

# LIFE IS SO UNFAIR!

Judith Halim took one look at the doctor's face and knew something was wrong. The 22-year-old had given birth to her first child the day before, but instead of joy, there was fear.

The news was devastating. Her daughter had been born with three holes in her heart, brain damage and Down's syndrome. She wasn't expected to live past three months.

Judith's world imploded. The young Indonesian woman had already endured a difficult life. Her father, a womaniser who beat his wife, left the family when she was 18 months old, and they fell into extreme poverty.

But life improved when, at 21, she married a Singaporean businessman in Jakarta, and fell pregnant six months later.

Her husband sent Judith to Singapore to have the baby and told her he would join her soon.

She was still waiting for her husband to fly in when she was told of her daughter's condition. "I couldn't take the news," Judith shares. "Why was life so unfair? As a child all I wanted was a complete family but I was deprived of it. As a mother all I wanted was a healthy child and I was deprived of that too."

"I thought ... if there is a God why is this happening to me?"

Worse was to come. Her husband arrived and told Judith: "I don't think we're meant for each other. I don't love you anymore." And, just as her father had done, her husband walked out on her too. There was

## IF THERE IS A GOD WHY IS THIS HAPPENING TO ME?



Judith Halim, her daughter, and her husband, Jason Ong.

**JASON'S STORY**  
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another woman in his life.

"I was so devastated even to breathe was painful," Judith shares. In desperation she prayed: "God, if You are real, You have to meet me halfway." Through her tears she saw a woman passing by. She also saw the cross she wore.

Judith called out to God again. "I prayed, 'Jesus if you are the true living God, come and help me because I don't think I can make it another day.'" In fact, she had no intention of making it

another day. She was planning to commit suicide - but not before taking a last walk down Orchard Road, Singapore's glittering shopping precinct.

That fateful day, as Judith was preparing to head to the shops, the phone rang. It was an insurance agent calling to ask if she would like to buy a policy. No? Okay then, the agent said, in that case would you like to come to church with me?

"I thought he was mad," Judith laughs. "One minute he was asking me to buy insurance, the next minute he was asking me to go to church? For some reason I told him, 'Okay, but only if you bring me to

Orchard Road first!'"

"My church is just off Orchard Road!" he exclaimed. "I will pick you up." And that is how Judith Halim, preparing to jump to her death with her baby that night, went to church for the first time in her life instead.

The service was conducted in English, which Judith didn't understand. She stood to leave but was stopped by ushers who brought her to the front. Later she was told the pastor had pointed at her and said: "That woman with the baby. Please come forward."

On stage the pastor asked Judith if she wanted to receive Jesus as her personal Lord and Saviour. "I was

wondering what to do when suddenly I saw the whole auditorium bathed in red," she says. "And I was filled with a peace that in 22 years of living I never knew existed."

"I said in Chinese, 'I don't know this Jesus, but if He gives this peace I'm experiencing I must have Him. I cannot live without it.' And I started to cry. I cried and cried until I forgot I wanted to go to Orchard Road."

Thus began her remarkable journey from uneducated security guard to managing director and business owner, in just 10 years.

Judith's daughter was miraculously healed - and she has the doctors' reports to prove it. One report shows a diseased heart; another shows a perfect heart with no trace of disease, something the cardiologist told her was medically impossible. Her daughter, not expected to live beyond three months, is now 26.

Happy ending? Not quite. In 2004, Judith's second husband Jason was diagnosed with an aggressive brain tumor so rare there are no more than 200 cases worldwide. It is incurable.

Surgeries to remove as much of the growth as possible followed. Jason became deaf and, later, blind as the tumour continued its unstoppable growth.

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## Fun for Kids

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## Coping with Covid

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# Imagine a world without theft

BY JODY BENNETT

CAN you imagine a world in which there was no theft? I find it is almost impossible to do.

Imagine not needing locks on doors, or cars? No security guards in stores, no pick-pocketing or phone scams. We wouldn't need safety deposit boxes or passwords because no one would steal online either.

If everything was paid for, stores wouldn't have to pad their prices and the cost of everything would be lower. Insurance companies would lose a lot of work. If no one stole from the tax man, the government would have plenty of money to make improvements on infrastructure and amenities.

Just think about the changes to everyday life.

No keys to carry around. No security bars on the windows. No safety deposit boxes. No alarms to set and much less need for CCTV cameras, since most muggings and attacks are due to theft. Airports wouldn't have to shrink wrap bags and car insurance would only have to be against having an accident.

There would be no voting theft, no identity theft, no car jacking and no racketeering, so no black market goods. Mob bosses would probably still survive on drug sales and prostitution. However, if there was no theft, there couldn't be human trafficking because that is stealing someone's child or freedom. Voluntary prostitution would still be

around but there would be no kidnapping and no government corruption.

On consideration though, maybe drug sales wouldn't survive, since addicts usually steal to support their habit!

Imagine how much easier it would be for the police!

A lack of theft would also lead to people being less suspicious of one another, more generous towards those in need, and more honest in other things, I would imagine.

I think we would all agree that such a world would be a much more pleasant place to live in.

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BACK PAGE

**INJURIES**  
**HUMBLE YOU**  
**JEREMY LIN**

# Life is so unfair!

• From page 1

He suffered excruciating pain. His response? "As long as I have breath I'm going to make every day count for Jesus."

The couple launched into overseas mission work, feeding children in third world countries.

In 2013, after another surgery, Jason was recovering in hospital when he began crying uncontrollably and shouting: "Jesus is here, Jesus is here!" Judith rushed to him but didn't make it past the foot of the bed.

