *Uit die Hand*

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v a n d i e H E E R

WAT SAL GEBEUR WANNEER DIE HERE WEER KOM?

Dit is belangrik dat julle dit moet weet: In die laaste dae van die wêreld sal daar mense kom wat baie sal spot met ander mense. Hulle sal spot en hulle sal die slegte dinge doen wat hulle graag wil doen. Hulle sal sê: "Die Here het belowe dat Hy weer sal kom, maar hoekom het Hy nog nie gekom nie? Want ons voorvaders het lank gelede gesterf, maar alles bly dieselfde soos dit van die begin af was toe God alles gemaak het."

Die mense wat spot, sal hierdie dinge sê, want hulle wil nie ont hou dat die hemel lank gelede klaar daar was en dat die aarde uit die water gekom het nie. God het gesê dit moet so wees. Hy het die aarde uit die water laat kom. God het gesê die water moet oor die wêreld van daardie tyd vloei en dit moet die wêreld verwoes. Dit is ook God wat gesê het dat die hemel en die aarde wat nou daar is, nog daar moet wees en dat Hy dit sal verbrand op die oordeelsdag wanneer Hy die sondaars vir altyd sal laat sterf.

Maar my vriende, julle moenie hierdie een ding vergeet nie. Een dag is vir die Here soos 1 000 jaar, en 1 000 jaar is vir Hom soos een dag. Party mense dink dat die Here 'n lang tyd neem om te doen wat Hy belowe het. Maar dit is nie waar nie. Nee, die Here is jammer vir julle, want Hy wil nie hê dat party mense verlore moet gaan nie. Hy wil hê dat al die mense moet lewe soos Hy wil hê hulle moet lewe.

Maar die dag van die Here sal kom wanneer niemand sal dink dat dit sal gebeur nie. Daardie dag sal kom soos 'n dief wat kom wanneer niemand dink dat hy sal kom nie. Op daardie dag sal dit baie hard raas en dreun, en die hemel sal verdwyn. Die sterre in die lug sal smelt en verdwyn. Die Here weet wat almal op die aarde gedoen het en Hy sal hulle oordeel. God sal al hierdie dinge so laat verdwyn, daarom moet julle ook julle hele lewe aan God wy en daarom moet julle Hom dien. Julle moet wag vir die dag van God, julle moet wens dat die dag gou sal kom. Op daardie dag sal die hemel en die sterre verbrand en smelt en verdwyn. Maar ons wag vir die nuwe hemel en nuwe aarde wat God belowe het, daar sal mense altyd doen wat God wil hê.

Daarom, my vriende, terwyl julle wag dat hierdie dinge sal gebeur, moet julle heeltemal reg lewe. Julle moet probeer om nie dinge te doen waaroor julle skaam sal moet wees nie, en julle moet in vrede lewe. Julle moet ook weet dat ons Here geduldig is omdat Hy mense wil red. Hy het vir ons liewe vriend, Paulus, wysheid gegee, en Paulus het ook hierdie dinge vir julle geskryf. Hy het dit ook in al sy briewe geskryf, briewe waarin hy oor hierdie dinge gepraat het. In sy briewe is daar party dinge wat 'n mens moeilik verstaan. Mense wat nog nie alles verstaan wat gelowiges moet weet nie en mense wie se geloof nog nie sterk genoeg is nie, verstaan hierdie moeilike dinge verkeerd. Hulle verstaan die ander boeke van die Bybel ook verkeerd. Omdat hulle dit doen, sal hulle verlore gaan.

My vriende, julle weet klaar dat hierdie dinge later sal gebeur. Daarom moet julle baie goed oppas, want daar is mense wat nie gehoorsaam is aan die wette van God nie. Julle moenie dat hulle vir julle ook laat lewe soos hulle lewe nie, want dan sal julle nie meer seker wees van die dinge wat julle glo nie. Nee, julle moet aanhou om meer en meer te glo in die genade van ons Here en Redder, Jesus Christus, en om Hom beter te leer ken. Daarom moet ons Hom prys, nou en vir altyd. Amen."

(2 Pet. 3:3-18 Die Bybel vir Almal)

Oase van Hoop

AGS Baillie Park Gemeente

Paaskonferensie

Goeie-Vrydagdiens (18/4) om 09:00
Lofprysingsdiens Saterdag (19/4) om 17:00
Opstandingsondag (20/4) om 09:30

Pastoor Johan Nortje 083 280 8971

Oase van Hoop

AGS

Baillie Park Gemeente



OASE VAN HOOP

-KOFFIE KAFEE-

HEB. 6:19

est. 2023

