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NOU REEDS 27 JAAR OUD!

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Munte op Moria

DIE GEWIG VAN 'N NAAM

'n Naam het dikwels dieper betekenis. Jy het waarskynlik al iemand hoor sê: "Ek ken 'n Martin. Goeie mens. Regverdig. Betroubaar."

Name dra stories. Soms word hulle gegee ter ere, soms in hoop of afwagting. Soos byname gesmee in vuur, gebore in gedeelde uitdagings, gefluister tussen diegene wat saam deur iets gaan.

'n Leraar het eens 'n vraag gedeel wat God hom op die hart gedruk het: "Waarom het My mense ophou om My te benoem?"

Die Israeliete het God baie name gegee. Elke naam het iets oor hul verhouding of 'n gebeurtenis onthul. *El Shaddai, Adonai, Jehovah Rapha*, en nog meer. Die naam wat vir my uitstaan, in die verhaal van Abraham: *Jehovah Jireh*, die Here wat voorsien.

Dis die middag van 27 Augustus 2024. Ons het pas die resultate van die BRT, dit is die Breinreaksietoets, vir ons 2-en-'n-half-jaar-oue dogtertjie ontvang. Wat kan 'n ouer vir so 'n resultaat voorberei? "Profoundly deaf."

Vanaf hierdie oomblik dra ons 'n nuwe etiket. Soos wat die ander maatjies in hul onskuld sê: "Die pappa en mamma met die dowe dogtertjie."

Dit is egter nie die einde van die storie nie. Daar is 'n manier vir haar om te hoor. 'n Kogleêre implantaat. Die operasie sal die deel van haar ore omseil wat nie werk nie. Dit is nie towerkuns nie. Dit is wetenskap. Dit is hoop. Dit is ontsaglik duur.

Ons het die somme gedoen. As elke Suid-Afrikaner vir ons net

een sent gee, kan ons dit bekostig. As elke 'Afrikaner' vir ons 20c gee, kan ons dit nogtans haal. Dis ongeveer 3 miljoen maal 20c. Dit is die koste om ons dogter die sintuig van gehoor te gee.

'n Berg van koper. 'n Wonderwerk gemeet in 20 sente.

MANNA IN MUNTE

Na nog 'n ronde van toetse in September was ons op pad huis toe vanaf die hospitaal. Die jakarandas het Pretoria violet laat gloei. My vrou het gesê: "Kom ons hou stil en neem 'n paar *gesinsfoto's*." Ek het uit die motor geklim en iets het my oog gevang wat die son weerkaats. 'n 20c. Ek het dit opgetel en in my sak gesit. Dit het egter nie geregistreer nie.

'n Week later, terwyl ek huis toe loop van die werk af, het ek 'n spoedhobbel naby ons huis bereik. Weer eens het iets kleins geglinster in die sonlig. Nog 'n 20c. Ek het gebuk, dit in my sak gesit. Steeds het dit nie geregistreer nie.

Daardie naweek, toe ek by 'n kruidenierswinkel se parkeerterrein uitklim, was dit weer daar! Nog 'n glans. Nog 'n 20c. Ek het dit opgetel. Dié keer, soos 'n vis wat teen jou spring by die hawe, tref dit!

Drie ontvang...
2,999,997 om nog te gaan.

Jehovah Jireh. God sal voorsien.

AS TYD SAAMGEPERS WORD

Ons het in vennootskap met 'n liefdadigheidfonds getree. Hulle het aan ons meegedeel die geld benodig vir so 'n operasie sal waarskynlik 'n jaar neem om in te samel. Dit was egter 'n kritieke tyd, want ons dogtertjie was nog minder as drie jaar oud. Hoe vinniger sy in die venster van 2-tot 7-jarige ouderdom kan begin

hoor en leer praat, hoe beter is haar kans vir taalontwikkeling... en 'n 'normale' lewe.

Ons het met ons kerk vergader en die storie is soortgelyk uiteengesit. Ongeag projekte wat op die tafel gelê word, sal hierdie minstens 'n jaar wees voor die nodige fondse ingesamel kan word.

Op hierdie punt het dit gevoel of God ons troos deur te sê: "Ons gaan nie so lank wag nie".

'n Vriendin wat by 'n aanlyn-mediahuis werk, het aangebied om 'n stuk namens ons te publiseer en die besonderhede van die liefdadigheidsorganisasie waarmee ons saamwerk, te deel. Om jouself so op die internet bloot te stel is een ding. Om dit aan jou familie te doen... Ek was huiwerig. Miskien effens skepties. Tog het die sluise geopen. Nie met donderweer nie, maar met 'n glinstering van genade. 'n Maand na ons die "profoundly deaf" resultaat ontvang het, is die stuk gepubliseer. Daardie naweek het ons 20% van die nodige fondse ontvang. Ek voel my naam kon sommer na Thomas verander. Hoe klein kan ons geloof nie wees nie, selfs te midde van oorfloedige voorsiening.

'n Week daarna, is ons genooi om op 'n plaaslike gemeenskapsradioprogram te gesels saam met die liefdadigheidsorganisasie. Daardie oggend is ons ingelig, die fonds het 'n verdere 60% ingesamel. Die radio-omroeper het ons ingelig dat die program besluit het om die finale 20% wat ons benodig, vir ons te skenk!

Nie net het ons nou die fondse nie, maar daardie oggend ontvang ons 'n bevestigde datum vir die operasie vanaf die liefdadigheidfonds se mediese vennoot. *Ons het 'n tyd!*



Die Hougaard-gesin

Wat hulle oorspronklik gesê het 'n jaar sou neem, het in twee maande plaasgevind! God het tyd saamgepers en skielik, het die datum van die operasie nadergekom.

'N NUWE NAAM

In Openbaring 2:17 word daar gepraat van verskuilde manna en die openbaring van 'n nuwe naam op 'n wit klip.

Wit simboliseer reinheid en regverdigheid. Die nuwe naam simboliseer 'n nuwe begin, of dan 'n nuwe identiteit deur God geskenk. Die belofte dui op 'n persoonlike verhouding met God, waar die nuwe naam net aan die ontvanger bekend is.

Wat Abraham op die Berg Moria beleef het, het ons in munte op die beton van die sygaardjie ontdek. In e-posse van vreemdelinge, familie en vriende, fondse wat geskenk word en datums op hospitaaltvorme gedruk, was daar vir ons 'n belofte.

Voorsiening dra nie altyd die klere van 'n wonderwerk soos

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Die Graansuier en die Sakke

Josef se graansuier of voorraadkamers was VOL. Op God se bevel Hy het hy voldoende voorsiening gemaak. God het dit vir hom voorgeskryf op grond van Farao se droom wat Farao self nie kon uitleë nie. Dit het God behaag om Sy gesalfde diensknecht, Josef, op die regte tyd en regte geleentheid na vore te laat tree om voorsiening vir Sy volk Israel te maak en hulle te red van ondergang. God het Sy hand op Josef gelê van voor sy geboorte af. Afgesonder tot hierdie rigtinggewende werk. Maar eers moes God Josef vir jare lank voorberei en vorm vir hierdie enorme taak. Sy suiers was nie altyd vol nie. Dit was die eindpunt van baie swaar jare en 'n Goddelike ingrype in sy lewe.

Ons kan Josef se lewe volg van laagtepunt tot laagtepunt (slaaf tot tronkvoël) tot hoogtepunt (verheffing na kroonprins of onderkoning van Egipte, 'n vooruitstrewende land van sy tyd). Farao self benoem hom as heerser oor sy huis en oor die hele Egipteland. Hy haal sy seëlring van sy eie vinger af en steek dit aan Josef se vinger. Ook sy goue, koninklike ketting. En Josef ry op die tweede koninklike rytuig, om deur die land te beweeg en voedsel te voorsien vir die hele toentertydse wêreld. Oral waar hy beweeg, moet hulle uitroep: "Betoon hom eer!" Hy kry ook 'n nuwe Egiptiese naam: *Sáfenat-Panéag*, wat beteken "oortloef van lewe" of "oortloef van lewe vir die lewendes." Daarom reis hy deur die hele land en rig oral voorraatskure op, want hy vorder by al die boere een vyfde van hulle opbrengs in gedurende die eerste sewe voorspoedige jare. Dit was sy tyd van hoogtepunte.

As jongeling was hy geliefd en bemind by sy vader omdat hy Ragel, Jakob se geliefde, se oudste seun was. Maar dit was oordrewe en misplaas. Hierdie voortrekkery het Josef negatief beïnvloed, want hy het voortgebou op die drome wat hy gekry het. Hy was egter nog onvolwasse en het gedurig sy drome vir almal vertel (Gen. 37).