In a hushed voice she recounts her experience: "Suddenly I couldn't move...the glory of God just fell on us and I ended up on my knees crying and praising Jesus and then I fell asleep."

She woke up the next morning to the sound of a nurse in a panic. Jason was not in his bed. Then the bathroom door opened and Jason, who had removed all his tubes, walked into the room after having a shower. He was discharged three days later by a surgeon, incredulous that he could get out of bed, let alone walk.

Both Judith and Jason are now ordained pastors and continue with their humanitarian work.

"God gave me a promise many years ago from Joel 2: 25-26 that He would restore the years the locusts had eaten," Judith says beaming. "And He has. He is faithful. All glory to Him."



# The smartest move this chess champ ever made

BY HARRIET COOMBE

Wesley So started playing chess for fun when he was a young child living in the Philippines. Now 27, he is the current United States chess champion and was ranked second in the world in 2017.

The three-time Filipino Chess Champion started playing chess when he was six or seven. In an article he wrote for *Christianity Today* he says at first he considered it a fun game that he could win but as he

got older, he kept winning and he started representing the Philippines in regional tournaments.

"But to become an elite chess player, you need to invest in your development, and I could never afford to hire a coach or secure serious training," Wesley explains. "I used to study from newspaper clippings because my family could not afford real books."

When he was about 16, he felt discouraged because although he knew he was a gifted chess player, he couldn't see the point in developing his skill.

"It felt like there was no realistic hope of pursuing a career as a chess professional," Wesley remembers. "Out of frustration, I stopped studying and my player rating began to slide."

When he was 18, a small American university invited him to play on its chess team and he decided to accept. He thought he could at least get a degree to prepare him for the future.

Wesley met a Christian family in America, who encouraged him to completely focus on chess in an aim to fulfil his dream of making it a full-time career. The following year he left the university and moved in with this family.

Living in this family's house, he noticed their faith was different to his. As a child, Wesley grew up believing he needed to be a good person so God would give him certain blessings, like food and jobs.

"But this confused me, because it seemed like the bad people received more than the good people," he explains. "I knew of many famous crooks who went to church, wore religious symbols, and got tattoos of Jesus or a crucifix—and they were pretty rich."

However, he decided to play it safe. "I would recite the right words, and I would make the sign of the cross at the right time," Wesley says. "But I never felt connected to God in any meaningful way. In fact, I was mostly afraid he would send me to hell. Deep down, the whole thing made no sense."

He started attending church with

his foster family and reading the Bible they gave him.

"Whenever I had questions I would ask my foster parents and their answers were always simple and made good sense," Wesley says. "They taught me how to find answers in the Bible myself and use it to check what others said. The Bible was the final authority, deeper and wiser than the internet and more truthful than any of my friends."

Wesley says his foster family referred to Christianity as the "thinking man's religion" and encouraged him to ask questions, search for answers and wrestle with what he discovered.

"All the while, I would observe how they lived their lives, taking note of how they spent their time and money," Wesley recalls. "They worked hard, they always went

## CHRISTIANITY IS THE "THINKING MAN'S RELIGION"

the extra mile to help others and they made every effort to resist immorality."

Wesley wanted the simple, contented, God-fearing life they had and he accepted Jesus as his personal Lord and Saviour.

"People in the chess world sometimes want to know whether I think God makes me win matches," Wesley says. "Yes. And sometimes He makes me lose them too."

"He is the God of chess and, more importantly, the God of everything. Win or lose, I give Him the glory. Of course, it's hard when I don't get what I want, the way it is for any child whose father says no. But even when I don't understand God's ways, I'm confident that His vision is much bigger than my own."

"Instead of worrying about the future, I try to focus on the work God has put before me. Right now it's chess, so I study it diligently and play it as well as possible. Will I rise to become the World Champion one day? Only God knows for sure. In the meantime, I know that He is a generous and loving father, always showering me with more blessings than I could possibly deserve. I content myself with playing one match at a time and practicing gratitude for my daily bread."

# Imagine a world without theft

• From page 1

It is almost impossible to get one's head around a world like that isn't it? Theft is just accepted as part of daily life. Let's be honest: do you steal? Have you ever shoplifted something, taken hotel supplies from the room, filched a colleague's pen or stolen a tool at work? For some people taking other's stuff is justified as okay because "they won't even notice" or "I'm owed it".

Now consider this - "Thou shalt not steal" is just one of ten rules for life that God told people to live by! If we cannot even really imagine what a world without theft would be like, let alone live it out ourselves, how on Earth could we think that we could somehow earn our way into heaven or have our good outweigh our bad?

The good news is that we don't have to be good enough for heaven. One of Jesus' closest friends was a former tax collector, who basically stole for a living! We are made right with God through believing that Jesus' death on the cross, as an innocent sacrifice, paid our debt, covered our multitude of sins and clothed us with a holiness that we could never ever come close to deserving.

If we accept that, and ask God to forgive and change us, one day we will live with Jesus in a world without theft - or lying, cheating, murder, sorrow or darkness. Now try to imagine that!!

## Coffee Break

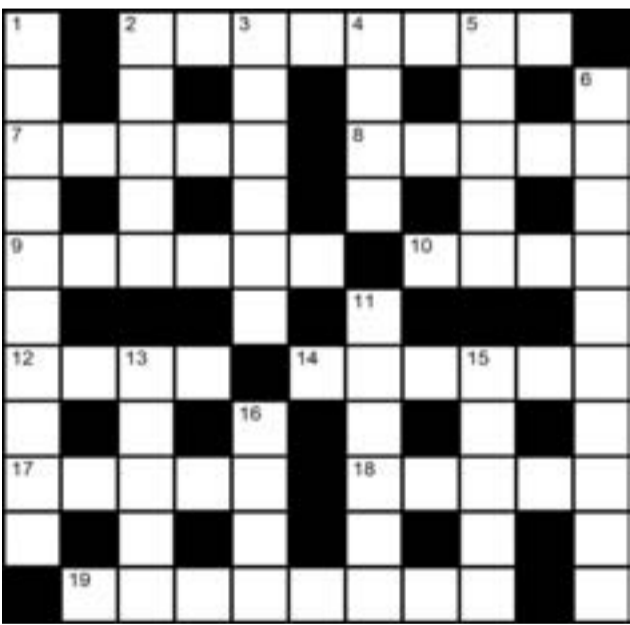
CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

### ACROSS

- 2 Avoid discussing (a topic)
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_ the Elder
- 8 Teapot part
- 9 Deodorant type (4-2)
- 10 Shade of blue
- 12 Pre-1991 empire
- 14 Louvre, for one
- 17 Banish
- 18 Bridge support
- 19 Cattle out of control

### DOWN

- 1 Outgoing flights
- 2 Expertise
- 3 Fungal problem for wood (3-3)
- 4 Shoulder-to-hip accessory
- 5 Traditional piano key wood
- 6 Building rock craftsman
- 11 Gloss, sheen
- 13 Go around
- 15 Evade, escape
- 16 Period



SOLUTIONS PAGE 11



		4	5		8		
	3			2		1	
7				9		5	4
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8							7
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## GOOD THINGS TAKE TIME

BY KARL FAASE

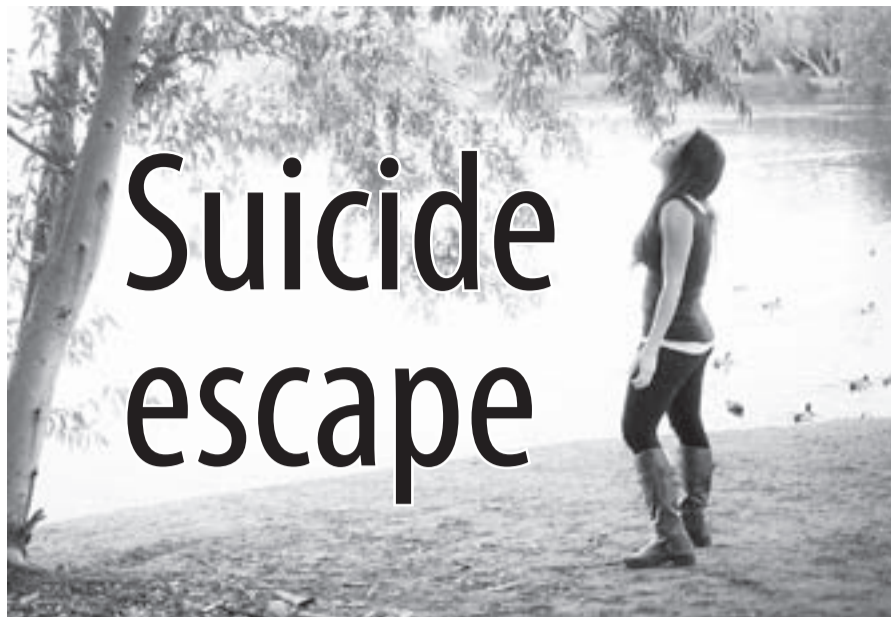
WE live in such an instant society. We stand in front of microwaves wondering what's taking so long. We hate lines and waiting on the phone drives us nuts!

Right now, waiting for the coronavirus crisis to be over is testing all of our patience.

But the one time I actually appreciate waiting is for a good coffee. We all know that we can make instant coffee; boil the kettle, throw in the instant granules and there it is - coffee. But there is something special, either in cafes or at home, about waiting for great coffee. Ah! Standing in the queue while the aroma of fresh coffee wafts over us. We appreciate the wait, as we know the result is well worth it.

This is a small but significant reminder that the things in life that really matter, take time; growing deep relationships, crafting mature character in our lives and the growth of personal faith.

God is slowly and assuredly modelling and building us. Don't give up too soon. Allow God time to build your faith. It's like great coffee, worth the wait!



# Suicide escape

BY AINSLEY GAEBLER

**S**arah Bryant was lying on the floor next to a suicide note she had written just before taking 50 pills in an attempt to end her life. She woke up 24 hours later unscathed.

"Why won't you just let me die?" she screamed angrily at the ceiling, directing her words at God.

Her heart was filled with so much pain and suffering. She just wanted to escape it all.

And no wonder. Sarah's difficulties began when she was only six, when her schizophrenic mother committed suicide.

"On Valentine's Day, my mum told me she loved me then got into her car and left. After she died, I remember believing she committed suicide because I was a bad kid."

Fear, rejection, and abandonment clouded young Sarah's life. Even though she had heard about God from her father, she could not bring herself to learn more about Him. She kept asking herself; why would a good, perfect God, allow such horrible things to happen?

Sarah's world was rocked once more two years later when her older sister was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a fatal children's cancer. "I remember we were in the hospital every day," she says. "I would spend all my spare time in that hospital, before school and after school."

When Sarah turned 13, with her sister still battling the deadly disease, Sarah turned to drugs as a way of escape. Her sister joined her and they both became "very severe drug addicts".

Sarah's sister died on Halloween in the year 2000. She was 22. "It completely shocked me," Sarah says. "Any feelings I had towards God turned into pure anger. Seven months after her death, I overdosed and ended up in rehab."