Hy vertel sy eerste droom: "Ons was op die land besig om gerwe te bind en skielik gaan staan my gerf regop en julle gerwe gaan staan daar rondom en hulle buig voor myne." Toe sê sy broers vir hom: "Jy verbeel jou jy sal oor ons koning word. Dink jy dalk jy sal oor ons regeer?" Oor sy drome en sy praatjies het hulle 'n nog groter afkeer van hom gekry."

Hy vertel ook sy tweede droom: "Hy het gesê: 'Ek het weer gedroom. Die son en die maan en elf sterre het voor my kom buig.'"

Toe hy dit vir sy pa en sy broers vertel, het sy pa hom berispe en vir hom gesê: "Wat vir 'n soort droom is dit wat jy gehad het? Verbeel jy jou ek en jou ma en jou broers moet voor jou kom buig?" Sy broers was afgunstig op hom, en sy pa het aan die droom bly dink."

Dit het hom gehaat gemaak by sy broers wat later gesê het: "Hier kom die dromer!" Almal, ook Josef self en sy vader Jakob, was kortsigtig en kon nie God se plan uitpluis nie. Maar die uitdaging het by God gelê om uit NIKS iets goed te skep. God skep ex nihilo - iets uit niks. En dit is die pad wat God regdeur die Bybel geloop het met elke uitverkore werktuig en gesalfde. Hy bring ons op 'n plek tot waar ons uitroep: "God, ek kan nie meer nie!" En dit is waar God Homself aan ons vertoon. En jy vind uit: God was nog ALTYD daar!

Maar Josef moes eers deur donker laagtepunte gaan in sy voorbereidingsreis. In die tronk lê Josef ander se drome uit. Maar, kon hy vra: "HERE, wat van my? Ek sit al vergete hier in die tronk in 'n vreemde land, nou al vir twee jaar!" Dan droom Farao. Josef kon hierdie droom uitleë. Die graanoes. Die graansuiers of voorraatskure word vol! Dit moet sewe jaar hou. Daarna volg die tyd van sewe jaar van intense hongersnood. En nou kom koop sy broers koring by hom. Hy toets hulle bedoeling, hoe eerlik en opreg hulle is. Hulle bring hulle sakke, en dit word gevul. Maar elkeen se sak is so bedremmeld klein in vergelyking met die groot graansuiers of skure van Josef. Keer op keer kom koop hulle. Hulle het beperkte kapasiteit gehad.

Ook hier vind ons 'n toepassing vir onself. Die Here se graansuier is tot oorloep toe VOL - onbeperk! Maar daarteenoor het ons 'n "klein sak mentaliteit". Ons kapasiteit is so klein, en ons kan nie alles bevat nie. Jesus Self het vir Sy dissipels net voor die kruis, opstanding en hemelvaart gesê: "Nog baie dinge het Ek om aan julle te sê, maar julle kan dit nou nie dra nie" (Joh. 16:12). God se rykdomme is oortloefdig, en is beskikbaar vir ons. Maar Hy deel die geestelike voedsel met wysheid - stukkies vir stukkies, sodat ons dit sal kan bevat en verteer.

Gedagtig aan sy drome, sê Josef vir sy broers: Gaan haal vir Benjamin, dat hy sy sak ook kan kom vul. Die graansuier is VOL! Meer as genoeg! Later sou hy sy ouers en almal se nageslag bring om in die land Gosen, die beste deel van Egipte, te kom woon. Hier is genoegsaam vir almal! Dan open-



baar hy hom aan sy broers: "Daarop bars hy in tranen uit, sodat die Egiptenaars en ook die huis van Farao dit gehoor het. En Josef sê vir sy broers: Ek is Josef! Leef my vader nog? Maar sy broers kon hom nie antwoord nie, want hulle was verskrik voor hom. Verder sê Josef vir sy broers: Kom tog nader na my. En toe hulle nader kom, sê hy: Ek is julle broer Josef vir wie julle na Egipte verkoop het. Maar moenie julleself verwyrt dat julle dit gedoen het nie. Eintlik is dit God wat dit bewerk het. Hy het my vooruit gestuur sodat julle lewens gespaar kon word. Twee jaar hongersnood is verby, maar daar lê nog vyf jaar voor. In dié tyd sal daar nie geploeg en geoes kan word nie. God het my voor julle uit gestuur om voorsorg te tref dat julle en julle gesinne aan die lewe kan bly en sodat julle 'n groot nasie kan word. Ja, dit is God wat my gestuur het en nie julle nie! Hy het gesorg dat ek as Farao se raadgever aangestel word, en ook as bestuurder van sy hele huishouding en heerser oor die hele Egipte." En Josef vergewe hulle.

Sy broers bring berig na hulle ou vader, en sê: "Josef lewe nog! Hy is die heerser van die hele land Egipte!" Jakob was oorbluf deur hierdie nuus. Hy kon dit nie glo nie. Maar toe hulle Josef se boodskappe oordra en toe hy die waens sien wat Josef gestuur het om hom te kom haal, het hy tot verhaal gekom. Toe sê Jakob: "Dit moet waar wees! My seun Josef lewe regtig! Ek sal gaan en hom sien voordat ek sterf." En daar word Josef se profetiese drome bewaarheid: Hy sien die elf gerwe voor hom buig. En hy sien die son, maan en elf sterre buig voor hom. Want hy is die regeerder van die hele Egipte! En sy gesin bewys hom eer. God se plan word werklikheid. En Josef word die voorsiener van natuurlike en ook geestelike voedsel, omdat hy God gehoorsaam was.

Alle gesalfdes van God vóór en ná Josef het hierdie pad geloop. Hulle begin met 'n "enkele sak mentaliteit" in kontras met die groot graansuiers wat beskikbaar is. Soos Josef se broers. Ons

almal staan met 'n powere, klein en geringe mentaliteit teenoor God. Hy is *El Shaddai*, die Algenoegsame. En alle wedergebore kinders van God word Sy werktuie, Sy dienaars in Sy Hand, met die wete: Dit wat Hy tot stand gebring het, sal Hy ook onderhou, beheer en bestuur. Want "geen ding sal by God onmoontlik wees nie."

Dit is dan waar God ingryp: reeds by die beginpunt van ons afdaling. Ten spyte van ons klein sakke wat ons rondra. Selfs vóór ons geboorte is ons Sy uitverkores. God kyk verby ons onvolwassenheid en onvermoë - Hy sien ons potensiaal raak. Vir die jongman Jeremia wat uiteindelik niks geword het, sê Hy: "Voordat Ek jou in die moederskoot gevorm het, het Ek jou geken; en voordat jy uit die liggaam voortgekom het, het Ek jou geheilig; Ek het jou tot 'n profeet vir die nasies gemaak" (Jer. 1:5). En verder: "Kyk, Ek stel jou vandag aan oor die nasies en oor die koninkryke om uit te ruk en om te gooi en te vernietig en te verwoes, om te bou en te plant" (Jer. 1:5). Jeremia is dus reeds van voor sy geboorte geroep as instrument in God se hand, maar hy moes deur baie jare van stryd en voorbereiding gaan voordat hy uiteindelik in sy roeping kon staan. En selfs toe was dit nie 'n maklike roeping nie. Maar hy was getrou en kon God se geestelike brood met die volk deel. So ook Paulus: hy daal af en word niks. Hy roep uit in sy nood en noem homself: "die geringste van al die apostels" (1 Kor. 15:9; Efes. 3:8). Tog beleef Paulus God se hand op hom van voor sy geboorte: "Maar toe dit God behaag het, 'wat my afgesonder het van die skoot van my moeder af...' en 'deur Sy genade [het Hy my] geroep om Sy Seun in my te openbaar, sodat ek Hom onder die heidene sou verkondig..." (Gal. 1:15-16).

Net so word elke wedergebore kind van God nie om 'n selfsugtige rede gered, bloot om hemel toe te gaan nie. Nee, hulle is uitverkore deur God om ware dienaars vir Hom te wees, voltyds en deeltjies, volgens jou eie

Vervolg op p. 3

Munte op Moria

Vervolg van p. 1

ons dit verwag nie. Soms is dit vermom as 'n mediavriendin, 'n liefdadigheidfonds of 20c in die son.

Ek is die ouer van 'n dowe kind. Nou met een kogleêre implantaat en die volgende een op pad Oktober 2025. Abraham was die vader van 'n volk. Ons het albei gewag vir voorsiening. Dit het gekom! Nie op ons tyd nie, maar deur Sy genade.

Die landskap het verander. Die tale is anders, maar die Naam? Die Naam het bestendig gebly. Ek betoon so eer aan my Vader vir my eie ondervinding van *Jehovah Jireh*. God voorsien. Gister. Vandag. Altyd.

My nuwe naam vir God, Hebreeus geïnspireer, is: "Elohim shadochas et hazman": God wat tyd saampers.

- Nico Hougaard



Die Graansuier en die Sakke

Vervolg van p. 2

karakter en bedieningsgawes. Want Sy Gees woon in jou! Daarom het Jesus ons gemaak en gevorm "van voor ons moeder-skoot af," uitverkore om "konings en priesters" vir Hom te wees. En dit kom met 'n prys. Jy moet tot nikswees voor Hom kom. Of dit kom met verdrukking en vervolging, vuuroonde en storms en of dit kom met bergtop-ervaringe, Hy berei ons elkeen individueel voor volgens elkeen se karakter, om ons unieke roeping te vervul.

Vir Paulus het Hy op 'n keer gesê te midde van wrede intense vervolging: "En Hy het vir my gesê: *My genade is vir jou genoeg, want My krag word in swakhed volbring. Baie liever sal ek dus in my swakhede roem, sodat die krag van Christus in my kan woon*" (2 Kor. 12:9).

Kom dan vandag met jou "klein sak mentaliteit," jou kleinwees-mentaliteit en gee jou oor hier voor Sy Wederkoms om alles wat jy kan, te doen om vir Hom diens-

baar te wees. Aanvaar jou roeping. Al is dit net om vir iemand "n beker water te gee" omdat hy aan Christus behoort. Die Woord verklaar: "...die bruilofsmaal van die Lam het gekom en sy vrou het haar gereed gemaak" (Op. 19:7). Jesus Self het aan Johannes in die laaste boek van die Bybel gesê: "Ja, Ek kom gou." Dan antwoord Johannes: "Amen, ja, kom, Here Jesus!"

Laat God jou sakke vul, sodat jy weer aan ander hongeriges brood

kan gee. Laat Hy jou sakke vergroot, sodat jou kapasiteit meer kan word om nog meer van Sy hemelse brood te ontvang. Vertrou Hom in die moeilike jare van jou voorbereiding, en sien uit na die reis saam met Hom, totdat jy kom op die plek waar jy diensbaar vir Hom kan wees. [Word 'n brood-ontvanger én 'n brood-uitdeler.](#) Bring só aan Hom die eer as die oorfloedige Gewer van alle goeie Gawes!

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DITSHUPO KWA MAGODIMONG KA LWETSE 2025

(SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS IN SEPTEMBER 2025)



Meteor Showers
Dipula tsa Didumedi

Moletlo wa Diterompeta ka Lwetse 2025, o gape o bidiwang Rosh Hashanah kgotsa Yom Teruah, o simolola fa letsatsi le phirima ka Mosupologo, Lwetse 22, 2025, mme o konela fa go nna bosigo ka Laboraro, Lwetse 24, 2025. Letsatsi leno la boikhutso la Bajuda le tshwaya tshimologo ya Ngwaga o Mosha wa Bajuda mme ke nako ya go rapela, go itlhatlhoba le go letsa lonaka lwa phelefu.

Ditemana tsa Baebele tse di rutang ka ngwedi o mohibidu di akaretsa Joele 2:31, Tshenolo 6:12 le Matheo 24:29.

JOELE 2:31 Letsatsi le tla fetoga lefifi, ngwedi o tla fetoga madi, go



Blood Moon /Lunar Eclipse
Ngwedi wa Madi/ Phifalo ya Ngwedi

ise go tle letsatsi la Morena le legolo, le le boitshegang.

TSHENOLO 6:12 Ya re e kanolola sekano sa borataro, ka bona thoromo e kgolo ya lefatshe, letsatsi la ntshofala, la nna jaaka kgetse ya boditse, ngwedi otlhe wa nna jaaka madi

MATHEO 24:29 Ka bonako morago ga pitlagano ya malatsi ao, letsatsi le tla fifala, le ngwedi ga o kitla o ntsha lesedi la ona, le dinaledi di tla wa mo legodimong, le dithata tsa magodimo di tla reketlisiwa.

Mo Bakereseteng gompieno, ngwedi o mohibidu o tsewa e le sesupo se se botlhokwa sa legodimo se se supang gore "Letsatsi la Morena" kgotsa paka



Solar Eclipse
Phifalo ya Letsatsi

ya Matshwenyego le a atamela. Le fa go ntse jalo, gantsi batho ba ba ikwatlhayang ba tshwanetse go nna le seabe mo dilong tse di sa siamang le tse di sa siamang, mme ba nne le seabe mo dilong tse di sa siamang. Ngwedi o mohibidu o tshwantshetsa tlhagiso ya bofelo ya Modimo pele ga go tla ga bobedi ga ga Keresete le metlha ya bokhutlo, go gatelela tlhokego ya go ipaakanyetsa semowa go lebeletse ditiragalo tseno tsa boporofeti.

Ke dire eng go pholoswa? Amogela Jesu jaaka Mopholosi!

JOHANE 3:16 Gonne Modimo o ratile lefatshe mo go kalo, mo o bileng wa le neela Morwaa-ona yo



Johan Zerwick
Sêlê ke 083 458 3837

o tsetsweng a le esi, gore mongwe le mongwe yo o dumelang mo go ene a se ka a latlhega, mme a nne le bophelo jo bo sa khutleng.

JOHANE 5:24-25 Ammaaruri, ammaaruri ke lo raya ke re: Yo o utlwang lefoko la me, a dumela ene yo o nthomileng, o na le bophelo jo bo sa khutleng, mme ga a tsene mo katlholong; o dule mo losong, a tshelela botshelong. Ammaaruri, ammaaruri ke lo raya ke re: Nako e e tla, le jaanong e setse e tsile, e baswi ba tla utlwang lentswe la Morwa Modimo ka yona, mme ba ba le utlwang ba tla phela.

God se Ontluikende Wil vir My

INLEIDING

Soms wonder ons of ons op die regte pad is, of ons met die regte dinge besig is, of ons God se beste en uitnemendste doelwitte vir ons lewe najaag... Dit is baie goed dat ons sulke vrae het, want dit beteken dat ons God tevrede wil stel en aan Hom vreugde wil bring.

Pastoor Craig Groeschel herinner ons dat ons kan nadink oor verskillende aspekte van God se wil: daar is God se *soewereine wil* (Sy oorkoepelende wil wat die beweegrigting van die wêreld bepaal en wat niemand kan teenstaan nie; Ef. 1:11), Sy *morele wil* (dit wat Hy wil hê ons moet doen en hoe ons korrek moet optree; bv. Ef. 4:15), Sy *toelatende wil* (goeie en soms negatiewe gebeure wat Hy wel toelaat omdat mense 'n vrye keuse gegun word, maar wat Hom nie noodwendig vreugde of plesier verskaf nie), en Sy *persoonlike wil* (die spesifieke werke wat Hy vir elke mens bepaal het, d.i. hul roeping; bv. Ef. 2:10).

Daar is ander kategorieë wat ons ook kan gebruik om God se wil te beskryf. Laat ons egter op 'n ander aspek fokus wat ek God se *ontluikende of ontvouende wil* sal noem.

1. DIE REIS VERSUS DIE EINDBESTEMMING

Dit gebeur gereeld dat ons voor groot besluite in die lewe te staan kom. Ons durf nie 'n fout maak nie, want dit kan tot groot reperkussies lei. Die versoeking is dan om te redeneer, te wroeg, selfs desperaat en angstig te soek na antwoorde - veral wanneer daar tydsdruk, morele druk of kompetisie betrokke is. Ons weeg die voor- en nadele op. Ons maak planne. Ons spekuleer. Ons wonder. En ons weet nie wat om te doen nie - besorg en radeloos.

Dalk lê daar 'n antwoord opgesluit in die metafoor van 'n reis - ons kan só gefokus wees op die eindbestemming dat ons die reis self glad nie genotvol vind nie. En selfs kort voordat ons die eindbestemming bereik, is ons alreeds besig om ons volgende bestemming te beplan. 'n Meesterstrategie.

Nie dat dit verkeerd is om te beplan nie, maar dit kan 'n gevaar vir ons geestelike lewe inhou: ons kan neig na 'n oormatige beklemtoning van werke of gebeure of besigwees, eerder as om stil voor God te raak en die reis saam met Hom aan te pak - en elke tree van gemeenskap saam met Hom te geniet.

Een Johannes 1:7 leer ons, "maar as ons in die lig leef, soos wat Hy

in die lig is, is ons aan mekaar verbonde, en reinig die bloed van Jesus, Sy Seun, ons [voortdurend] van elke sonde."

Inderdaad leer die Westminster Korter Kategismus ons dat die hoofdoel van die mens is om God te verheerlik en Hom vir ewig te geniet (1 Kor. 10:31; Rom. 11:36; Ps. 73:25-28). Wat 'n kosbare, innige meelewing en saamwees wat ons beskore is!

Laat ons dus tevrede wees met die feit dat ons 'n kosbare Reisgenoot het; laat ons op Hom wag terwyl Hy die reisplan ontploo. Miga 6:8 (DV) herinner ons, "Hy het aan jou, mens, bekend gemaak wat goed is: Wat anders eis die HERE van jou as om net te doen wat reg is, om troue liefde te bewys en om nederig die pad saam met jou God te loop?"