After some time at the rehab centre, Sarah was given a day pass and went for a drive with another girl. "I ended up taking 16 pills without her knowing," Sarah admits. "As we were driving back to the centre, I had a seizure and passed out in the driver's seat."

Miraculously, no one was hurt as the girl was able to steer Sarah's car off the road. "If she had not been in that car with me, I would've died," Sarah says. "When I woke up, I wondered: Why would God choose to save me? Why did everyone else die but me?"

Sarah's close call with death made her realise she was not right with God. She remembered the Bible stories her father used to tell her. "My heart softened

towards Him as I realised I had not been able to achieve hope, peace, or joy through drugs. God clearly was not going to let me die. I began to desire Him, want to talk to Him, know who He was, and have communication with Him."

Sarah stayed sober for five years and worked on her relationship with God. Then, she met a guy and the relationship turned sour very quickly.

"I fell hard for him; I thought this is the guy I'm going to marry," she recalls with a grimace. "Little did I know he was going to take me back to a place I was finally getting out of."

He became abusive and controlling and Sarah got back on drugs worse than she had been before. "It was something that I felt a bondage to," she says. "I couldn't get away from it. I hated myself so much

it made sense that I was being hated by a man too. The abuse became so bad I tried to take my life."

She wrote her suicide note and swallowed the 50 pills. Nothing happened. "I didn't see it then, but I can look back and see that God had a plan for my life," she smiles. "He was still pursuing my heart."

In the years that followed, Sarah continued to suffer from severe depression but she never tried to take her life again.

Sarah's family had to make her disappear so she could escape from the toxic relationship. While she was in hiding, she became sober and decided that she wanted to become a Christian.

During those two weeks, Sarah met a girl who was attending a Bible school. Sarah could not explain it but she felt that she had to go to this school too. While she was there, she started going to church and between the two, learned of Jesus' sacrifice in order to save her from her sins.

"He completely delivered me!" she exclaims. "My life was turned upside down by God's power and restoration. I experienced His love. I realised God was not just for people in the Bible, but for me too."

"God set me free from suicidal depression, drug addiction, and an abusive relationship. He also healed the emotional pain and grief that I experienced from the death of my sister and mother. God does heal the broken hearted, and I am an example of His tender kindness and care."

Today Sarah helps other broken women who need Jesus. "I have been able to use my story to help others," she says. "God is using my story now for good and I love to be able to be a part of it and watch what He is doing."

Check out Sarah's website at <https://joyandhope restored.org>.



Sarah Bryant

# Brain cancer miraculously beaten

**I**t began in 2004 with nosebleeds. When it progressed to vomiting, blinding headaches and fainting spells, Jason Ong knew something was very wrong.

Doctors confirmed his worst fears. Only 31 and three years into his marriage, Jason was told he had a rare form of brain cancer. There are only about 200 cases worldwide.

There was no cure. Jason was told he had six months to live. That was 17 years ago. Today, while he bears the scars from several surgeries, Jason is alive and well - a miracle he thanks God for every day of his life.

Jason didn't always believe in God. Just the opposite - his youth in Singapore was so pockmarked by smoking, drinking and fighting, his family predicted jail or an early death.

Then his father fell terminally ill. As he sat by his deathbed, Jason called on the names of all the gods he could think of. Nothing happened. Somehow he remembered one other God - the one he had learned about in kindergarten.

"I called on Jesus," says Jason. "And suddenly my father's eyes opened. I was amazed. So I held his hand and told him, 'Pa, you are going to meet somebody in white and He will stretch out His hand to you; take it and follow Him and you will be safe'."

"After I said that, he closed his eyes and he left. I have no idea how I knew to say all that but in hindsight I know it was the Holy Spirit (the unseen presence of God). That was the point I said to Jesus, 'Now that You have saved my dad, I owe You my life' - and I gave my life to Him."

Jason had his first surgery in 2004. The tumour was so big surgeons had to remove large swathes of tissue, including his eardrum, leaving him completely deaf in that ear. But they couldn't get all the tumour and they told him it would continue to grow and kill him within a year.

Already involved in mission work, Jason ramped up his commitment. He and his wife Judith opened a restaurant in Singapore and funnelled its profits into feeding programs for the needy in the Philippines, Indonesia and Pakistan.

"I wanted to make whatever little time I had left count for Jesus," notes Jason. He outlived the doctors' prognosis, but in 2007 had a relapse. The tumour was growing aggressively. An operation this time would render him unable to swallow, talk, see or move his left side.

He refused surgery - "If I can't speak, I can't share the gospel, so what's the point?" he reasoned - and was informed the tumour would grow so big it would push his brain out of his skull through the orifices on his face. "You will collapse and die," the doctor said.

But Jason stuck to his guns. He and Judith continued to work and travel to third world countries sharing food and the gospel. They encouraged each other through the pain and the grief that God was faithful and to continue to trust Him.

"I was very specific never to twist God's arm, to say, 'You must heal me'," Jason explains. "Instead I prayed 'If You heal me, hallelujah, if You don't, also hallelujah. If I have to die, you are still Jesus. Nothing changes.'"

"I told Judith not to be angry with God, to continue serving, to give thanks even if I die."

In 2013, things took an unexpected turn. A different doctor sent him for one more scan, which



Jason in hospital

showed the tumour was now the size of two eggs - half of it inside his brain, the other half outside.

"Technically," the astounded surgeon said, "your brain should have been pushed out of the cranial cavity already. You should be in a coma. But you're here talking to me. That in itself is a miracle."

He promised he could operate without the side effects the other surgeon had warned against. Three days later, Jason had the operation. When he woke up he couldn't see and could barely breathe. He was in such pain he finally gave up. Calling Judith to his side, he asked her to let him die, telling her: "I'm so tired; I just want to go home."