Laat Hy die stuurwiel neem, en ons die passasiersitplek. Laat ons op God wag soos die psalmis ook skryf, "Ky, soos die oë van die knegte is op die hand van hulle heer, soos die oë van die diensmaagd is op die hand van haar meesters - so is ons oë op die Here onse God, totdat Hy ons genadig is" (Ps. 123:2 OV). Op hierdie wyse bly ons van God afhanklik en kry Hy die eer vir die goeie seën wat ons beleef soos wat ons die lewenspad aandurf.

2. DIS 'N HARTSREIS

God se wil is dat ons in 'n verhouding met Hom sal staan en met Hom beraadslaag oor ons besluite. Psalm 32:8 (DV) lui, "Ek wil jou insig gee, Ek wil jou die pad leer wat jy moet loop. Ek wil jou raad gee, My oog oor jou hou." Dit spreek van 'n voortdurende wandeling en kommunikasie met ons Hemelse Vader. 'n Noue en intieme verbintenis. Soos 'n barmhartige, wyse vader, wil Hy ons Mentor wees en ons leer hoe om te leef. Nie net wát om te doen nie, maar met watter harts-gesindheid en -motief.

Ons lees verder: "Dit is wat God wil hê: ons moet Sy Seun, Jesus Christus, volledig in die geloof aanvaar vir Wie Hy is. Daarmee saam moet ons die wil van Jesus doen deur mekaar lief te hê. Wie God se wil so doen, is werklik deel van die intieme familiekring van God. Sy belange raak totaal met die belange van God vervleg. God is vir hom die allerbelangrikste en hy is net so belangrik vir God. Dat God ons werklik so deel van Sy intieme familiekring gemaak het, kan ons daarin sien dat Hy aan ons die Heilige Gees gegee het" (1 Johannes 3:23-24 DB).

God se wil is dat ons ons lewe met

Hom sal deel, dat ons vir Hom raad sal vra en dan sal reageer op die inspraak van die Heilige Gees en Sy Woord. Vervlegte belange en waardes. Liefde vir Hom en ander. En dit kry ons deurdadig dat ons Hom voortdurend beter leer ken.

In Jesus se Hoëpriesterlike gebed, definieer Hy die ewige lewe as volg: "En dit is die ewige lewe, dat hulle U ken, die enige waaragtige God, en Jesus Christus wat U gestuur het" (Joh. 17:3 OV). Dit dui op praktiese ervaringskennis, meer as net kopkennis. **Hartskennis.**

Ons moet dus 'n hartsreis met God onderneem en sensitief na Sy Heilige Gees luister, omdat Hy vir ons die pad sal aandui wat ons moet stap. Dit sal dan vir ons natuurlik wees om Sy wil na te volg. Sodoende sal ons in Sy liefde bly: "Groter liefde as dit het niemand nie, dat iemand sy lewe aflê vir sy vriende [soos wat Jesus vir ons gedoen het]. Julle is My vriende as julle doen wat Ek julle beveel. Ek noem julle nie meer slawe nie, omdat 'n slaaf nie weet wat sy eienaar doen nie. Ek het julle egter vriende genoem, omdat Ek alles wat Ek by My Vader gehoor het, aan julle bekend gemaak het" (Joh. 15:13-15 DV).

Ons is dus familie en vriende en mede-erfgename van Jesus (Rom. 8:17). In Jesus het ons naby gekom (Ef. 2:13). Wat 'n groot genade!

3. DIS 'N REIS VAN OORGAWE

Baie mense se besluite word deur hul eie belange gedryf. Wat sal vir my die voordeligste wees? Die beste vir my besigheid, gesin of loopbaan? Hoe gaan ek die kompetisie ore aansit? Bo uitkom?

As ons egter vir die eer van God leef en nie ons eie eer nie, verander ons perspektief en prioriteite. Ons dien 'n ander Koninkryk en nie meer ons eie nie. Dit maak nie meer saak of mense ons bewonder en op die skouer klop nie.

Die Boodskap herinner ons, "Moenie julle lewens mors deur sonder 'n doel te leef nie, maar maak seker hoe die Here wil hê julle moet leef" (Ef. 5:17). Die 2020-vertaling stel dit so, "Let daarom sorgvuldig op hoe julle leef - nie as onverstandiges nie, maar as wyses. Koop die tyd uit, omdat die dae vol boosheid is. Om hierdie rede moet julle nie onverstandig wees nie; probeer eerder om te verstaan wat die wil van die Here is" (Ef. 5:15-17). Die Nuwe Lewende Vertaling som dit mooi op: **leef Geesvervuld!**

Soms is dit 'n stryd tussen my wil en God se wil, veral as ek nie verstaan hoekom 'n bepaalde saak moet plaasvind nie. Mag ons ons wil belyn met God s'n. Dit verg werk en aflegging en selfverloëning, terwyl ons God se wil soek.

Die rede dat ons soms nie hoor wat God sê nie en nie weet wat Sy wil vir 'n bepaalde saak is nie, is dat ons heimlik reeds besluit het wat ons wil doen, en nie bereid is om afstand daarvan te doen nie. Dat ons reeds 'n plan gereed het. Ons wil eintlik net God se goedkeuring hê. Dit is nog 'n geestelike strik.

As ons egter van harte glo dat God die beste vir ons wil hê en dat Sy planne soveel beter as ons eie is, dan sal ons kom op die punt van oorgawe - ten spyte van ons eie besware en dié van ander. Ons sal terugstaan, God se wil daadwerklik soek, en dit ook in nederige gehoorsaamheid noudeset uitvoer. Hoe meer ons onself in hierdie geestelike dissipline oefen, hoe makliker sal ons God se Stem hoor en hoe makliker sal ons die pad stap wat Hy wil hê ons moet stap.

4. DIS 'N REIS VAN VERTROU

Die psalmis herinner ons, "U woord is 'n lamp vir my voet en 'n lig vir my pad" (Ps. 119:105 OV). Die Hebreeuse woord vir lamp is *nîr* en dui op 'n dowwe lamp, soos 'n kerslig. Die implikasie is dat ons beperkte visie het, maar wel genoeg lig vir die volgende tree op ons pad. As ons een tree gee, sal ons vorentoe beweeg en nou in staat wees om die volgende tree te gee. En dan nog 'n tree. So lei die Woord van God ons ook: stap vir stap. Dit dui rigting aan, maar gee nie die volledige padkaart in fynste besonderhede vir ons nie.

Die lewe moet tog gelêf word - stukkie vir stukkie. Dit verg dus vertroue van ons kant af - dat ons God sal volg, al kan ons nie die volle prentjie sien of ons lewensomstandighede wat ons tans beleef, begryp nie.

Dit mag wees dat die Vader moeilike dinge oor ons pad toelaat (nie noodwendig stuur nie, maar dit wel Sy diensknegte maak) om ons karakter te vorm. Om ons te help om sekere dinge af te lê en ons fokus en perspektief te verfyn. Hy mag ons selfs tugtig: "En julle het die vermaning heeltemal vergeet wat tot julle as seuns spreek: My seun, ag die tugtiging van die Here nie gering nie en beswyk nie as jy deur Hom bestraf word nie; want die Here tugtig hom wat Hy liefhet, en Hy

Vervolg op p. 5

TRUSTING GOD TO SHAPE YOUR STORY

1. THE IMPRINT OF MEMORY
There's an old potter's adage that says, "Clay has memory." Press your thumb into a pliable mound of earth, and it will hold the indentation long after the surface is smoothed over. Beneath the glaze, beneath the finished shape, the clay still remembers where it was pressed, where it was pulled, where it was wounded. Isn't that how we are, too?

Our souls bear the imprints of moments long past. Words spoken in anger, love offered and withdrawn, joys that made us sing, betrayals that hollowed us out, all of it is pressed into us. We may smooth our faces and build sturdy lives, but underneath, there are grooves and impressions time has not erased.

Perhaps it feels like weakness to be so formed by what we've experienced. But what if it's also what makes us most beautiful? What if the memory held within us is not simply scar tissue but a testimony that we have lived, that we have been molded by both pain and grace?

Scripture echoes this in Psalm 56:8 ESV: *"You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book?"* Nothing we've carried has been lost on God. Each sorrow is known, each joy remembered.

When we come to God with our memories, we aren't offering Him pristine, unmarked clay. We bring Him all the fingerprints, all the

fractures, all the lines that tell our story. And in His hands, they are not flaws to be erased, but lines of narrative He weaves into something more whole than we could imagine.

Today, dare to notice the places you still carry the past. Rather than despising them, let them remind you of your tenderness, your capacity to be shaped, your willingness to keep living. Clay that refuses to be moved becomes like stone. Your softness is not your failure: it is your glory that can be used for God's glory.

2. WHEN OUR CRACKS SHOW
There's a part of us that fears being seen for who we really are, the fragile places, the inconsistencies, the cracks that spider quietly across our surface. We often work to patch ourselves up, to appear smooth and unbroken. But the truth is, no vessel makes it through the kiln of life without some stress. Some lines are inevitable. Some give way under pressure.

In the short film "Clay Has a Memory," the potter says: "If I'm going to make a piece of art that's an expression of my soul, I have to be clean." This isn't about moral perfection but about integrity: an alignment between what is inside and what is outside.

Unconfessed bitterness, harboured shame, unhealed memories, these eventually work their way through the walls of our lives, sometimes as hairline cracks,

sometimes as deep fractures. But God is a Master Craftsman. In His hands, our cracks don't spell ruin. They become windows for light to shine through. As Paul writes in 2 Cor. 4:7 ESV: *"But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us."* It is precisely our frailty that reveals His glory.

What if our broken places aren't proof of failure but invitations to deeper honesty, more profound surrender, gentler compassion for ourselves and others? Kintsugi, the Japanese art of repairing pottery with gold, sees the cracks as part of the object's history, making it more beautiful for having been broken. God does the same with us; not erasing our past but highlighting how grace holds us together.

Where have you been trying to hide your cracks? What might it mean to bring them into the light, to let God mend them in a way that doesn't erase the story but dignifies it?

3. CRAFTING BEAUTY WITH OUR LIVES
By now, perhaps you're starting to see your life as a kind of living vessel; molded by memory, marked by stories of both wounding and wonder. The question becomes: what do we do with this clay? Do we harden it in bitterness, or do we keep yielding to the shaping of divine hands?

In the Wonderhunt film "Clay Has a Memory," we see creativity as a

sacred act. The potter doesn't just make bowls to be useful. He creates pieces that carry something of his own soul. When we live honestly, allow ourselves to be shaped by forgiveness, tenderness, and truth, we become living works of art, bearing the signature of the One Who made us. Scripture invites us into this shaping. Isaiah 64:8 ESV says: *"But now, O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You are our Potter; we are all the work of Your hand."* This isn't passive resignation but an active trust, choosing again and again to stay soft in His hands.

The state of your soul flows through your hands, your words, your relationships. Healing, then, is not simply for your own relief but so that the art of your life might bring beauty into the world. That doesn't require perfection. It requires courage to let your true story breathe.

As you go forward, remember: the clay remembers, yes, but so does the Potter. He knows every sorrow that pressed upon you, every joy that made you pliable, every season you feared you were beyond repair. And He still calls you good, still shapes you with patient, skillful love.

What would it look like to trust Him today? To let your life be crafted into something beautiful, not despite your memories, but because of them? Stream the film mentioned above completely free at wonderhunt.co
- Betsy Sunny

God se Ontluikende Wil vir My

Vervolg van p. 4
kasty elke seun wat Hy aanneem"
(Heb. 12:5-6 OV).

Dit is in hierdie tye wat ons onself die volgende vrae moet afvra: Is God betroubaar? Het Hy my al ooit in die steek gelaat? Dra Hy my belange op die hart? Sy karakter is volmaak en Sy hart is vol liefde. Ons kan Hom vertrou om ons deur elke krisis, nood, en tugtiging te lei, ook die een wat ons dalk nou beleef.

SLOTSOM
Dit mag gebeur dat die Here ons 'n kragtige visie gee en 'n belangrike saak vir ons as 'n groot geheel sal openbaar. Maar dit gebeur ook dikwels dat Hy ons eerder stap vir stap lei en leer. Met ander woorde, dat Sy wil en roeping vir ons stelselmatig ontvou. Ons moet dan leer om geduldig

en in vertroue op Hom en op Sy volmaakte tydsberekening en handelwyse te wag. Laat ons die reis op pad na die eindbestemming geniet! Laat ons ons verheug in die wonderlike voorreg dat ons nie net gedweë slawe is wat maar moet luister na elke beveling of wispelturige bevel van hulle eienaar nie, maar dat ons deel is van die Goddelike familie en verstaan wat God se oorkoepelende plan, asook dele van Sy gedetailleerde reisplan vir ons is.

Lê vandag jou belange neer en Koninkryksbelange na. Vertrou Hom en gee oor aan Sy volmaakte wil soos wat dit ontvou wanneer ons hand aan Hand met Hom die lewenspad aandurf! Dan sal jy God beleef as Emmanuel - want Hy is inderdaad met ons!
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Leaving a Legacy of Love

By Sophia Bricker
I recently finished reading Miriam Huffman Rockness's *A Passion for the Impossible: The Life of Liliás Trotter*. Liliás Trotter (1853-1928) is not as widely known as other missionaries like Lottie Moon or Hudson Taylor. However, I first learned about Trotter when I read a devotional book about Christian women in history.

After reading the short excerpt about her life, I was intrigued and read her *Parables of the Cross*. While this book is short, it is a biblically rich work that challenges readers to greater discipleship. Since I greatly enjoyed Trotter's writings, I decided to read her biography by Rockness, who is a recognised authority on Liliás' life. She regularly blogs about Trotter's art [see below] and writings.

A Passion for the Impossible details Liliás's life including her ministry to the downtrodden in England to her mission work in Algeria. Although she is not widely known, Liliás Trotter displayed a life of love for her Saviour and others.

Even when she was serving at home, she was pressing the limits of what it meant to reach others. In the culture of her era, most upper-class women volunteered their time for social causes to balance out their easy life of comfort.

However, Liliás went a step further and kept reaching out to the downtrodden and undesirables even when it went against social standards. As Rockness wrote in the biography, "At a time when it was unacceptable for a young woman to be out alone in the city, Liliás fearlessly traversed the streets to rescue these street-walkers [prostitutes], many of whom haunted the neighbourhood of Victoria Station" (p. 91). Her bravery in reaching out to the prostitutes of her city shows her heart for people who needed to know about Jesus.

Later, when she was in Algeria, she displayed a similar concern for the women who were cloistered away in their homes. Knowing that these women needed to hear the good news of

Jesus, she had to find a creative way to gain access to these enclosed lives. Trotter soon realised that talking to the children was a way to gain access to the women in the houses. She gained their friendship and was able to talk about Jesus, fully aware of the severe consequences if they chose to place faith in the Lord. Even when the way seemed impossible, she trusted God and continued forward with a sincere love for people.

In many ways, her work among the "streetwalkers" of London and women in Algeria reminds me of Amy Carmichael's ministry to the "shawlies" in Ireland who were looked down on by others. It is no surprise then that Carmichael and Trotter were friends, as they regularly wrote to each other. These women loved God wholeheartedly, which affected how they interacted with the people around them.

For Carmichael, this meant helping the "shawlies" and later offering refuge to children in India who were forced into temple prostitution because of the local tradition. For Trotter, her love for God moved her to bring light to prostitutes on the street and to offer hope through the gospel to the people in Algeria.

As I reflect on the significance of Liliás Trotter's life, I find that I agree with Rockness' evaluation of her legacy at the end of the book. Trotter did many wonderful things in working among the people of Algiers, writing devotional literature, and creating a book called *The Sevenfold Secret*, to point people to Jesus - the Way.

She was also a founder of the *Algiers Mission Band*, which continued the mission of spreading the Gospel in Algiers and is now known as *Arab World Ministries*. However, her life is best remembered as a life of love since "[f]rom the little street urchin of the slums of Algiers to the most sophisticated statesman of the faith, Liliás loved with a love that showed no partiality" (Rockness, p. 328).

Her love for God and others made her contributions more mea-

ningful. If she had merely painted beautiful landscapes in water-colour or written Arabic parables for the sake of being famous or acknowledged for her skill, then these contributions would not have been as impactful. Because love was her motivation, her impact continues through her published works, where readers can learn about her love for her Saviour and her concern for the Arab world.

Knowing that her main legacy was based on love provides an important lesson that is reflected in Scripture. If we do not have love, then nothing we do really matters.

The Apostle Paul described it this way, *"If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing"* (1 Corinthians 13:1-3, NIV).

Even if we have the greatest gifts and set out to do the greatest good in the world around us, it means nothing if we do not have love. When we love God with all our hearts, mind, soul, and strength, then we will love others as ourselves (Mark 12:30-31). Anyone who does not love their neighbour cannot claim to love God (1 John 4:20).