That was a Saturday afternoon. At midnight, Judith woke up to the sound of her husband crying out, "Jesus is here, Jesus is here!" and trembling so hard his bed shook.

Jason describes the encounter: "I did not see His figure but His presence was so strong. You don't know what holiness is until you experience the presence of the Lord. Words cannot describe it. It's so awesome. You feel His love but you also feel small and unworthy."

Feeling a hand touch him, he heard Jesus say to him, "I am moved by the tears of your wife. I will heal you." Jason breathed in a deep breath, whispered "Thank You Jesus", and fell asleep.

When he woke up the next morning he realised he could see, he could breathe and he could walk. There was no pain. Against all odds, he was discharged the next day.

There is still a little of the tumour left in Jason's brain but no more of the debilitating symptoms. "Praise the Lord, He has healed me," the restaurateur says with a smile.

He and Judith are continuing with their feeding programs.

"Scripture says: 'to live is Christ, to die is gain'. I know my life is not my own and I have chosen to live this life to be a blessing to others."

His experience with cancer has given Jason a sober message: "When I minister to the sick, I tell them, 'If Jesus heals you, hallelujah. If He doesn't, you must be ready to meet Him.'" •

**IF I HAVE TO DIE, YOU ARE STILL JESUS.**



Jason Ong

# Freed from an addictive past

BY JANICE TEO

Oliver Leach took a deep breath. The 16-year-old was high and desperate. Adjusting the grisly Halloween mask on his face, the teen gripped a knife in one hand and a replica pistol in the other.

Frantic for a fix, he forced his way into the matron's office at one of Perth's elite boys' schools. He knew she kept dexamphetamine there because he had been a student until a month before, when he was expelled.

The inexperienced criminal (he left a shirt with his name sewn into the collar at the scene) was quickly caught by police. Remand followed but did not help. Instead, he progressed to bombing an ex-girlfriend's apartment with a molotov cocktail and ended up getting beaten and stabbed in revenge.

It wasn't supposed to be this way. Born in Norfolk, England, Oliver's family moved to Oman in the Middle East when he was three.

Their life read like a fairy tale. Safaris in Kenya, skiing holidays in Switzerland. But beneath the glitter, the diamond life was just well-polished gravel.

He had a hashish-addicted father whose work took him away from the family and a mother who used cigarettes and alcohol to numb the loneliness and stress.

Then when he was six, a houseboy employed by his family began sexually molesting him. The abuse went on for a year until it was discovered and the houseboy was sacked.

Perhaps Oliver could have been spared the wreckage of his adult life if he had been given the proper treatment after this, but it was not addressed till he was 13, when he was almost raped by a rugby player. Counsellors were arranged, but by then unforgiveness, anger and shame had taken root.

"The early abuse opened the floodgates to the world of sex and I soon became overly sexual," he tells *Challenge News*. "Within two years I began experimenting with someone very close to me."

The family moved to Australia when Oliver was about 10. The Year 4 student immediately became a target for bullies. Craving acceptance, he brought pictures of his father in front of cannabis crops to school to gain some street cred.

His father became aware of this,

and possibly in an attempt to scare him, gave his son three massive doses of cannabis and allowed him to collapse, green to the gills, retching uncontrollably.

Unfortunately it did not deter Oliver, who moved from cannabis to acid. At 17, he got his first taste of methamphetamines and was instantly hooked.

"One day I chased my parents around the home with a replica gun, knife and star picket," he says. "I smashed my way in and assaulted my dad."

Arrested and thrown into prison, Oliver was sent to several rehabilitation centres but said none helped.

"I had been diagnosed with ADHD and depression and I felt like they just gave me other drugs to replace the illegal ones. The bottom line is I was still being pumped full of drugs," he says. "There was something

missing, something spiritual."

Oliver lurched from one disaster to another. "I knew the way I was living I would die an early death, but I was powerless to change," he says.

"My parents tried to help, but they actually enabled the bad behaviour because they would pay my bills and bail me out of trouble instead of letting me face the consequences."

His breaking point came when he caught his girlfriend cheating with his best friend. Oliver decided it was time to end his own wretched life.

But, in what he now says was a moment of divine intervention, help appeared. "Whether you believe in God or not, I firmly believe He sent an angel to me in my darkest hour

in the form of a good friend I had not seen in years.

"This friend of mine knew about Shalom House and told me to call them. After 22 years of meaningless relationships that revolved around sex and drugs I was finally brought to my knees and I made the call that would mark the first day of the rest of my new life."

Shalom House is a residential rehabilitation centre in Perth. Founded by Peter Lyndon-James, himself a former ice addict and criminal, it runs what is reputed to be Australia's 'strictest rehabilitation regimen'.

Using tough love and the 12-step program, its residents are expected to buckle down or get booted out. It is also firmly Christian. And this aspect is what Oliver says finally helped him to turn his life around.

Oliver entered Shalom House in early 2020. Daily devotionals, where there is Bible reading and prayer, are compulsory, as is going cold turkey and working on the property. Gradually he experienced the love of God and committed his life to Jesus Christ

Today he is free from drugs. His life has been transformed. Relaxed and



Oliver Leach clean and free after getting help at Shalom House. (Inset) his intake photo from when he arrived at Shalom.

good-natured, he has reconciled with his father. Unfortunately, his mother died several years ago of liver failure.

"At Shalom House they dealt with the underlying issues behind my offending behaviour and they led me to God, who replaced the black spots in my life with His grace [undeserved kindness]," he says. "I feel an overwhelming peace and newfound purpose and I owe it all to Jesus."