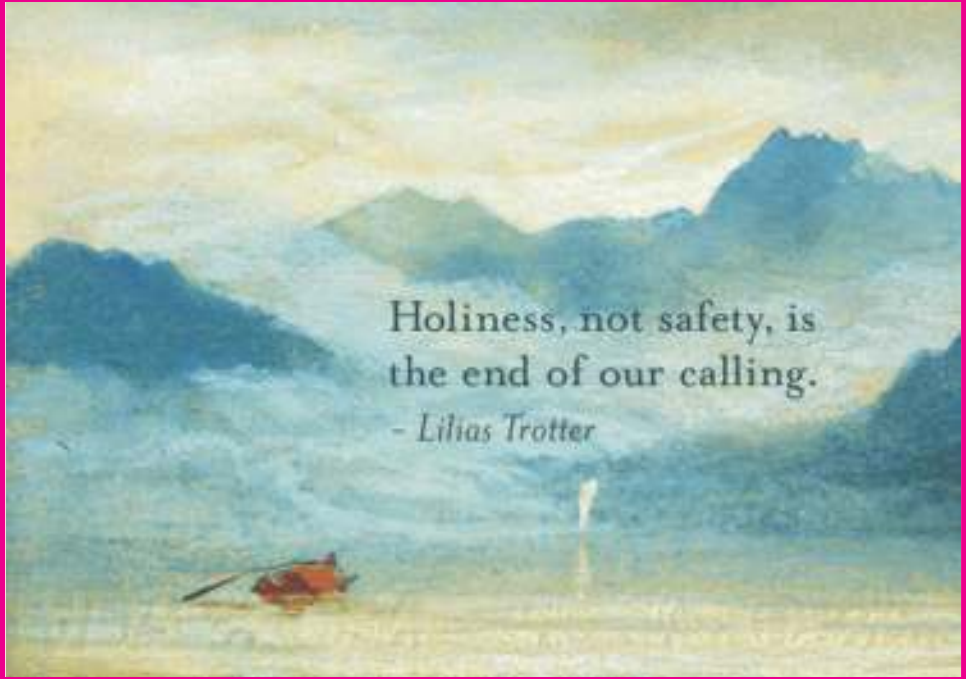
Liliás Trotter

Liliás Trotter served the Lord and left an inspiring example, but the driving force behind her service was love for her Saviour and love for others in wanting them to know Him.

If we want to use our talents and resources for Christ's glory and to help others know Him, then the most important thing to remember is to grow in our love for God and allow that love for Him to drive us toward greater love for others.

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<https://thecrosspenandpage.substack.com/p/leaving-legacy-of-love-reflections-on>





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WHEN YOUR SEASON MEETS YOUR MOMENT

We need to be living with hope between the promise and the breakthrough!

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens...” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8).

INTRODUCTION
Life passes in seasons. We have seasons that feel full of sunshine and growth... and others that feel like deep winter. There are moments of joy and moments of pain, moments of planting and moments of harvesting, moments of starting and moments of letting go. The Bible makes it clear - there is a season and a time for everything.

A season is a stretch of time, often marked by a certain set of circumstances. On the other hand, a time is a specific moment - an instant when something happens. We can usually recognise a season... but the exact moment when things shift? That's harder to see. Seasons move steadily, but moments can arrive suddenly.

SEASONS VERSUS TIME - AN ILLUSTRATION
A while back, I was getting our garden ready for a special event. I wanted the grass lush and green, and the trees covered in fresh leaves. It was spring - the season for growth - and I could already see a few buds here and there. But then I noticed: even though it was the season, it wasn't yet the time.

We pruned the trees. We fed them

fertiliser. We watered them faithfully. We even enjoyed a streak of unseasonably warm days. And still... nothing. Just bare branches staring back at me. I kept looking for signs of change, but the moment hadn't arrived.

Then, almost overnight, it happened. Buds appeared, leaves began to unfurl, and everything burst into life!

That's when it hit me: **just because it's the right season doesn't mean it's the right moment.**

You can do everything 'right' and still have to wait for God's perfect timing. When that moment comes, things can change faster than you ever imagined.

WAITING IS PART OF LIFE
We don't like waiting, but it's built into the circle of life. We wait in queues, we wait for results, we wait for opportunities. Spiritually, we wait for God to answer prayers, open doors, and fulfil promises. These waiting seasons can be hard and the temptation to lose hope is real.

But the Bible says in Psalm 14:7, *“Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD brings back the captivity of His people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad.”*

When you're in a waiting season, hold on! Don't let discouragement harden your heart. Waiting is not wasted time, God is at work, even when you can't see it.

THE TIME TO TURN AWAY FROM WRONG
There are moments in life when we know we need to make a change. A time to decisively walk away from sin and step into the life God intends for us. *“Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it”* (Psalm 34:14).

Turning, or changing our ways or direction isn't always easy, we may fail along the way. But the Holy Spirit empowers us to keep going. Many people can remember the exact moment they gave their lives to Christ. That was their time of turning. If you sense God prompting you now, don't delay.

THE TIME TO REALISE LIFE IS SHORT
We don't think much about the brevity of life when we're young. But sooner or later, we have a moment that makes it real - the loss of a loved one, a health scare, or simply the passing of years. *“Show me, LORD, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is”* (Psalm 39:4). Realising that life is short changes how we live. It shifts our priorities and helps us focus on what truly matters.

THE TIME TO TRUST
Trusting God should be constant, but there are times when trust becomes all we have. When our own strength runs out, we need to lean entirely on Him. *“Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to Him, for God is our Refuge”* (Psalm 62:8). If you're in a trust-only season, be honest with God. Pour out your heart. He

can handle it and He can help.

THE TIME FOR GOD TO ACT
Joseph knew what it meant to wait for God's timing. After his God-given dreams, life seemed to go backwards - betrayal, slavery, prison. For years nothing happened... and then, in a single day, everything changed. *“It is time for You to act, LORD”* (Psalm 119:126). *“Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him”* (Psalm 37:7). God's timing may not match ours, but it's always perfect.

THE TIME TO REJOICE
When God comes through, there's nothing like it - that moment when you realise the prayer has been answered, the breakthrough has come, and the burden is lifted! David knew that feeling: *“I love You, LORD, my strength. The LORD is my Rock, my Fortress and my Deliverer...”* (Psalm 18:1-2). If you're still waiting, don't give up, your rejoicing moment might be closer than you think!

THE RIGHT TIME
Life is a constant flow of seasons and moments. Some are easy, some are hard, but all are opportunities to trust the One Whose timing is flawless. Trust that He knows best, especially when you don't understand why. Whatever season you're in right now (planting, grieving, rebuilding, laughing, or letting go) lean into it with faith. God's timing is never off!
- Pastor Andrew W. Roebert
www.alivetogod.com

Worry is a Waste of Energy

“Don't worry or surrender to your fear. For you've believed in God, now trust and believe in Me also” (John 14:1 TPT).

Let your heart take hope today in the stream of My living love. Come lay down your cares at My feet. Let Me lift the burdens that have been weighing you down.

Sit and feast at My table of plenty. Eat of My tender kindness that breaks down the strongest defenses. Drink of My mercy that satisfies every lack and clears out all shame. Partake of My power that infuses you with energy and passion to accomplish all that you hope and dream.

There is no need to keep a running account of possibilities that may

or may not happen in your life or in the lives of those you love. I am already aware of every eventuality, and I will supply you with all you need for every moment.

Why rely on your limited resources when you have access to a boundless reserve? Be partnered with Me, and you will never need to be dependent on your ability alone. I am able to do far more than you could ever imagine. Fear will not overtake you, for My love already has. Trust me!

- Adapted from 'I Hear His Whisper for Women' written by Brian Simmons

“Worry is worshipping your problems. Trust is worshipping God.” - Anon.



KEEP TRUSTING WHEN GOD DISAPPOINTS YOU

There was a horrific church shooting in Minneapolis last week. Understandably, there were different reactions to this calamity. Outrage, sadness, questions.

Jen Psaki, MSNBC host and former White House Press Secretary wrote that “Prayer is not freaking enough. Prayers do not end school shootings. Prayers do not make parents feel safe sending their kids to school. Prayer does not bring these kids back. Enough with the thoughts and prayers.” One can hear her frustration and disillusionment in these words. Mayor Jacob Frey wrote: “Don’t just say this is about thoughts and prayers right now. These kids were literally praying.”

Those who criticise offering “thoughts and prayers” in response to tragedy presumably believe that praying to an omnipotent God has no practical value, or they would not oppose the practice. They often call for more “practical” responses, advocating for gun legislation, mental health reform, and similar measures. However, we know that prayer is in no sense a substitute for practical actions and often strengthens such responses. As James made clear, genuine faith leads to genuine action (James 1:22–27).

C.S. Lewis wrote after his wife died of cancer: “Not that I am (I think) in much danger of ceasing to believe in God. The real danger is of coming to believe such dreadful things about Him. The conclusion I dread is not ‘So there’s no God after all,’ but ‘So this is what God’s really like. Deceive yourself no longer.’”

We may be disillusioned with God, but sometimes we are disappointed by His Church. My father was very active in his church before he served in World War II and experienced such atrocities that he never attended church again. I am praying and grieving right now for the family of a dear friend who died recently of cancer after I and multitudes of others prayed fervently for his healing. I am praying and grieving for another dear friend whose cancer has come back despite my fervent intercession for him.