"None of the specialists helped me to forgive my abusers or myself; but God has helped me do that. I forgive them all."

"When I should have died, God protected me. It's difficult to fully

express how God's love and grace for me has helped me. What I feel is truly beyond words."

One of Oliver's favourite Bible verses is James 1: 2-4: "When troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed you will be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."

Oliver will soon be enrolling in Tafe to pursue a career in mental health-care, as he believes his life's calling is to now help others. •

## Joy in the truth

**Lori Johnson is one of the women touched and changed by Sarah Bryant's influence (story page 3)**

Nineteen-year-old Lori Johnson was all alone and homeless. Her father had disowned her and she had been kicked out of the house. Lies about her self-worth filled her mind and threatened to suffocate her.

She was used to it. Feelings of low self-esteem started at six when she developed an eating disorder she carried into adulthood.

"I was constantly called names as a child and I believed those lies," she says. Lori tried very hard to block these painful memories so now, she confesses, "I've realised that I have very few memories of my childhood."

When Lori was 19, with no guidance or help from any of her family members, she decided to give her life to Jesus and become a Christian. When she told her parents, they became furious, resulting in her being thrown out of home.

Lori admits to struggling to trust God as a young Christian: "It became very difficult for me to believe that God could really, truly love me and that He wouldn't also disown me."

She knew her perspective had to change so she sought help from a Christian therapist who helped her to understand the Bible better and deal with some of her issues.

Lori grew older, got married, and had children, yet she was still struggling with her painful past. "Life was good but there was something wrong," she recalls. "My goal was to just avoid pain at all costs but if you're human you know that's just not possible. In John 10:10, we are told that the thief (Satan) comes to steal, kill, and destroy. I felt like a target for the enemy. My identity was not in Christ, it was in my past."

Then Lori met Christian life coach Sarah Bryant, who became her mentor and encourager.

"Sarah told me how God had taken her out of the past and pain and into the new life. She taught me to wait on the Holy Spirit [meditate on the invisible presence of God] as He revealed those areas in my life where I was still being deceived. But better than that, she taught me how to replace those lies with truth."

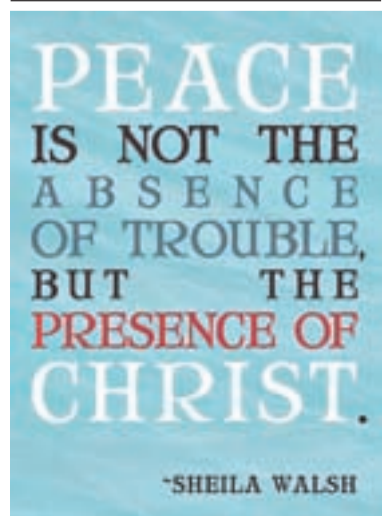


Sarah referred Lori to John 8:32, "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Now it is one of Lori's favourite Bible verses. To her, it is a beautiful truth from Jesus that has set her free from her pain and anxiety.

"A Christian doesn't need to worry about defeating the enemy. The enemy has already been defeated by Jesus," she says, smiling. "But we do need to learn how to walk in that knowledge and to learn how to use the tools we've been given so that we can live a life of joy and freedom in Christ." •

Lori has uploaded her testimony to Sarah Bryant's website, Joy and Hope Restored.

You can find it here: <https://joyandhoperestored.org/video>



# Abused boy finds masculinity scary

BY BENJAMIN LAHOOD

When Daniel Delgado was only 14, a school counsellor persuaded him to change his gender.

"When I was dressing up like a woman, I thought this was going to be the place where I could become something, that my life could matter," Daniel says on a 700 Club video.

Daniel Delgado's confusion started when he was molested at age five by two boys in his neighbourhood in Chicago.

"The feelings that I was experiencing of same-sex attraction were unwanted," he says. "Those feelings were surfacing in my life and I didn't know what to do with them."

His mum was often distant, and his dad and stepdad were harsh disciplinarians who didn't offer compassion to their sensitive son.

"I thought that masculine strength was too scary, and I didn't want to become like them," Daniel says.

So, as he grew older, he inclined towards feminine behaviour and habits.

"When I told my father that I was going to embrace the gay identity, he said; 'Don't bring it around me,'" he remembers.

Life didn't get better for him as expected.

Living outside of Dallas, Texas, he became the target for constant ridicule and bullying.

"I thought that there was no hope for me," he recalls. "Life was too painful, and sometimes it

just seemed like it would be better to be dead than alive."

When Daniel was 16 he suffered a barrage of insults, causing him to hide in his bathroom and plot suicide. Just then, a neighbour visited.

"There was a knock at the door and I heard my neighbour, Patty, telling my mother that I had five minutes to get my shoes on and come to the youth group with her that evening," Daniel remembers.

Patty had felt God tell her to invite Daniel. She had become aware of his condition of being bullied.

Daniel decided to go, unsure of what he would face. He donned his platform shoes and rainbow poncho.

He wasn't bullied in church. Instead, a group of men surrounded him and lovingly prayed for him.

"For the first time in my life, I felt so loved by other men," Daniel says. "And I didn't have to sleep with them in order to get it."

Daniel found acceptance but didn't believe he could shed the same-sex attraction, so he eventually dropped out of church.

"I didn't think that the church was a place for me. I thought that the LGBT community was my home," Daniel says.

He dressed as a woman, put on makeup and called himself Danielle. He began competing in drag queen pageants.

But by 2001, the supposed happiness to be found in the gay lifestyle never materialised.

"I looked back into the mirror and I couldn't recognise myself," he says.

**FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, I FELT SO LOVED BY OTHER MEN**



Daniel Delgado in 2013 (above) and today (below) and dressed as a woman (right and right above).

"And it scared me. I didn't want to hide anymore. I needed to reckon with the reality that I'm a man, not a woman."

He stepped away from pageants and started going back to church one Sunday.

Could God forgive him? he wondered.

Of course, God could forgive him. The Bible says this; *'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'* (1 John 1:9)

At the end of the service, Daniel walked forward to the altar to receive Jesus into his life. The pastor gave him a warm, welcoming handshake.

"I wept on his shoulder and he just continued to say, 'The Father loves you. He loves you. He loves you,'" Daniel remembers. "My heart began to break and I said, 'Jesus, I submit, I surrender to you.'"

Shortly after that, Daniel cut ties with the LGBT community and destroyed every vestige of his former lifestyle.

"I knew that God the Father loved me," he says. "He dropped into my mind this phrase, 'You are not a homosexual.' I've never felt so at home in my skin."

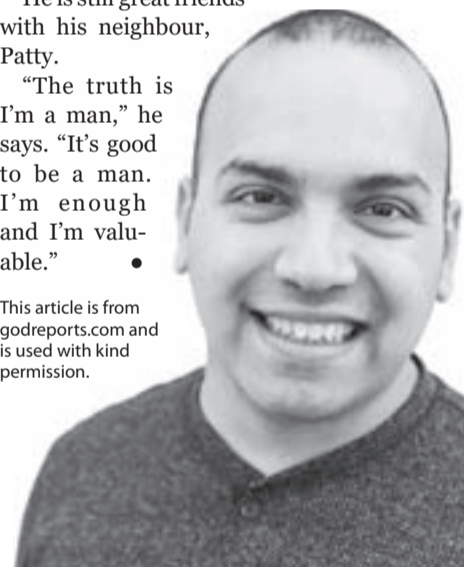
Daniel is now involved with Living Waters Ministries, helping people around the world overcome brokenness through Christ.

He even led his mother to accept Jesus as her Saviour.

He is still great friends with his neighbour, Patty.

"The truth is I'm a man," he says. "It's good to be a man. I'm enough and I'm valuable."

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Daniel Delgado with his neighbour Patty, who helped him meet Jesus.

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## Delivered from drugs & destitution

It's hard to listen to Jo Moir's description of what she was like in 2004. It is a graphic description of what drug addiction can do to a person.

"I was a walking shell, a mere skeleton with a covering of skin," she says. "All I wanted to do was die."

Jo's story, published in the Teen Challenge newsletter, was, as she said, an all-too-familiar one.

"Multiple drug addictions, near death experiences, abuse, alcohol, rave parties, crime, recklessness and homelessness - I was trapped in a cycle of addiction with seemingly no way out."

Things looked hopeless and an early, untimely death seemed inevitable. Then came a surprising turn of events. Jo was recommended to attend the rehabilitation program at Teen Challenge, a Christian residential centre for adults and teens with substance abuse or self-destructive behaviour problems. It changed her life.

"I am incredibly grateful to God for the day I stepped off the bus in Esperance (Western Australia) to begin my journey towards a future and a hope," she shares.

At Teen Challenge Jo experienced a love and care that had been absent from her life. The staff at Teen Challenge were "amazing and caring," she says.

"They loved me, showed me that I was valuable in God's eyes and that I did indeed have hope for a bright future."

"Teen Challenge instilled in me principles that have stood me in good stead for the past 14 years. Those faith-filled, Godly principles have been what have shaped my decisions to this day because they are founded on and resonate loudly with the life-giving truth of the Bible.

"My core value system is Jesus and He has shaped the way I see and serve others.

"My journey has taken me from dirt and destitution to the grace of the pulpit and mission field. Sharing the love of Jesus with others is the greatest privilege on earth."

Today, Jo is happily married and has two young daughters. She counts this as yet another miracle, because as she told Teen Challenge: "My body was so severely ravaged by drugs and abuse I was unable to have children. My daughters are an amazing testimony to the goodness of God."

When she talks about her life today, it is in startlingly different terms. "My life is full of happiness, joy and laughter - a far cry from the shadows and shackles of death that stared me down, the depression that engulfed me and the lifestyle of decay that too many times almost took my life."

She said her mission now was to "demonstrate how even the worst of lives and situations can be transformed by the grace of God".

**MY CORE VALUE SYSTEM IS JESUS**



# Coping with Covid ...Coping with Covid ... Coping with Covid... Coping with Covid...

## Be kind

A Canadian woman enlisted the help of two friends to leave handwritten notes around Toronto in high-traffic areas, with positive affirmations on them. The anonymous writers hope their project lets strangers know they're not alone, and encourages more acts of kindness — not just in Toronto, but around the world!



Nine-year-old Daniel Class, from St. Cloud, Florida, wanted to cheer up his neighbours with music during the pandemic, so he learns a new song just about every day and plays piano in his driveway. The sign invites people to stop and listen.

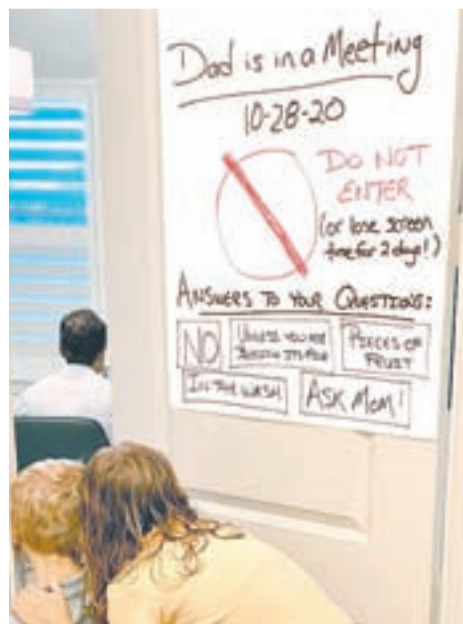


**Vikram Paralkar**  
@VikramParalkar

It's only Quarantine if it's in the Quarante province of France. Otherwise it's just Sparkling Isolation.