One may be tempted to think that perhaps the Greeks got it right with their capricious deities atop Mt. Olympus.

Perhaps God sometimes disappoints us because that’s just Who He is. Or perhaps my doubts say more about me than they do about

Him.

WHEN YOUR DOCTOR DISAPPOINTS YOU

In the face of tragedy, it can be hard to trust God for His help with suffering He could have prevented but did not. If your doctor could have kept your malignancy from metastasising but did not, you likely would have looked for another doctor to treat your disease. If your lawyer could have prevented your guilty verdict but did not, you would probably seek another attorney to handle your appeal. But God is not a doctor or a lawyer. And trusting Him even when He disappoints us can be the path to our most empowering and redemptive experience of His grace!

David wrote Psalm 69 at a time when he had “come into deep waters” of opposition and persecution (vv. 1-2). He had been praying for help, but God had not responded (v. 3). Even worse, he was being persecuted because of his faith: “It is for Your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonour has covered my face” (v. 7).

Did he then turn from God in anger? Did he give up praying since God had not answered and his very prayers were a cause of his persecution? The opposite, in fact: “As for me, my prayer is to You, O Lord” (v. 13a). David knew that it is always too soon to give up on God: “At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of Your steadfast love answer me in Your saving faithfulness” (v. 13b).

In response to God’s response, David said, “I will praise the Name of God with a song; I will magnify Him with thanksgiving” (v. 30). He knew that “this will please the Lord more than [a sacrifice of] an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs” (v. 31).

It is one thing to trust God during times when He has blessed us and all is well. It is another to trust Him despite our circumstances. Such faith shows that we believe what Scripture says about Him even though our experiences seem to contradict His Word. It shows that we love Him when He disappoints us or acts in an unexpected way, just as He loves us when we disappoint Him. It shows a skeptical world that our faith is real and relevant in the hardest days of life. And since God honours our free will, such faith positions us to experience His grace in ways we could not otherwise. Missionary Jim Elliot’s declaration is therefore both biblical and logical: “God always gives His best to those who leave the choice with Him.”

WHEN WE TRUST GOD WITH OUR PAIN

It makes sense for me to question the character of someone only if I know enough about them for my doubts to be fair to them and accurate to the facts. But I cannot see the future consequences of God’s present actions. I cannot know how He will redeem present suffering for a greater future good, as with Joseph’s imprisonment in Egypt, which led to his saving Egypt and his own family from starvation. Nor can I know how He is redeeming present suffering in my life, as with Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” that led the apostle to trust God on a deeper level than ever before and then testify, “When I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10).

Doubting God when He disappoints me can only lead to further disappointment and further doubt, because I refuse to allow Him to work in my life and then blame Him when He does not.

Conversely, trusting God even when He disappoints us moves our faith from a transactional religion to a transformational relationship. We all want the latter and would probably say this is how we relate to God. But if we turn from Him when He does not do what we want, we discover that the former was actually the case.

Choosing to trust Him when we don’t understand Him shows that our trust is not based on our circumstances. And this positions us to experience Him on a level that changes our lives. I can offer three ways this has

been true for me personally. First, when we trust God with our pain, we can experience His Presence and comfort on a level we could not before the suffering came. When I was a summer missionary in East Malaysia many years ago, I experienced a deeper loneliness than I have ever felt before or since. But when I turned to God in my darkest hours, I felt His Presence at a depth that marked my soul.

Second, when we trust God with our pain, He can use us in ways he could not before the suffering came. When our son and grandson were diagnosed with cancer, cancer survivors ministered to us as others could not. As Henri Nouwen noted, wounded people can be “wounded healers.”

Third, when we trust God with our pain, He can use our suffering to guide us into His purpose in ways He could not before the suffering came. My back challenges of recent years have led me to focus more on writing than ever before, a season of my work in which I am finding great fulfilment and joy. As Michel Quoist notes, God often leads us through our limitations.

The greater the pain, the more we need a physician. The harder it is to trust our Father, the more we need to trust our Father. And a relationship with God that transcends feelings and circumstances shows the world that such faith is real and relevant, displaying the light of Christ in the darkest of days. Dr. Jim Denison
www.denisonforum.org

Tot Bo Toe Vol ‘n Italiaanse volksverhaal

Leerreester," sê 'n soldaat eendag vir 'n wyse ou man, "ek het nou elke moontlike krygskuns bemeester, en al moet ek dit self sê, ek was in elke opsig die heel beste. Nou het ek tyd om iets van God te leer. Kan u my daarmee help?"

Die wyse ou man het stilweg geglimlag oor soveel selfvoldaanheid en die soldaat genooi om by hom te kom sit. "Kom ons drink eers 'n koppie tee voor ons verder gesels."

Toe die soldaat sy koppie aangee, begin die leerreester die tee inskink. Toe die koppie vol is, hou hy aan met gooi totdat die tee van die piering af op die tafel loop en later op die grond drup.

Stomgeslaan hou die soldaat sy leerreester dop tot hy nie langer kon stilbly nie. "Hou op!" roep hy. "Die koppie is mos vol. Daar kan tog niks meer ingaan nie!"

Die leerreester sit die teepot kalm neer. "Ek merk op dat jy so vol is van jouself," sê hy, "dat daar geen plek vir God is nie. Dit is nie moontlik om jou iets van Hom te leer voor jy leeg word van jouself nie."

- Stories vir die lewe Omnibus, Piet Naudé, Lux Verbi.BM, 2002

Jehova Jireh, die Voorsiener-God

Ons lees in Genesis 22 van Abraham. God het hom gevra om sy enigste seun te offer. Dit moes 'n geweldige stryd in sy hart ontketen het. Tog het hy geglo dat God op een of ander wonderbare wyse sou voorsien.

Hierdie krisis word egter 'n geleentheid om God beter te leer ken: as die Algenoegsame Voor-siener!

Inderdaad het God 'n ram voorsien om in die plek van Isak te offer - wat 'n kosbare beeldspraak van die kruis wat veel later sou kom. God voorsien vir ons 'n Volmaakte Offer - Jesus - in Wie al die nasies van die aarde geseën word.

Hieronder volg twee verhale wat ook prakties toon hoe God in mense se lewens voorsien het - en Hy sal ook in joune voorsien as jy Hom soek en Hom in ootmoet, volgens Sy wil, vra.

JACK CONNOR: SENDELING
Toe ons gemeente hulle eerste sendinguitreik begin het, het ons Jack Conner as ons sendeling beroep. Ons het egter geen geld vir sy trek en ook nie vir sy salaris gehad nie. Aangesien hy drie kinders gehad het, het ons gevoel dat ons hom ten minste R5 000 per maand moes betaal. Ons het begin bid dat God vir die trek en Jack se behoeftes sou voorsien.

Dit was die eerste keer wat ek 'n gemeente gelei het om so iets te doen. Ons het geglo dat die Here wou hê Jack moes ons sendeling in Prince Albert wees. Ek het

niemand geken wat ons finansiële kon help nie, behalwe 'n paar mense in Kalifornië. Toe het ek myself begin afvra: "Hoe op aarde gaan God hierin voorsien?"

Dit het tot my deurgedring dat God geweet het waar ek was en dat Hy vir enigiemand kon laat uitvind waar ek was. Solank Hy my behoeftes ken, kan Hy dit op die hart van enigiemand druk.

Jack het in geloof geïmmigreer, oortuig daarvan dat God hom geroep het. Toe ontvang ek 'n brief van 'n gemeente in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Die brief het gelees: "God het dit op ons hart gelê om een persent van ons sendingbydrae aan julle sending-aksie te gee." Ek het nie toe geweet hoe op aarde hulle by ons betrokke geraak het nie, maar die tjek van R6 600 het ons bereik.

Eendag het iemand my by die huis geskakel. Die persoon het onderneem om vir die volgende jaar die R5 000 per maand wat ons vir Jack se salaris nodig gehad het, te skenk. Net toe ek die telefoon neersit, kom Jack met ons motorpad opgery.

Ek het vir Jack gevra: "Wat het jou trek gekos?"

"Wel, Henry, ek dink dit het my R6 600 gekos."

Ons het daardie eerste stap van geloof geneem deur te glo dat God, wat weet waar ons ons bevind, die God is wat enigteen op enige plek kan aanraak en vir hom/haar laat weet waar ons is. Ons het die aanpassing gemaak

en was gehoorsaam. Ons het geglo dat God, wat vir Jack geroep het, ook sê: "Ek is die God wat voorsien." Toe ons gehoorsaam was, het God Homself aan ons geopenbaar as die God wat voorsien. Daardie ondervinding het ons gelei tot 'n dieper liefdes-verhouding met die Algenoegsame God.

DIE STUDENTE-VERPLEEGSTER
'n Tweede verhaal speel hom af terwyl ek studenteleraar was. Ek het dikwels onderhoude met die universiteitstudente gehad. Ek het besef dat hulle in 'n tydperk in hulle lewe was waar dinge vinnig verander en ek wou hulle graag help, omdat hulle baie belangrike besluite moes neem.

Sherri, 'n pragtige studente-verpleegster, het my kom sien. Ek het reeds baie vir Sherri gebid en vir wat die Here in haar lewe kon doen. Ons het gesels oor haar alkoholis-pa en of sy moes voortgaan met verpleging of nie. Toe het ek na Sherri gekyk en gesê: "Sherri, die Here het dit op my hart gelê om te bid vir 'n man vir jou."

"Is u ernstig?" het sy gevra.

"Ek wil hê jy moet weet dat ek ernstig is, Sherri," het ek gesê. "Omdat jy soveel hartseer en probleme deurgemaak het met jou alkoholis-pa, glo ek dat die Here vir jou 'n wonderlike man wil gee wat jou kan liefhê vir wie jy is. Ek wil hê jy moet weet dat ek vandag gaan begin bid dat die Here jou 'n wonderlike, liefdevolle man moet gee." Sy het gehuil. Ons het begin bid dat God vir haar



'n maat moet voorsien.

Ongeveer drie maande later het die Here 'n lieflike jongman na ons gemeente toe gebring. Hy was 'n ingenieurstudent. Die twee het mekaar liefgekry en ek het hulle in die huwelik bevestig. Hulle het nou al twee kinders en hulle dien die Here baie getrou. Die laaste wat ek gehoor het, was dat Sherri so gelukkig is as wat sy maar kon wees.

Hoe het Sherri geweet dat God vir haar 'n man kon gee? Sy het bely dat God inderdaad kon voorsien en het toe aanhou waak en bid.

Sy was gereed om die een te aanvaar wat God vir haar wou gee. En sy moes in gehoorsaamheid aanvaar toe God sy keuse aan haar bekendmaak. So het sy God leer ken as die Voor-siener - ook van lewensmaats!

Vertrou God vandag om ook in jou spesifieke behoeftes te voorsien. Glo Hom en eer Hom vir uitkoms!

- Beleef God! HT Blackaby en CV King, Protea-Uitgewers, Lux Verbi.BM, 2002.

“I CALL YOU MY BELOVED”

I received an email from a high school girl named Sydney. She shared the following very special story.

“My name is Sydney I'm a senior in high school. I placed my faith in Christ in 2019.

My story starts all the way back in 2004. I was born in Nepal and my birth parents left me on the street when I was 2 days old. I was left outside a police station and I was found by a police officer.

A couple of days later I was brought to an orphanage and I didn't have a name. I didn't have any identification. They gave me a name Priya Balika. Balika means “orphan girl” and Priya means “Beloved.”

When I was two I was adopted by my mom and I moved from Nepal to Minnesota.

When I was in fourth or fifth grade, I started to see my friends connect with their biological parents in a way that I felt like I was missing out on. I just really wanted to know who they were. In about 9th grade I would go to a place of “They didn't want you.” I felt that I was left there on the street to die.

I became a Christian in my sophomore year of high school and the *Through the Word* Bible app really contributed to the strengthening my faith. I really started to experience God speaking to me.

I came across Romans 9:25 where

He says, “I will call those who were not My people, ‘My people,’ and [I will call] her who was not beloved, ‘beloved.’” This was God's special word to me!

Now, when I think about my life before Christ, it feels so hazy and gray compared to my life now. I feel alive! The whole first part of my life I really focused on the orphan part of my given name. But now, I feel beloved.”

How wonderful that God was watching over Sydney. He met her in one special moment with one special verse. In this verse Paul is quoting from Hosea. It's an incredible story where God changes the name of an orphan who felt unloved, into “Beloved.”

throughtheword.org/about



**“I will call those who were not My people, ‘My people,’ and [I will call] her who was not beloved, ‘beloved.’”
(Rom. 9:25 AMPC)**

Scriptures for Spiritual Growth

My eldest recently turned 30. While I'm proud of the man he is becoming, I can't help but think about the night he entered this world. Needless to say, he's done a lot of growing over the last three decades.

As Christ-followers, we are called to grow in Him as well. The Bible is filled with spiritual growth Scriptures that encourage us to increase our faith and become more like Jesus. Just as my son has gone from being an infant to a man - a husband and father in his own right - Scriptures for spiritual growth challenge us toward biblical maturity. It's a challenge we need to take seriously.

The day you accepted Jesus's offer of salvation serves as a milestone for your life as a Christ-follower. It represents the beginning of the most important journey you'll ever take, an adventure like no other. Yet, it was just the starting point. God has so much more for His people as they move toward spiritual maturity.

That's where spiritual growth Scriptures come in. Through His Word, God encourages us to avoid standing still in the Christian life. He doesn't want us to go through the motions or get stuck in a rut. He urges us to grow to be more like Him for His glory (2 Peter 3:16). As we meditate on verses about spiritual growth, we learn more about His expectations for us and how we can fulfil His plans and purposes for our lives.

Below are a few spiritual growth Scriptures. These Bible passages encourage us to grow in our faith and to stand strong in the commitment we've made to Christ. They challenge us to become more like Him. They help us know who we are as men and women of God and what it means to mature

in the most important relationship we have.

John 15:5 - *"I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me."* Among all the spiritual growth Scriptures in the Bible, this one should be near the top of your list. If we're going to remember one principle about growing in our faith, it needs to be that spiritual maturity is all about Jesus. It starts with a personal relationship with Him, where we embrace His sacrifice on the cross as the payment for our sins. And it continues with our complete dependence on Him each step of the way. He is the vine. We are the branches. Without Him, we are helpless and can never experience spiritual growth.

1 Peter 2:2 - *"Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the Word, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation."* The Christian life is a journey. When most of us start out, we don't know a lot about God or His plan for our lives. Like a child learning to walk, we grow and mature. The key to that growth is studying God's Word. Like milk for a newborn, the Bible provides strength and nourishment. We can't experience spiritual growth without it.

Hebrews 10:24-25 - *"And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching."* This spiritual growth Scripture reminds us of another important element for maturing in our faith: fellowship. The Christian life is not an individual sport. We need the encouragement, support, and accountability other believers

provide. If we're going to grow spiritually, we need to be connected to a solid, Bible-preaching local congregation.

Psalms 92:12-13 - *"The righteous thrive like a palm tree and grow like a cedar tree in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the Lord, they thrive in the courts of our God."* Every spiritual growth Scripture has one thing in common: growth. Living things grow. Dead things don't. So, if we're going to reflect a vibrant and living relationship with Jesus - a maturing relationship with Him - we've got to grow. Otherwise, we're just going through the motions, living a mediocre existence that doesn't benefit us or make an impact on the world around us.

Ephesians 2:8-10 - *"For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift - not from works, so that no one can boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do."* The Bible is clear that we are saved by our faith in Jesus, not by any good works we can perform. Throughout the Bible, spiritual growth Scriptures emphasise that we could never be good enough to earn God's favour.

Yet, these verses do challenge us to grow in our faith by demonstrating good works. When we act like Jesus, we point others toward Jesus. So, even though we can't gain a relationship with Jesus through good deeds, we can show the world what a relationship with Jesus looks like by doing what's right every chance we get.

Colossians 2:6-7 - *"So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in Him, being rooted and built up in*

Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude." We received Christ by faith. We also grow toward spiritual maturity by faith. At its essence, such faith requires us to embrace what we don't always understand. But, as we grow closer to Jesus, we can stand strong in Him - even when we don't understand it all. Spiritual growth means being rooted in Christ and standing firm in Him. It also means demonstrating gratitude regardless of the situation.

1 Timothy 4:14 - *"Don't neglect the gift that is in you; it was given to you through prophecy, with the laying on of hands by the council of elders."* Another sign of spiritual maturity is our ability to use the spiritual gifts God has given us for His glory. At the moment we accept Jesus as Saviour, God's Spirit gives us at least one spiritual gift. Several passages in the Bible (like Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12) describe these gifts in more detail, but each of us can be sure that we have a gift and that God wants us to use it to build up His Body, the Church. Paul urged Timothy to avoid diminishing the gift he had received. God wants us to identify and use our gifts as well so we can grow in our faith.

There are many other Scriptures that encourage us and teach us on spiritual growth. Search for them in your private study of the Bible! Apply them to your life with the help of the Spirit! It's always a comfort when we don't have to travel through uncharted territory alone. With Jesus, we not only have a Companion Who walks with us, we have a Guide Who's been there and done that. We just need to trust Him... and follow Him.
- Bob Bunn
manhoodjourney.org/spiritual-growth-scriptures

Jer. 20:11

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est. 2023