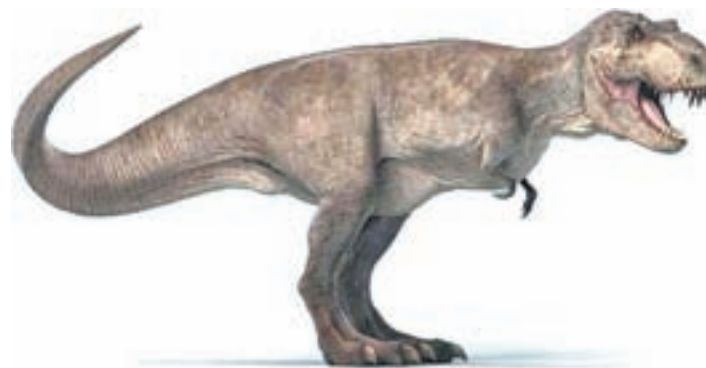


Mask wearing when it gets too much.



Working from home hack

## Couldn't Wash Hands



## Is Now Extinct



## Laugh



## Ponder

# Some masks should go

GREG LAURIE AND JODY BENNETT

IN these days when mask wearing against Covid-19 is a common sight, we are reminded that in fact we all tend to hide behind psychological masks that are just as effective at disguising us.

Jesus warned His followers about pretending to be someone they are really not.

The word He chose to describe it was "hypocrisy," which means "to hide behind a mask." In Greek theatre of that day, actors would hold masks in front of their faces when they were playing a part.

So hypocrisy is trying to be someone you're really not. Jesus was saying, "Don't hide behind a mask. Be real. Don't be a hypocrite."

This is a part of our human nature. We want to be accepted. We want to fit in.

How does hypocrisy spread in our lives? Jesus likens hypocrisy to leaven.

Leaven is yeast, which is a rising agent. In the Bible, it is always symbolic of evil. It is something that works in secret with penetrating power, starting small and working its way through our lives.

That is why we must carefully guard against it. Little things inevitably lead to big things. Often we will rationalise a sinful act, telling ourselves it's just one time. But that one thing ultimately leads to other things. Small lies lead to big lies, and one deception to another.

Case in point: King David. I seriously doubt that when he looked lustfully at the beautiful Bathsheba, he realised it would lead to adultery, murder, his baby's death and ultimately scandal for his kingdom. But that is exactly what happened. A small thing became a big thing.

Hypocrisy is futile and foolish, and Jesus explained why: "For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops" (Luke 12:2-3 NKJV).

Simply put, there are no secrets with God. The truth will out. Whatever you try to hide will surface one day.

The remedy for hypocrisy is to forget about what people say and do and instead fear God alone. Psalm 111:10 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom..." (NKJV).

The Bible teaches that a day is coming when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. It all will become known.

But here's the good news: If you have been living a God-honouring life, then that will be acknowledged too. Whatever you have been doing will ultimately break ground one day, and you will have cultivated a crop of it. You'll reap what you have sown (see Galatians 6:8).

Today, can the question be asked of you, like it was at the end of the old *Lone Ranger* shows, "Who was that masked man?" or "Who was that masked woman?"

Fear may cause us to back down on what we believe, especially in the presence of others who don't hold the same views. It might cause us to put on a mask, so to speak.

But remember what Jesus said. Be real. And don't be a hypocrite.

## Be creative



Stuck-at-home food writer Angela Hansberger went from putting out walnuts to crafting teeny-tiny tacos, milkshakes, and other foods safe for chipmunks. As you can see, her tiny restaurant got pretty elaborate!

# Genesis convinces scientist

**Dr Samuel Gan is the senior principal investigator of the Antibody & Product Development Lab in Singapore, researching antibody engineering, allergies, HIV drug resistance, scientific phone apps, and psychology.**

Singaporean scientist Doctor Samuel Gan has a string of qualifications as long as your arm.

Science, with its rules and logic, gave him a sense of order and in an uncertain world, the place to go to for answers.

He was raised attending Sunday school. For some time he struggled to reconcile his faith, particularly the Biblical account of creation in the book of Genesis, with his education. He had a kind of hybrid idea where God sped up directed evolution to create the world.

"My mind was one of my biggest struggles even though I'd always believed in intelligent design," he shared in a testimony at a church in Singapore. "Life around us clearly didn't happen by itself. There was obviously a designer.

"But I never took the Bible seriously word for word... I always sat on the fence, so because my understanding of creation was warped, my Christian view was also warped. No serious scientist could believe that the complexity, order, and time-sensitive inter-relationships of living things came about by chance," he says. "However, conventional theistic evolution ('God used evolution over billions of years') was way too slow. I was confused."

In 2014, he attended a workshop by

Dr Carl Wieland, then the Managing Director of Creation Ministries International (Australia), who showed the classic slide of 'Eden on bones' (see graphic below). The simple cartoon shows the Garden of Eden built on the secular interpretation of the fossil record, which says that millions of years of death and struggle brought man into existence.

This challenged Samuel and helped him align his beliefs with God's Word [the Bible]. That year he took a stand, moved to a church that taught six-day creation and enrolled in a Bible college. This turned out to be far more important to him than all his secular education.

"I'm a scientist with a multi-disciplinary background and it turns out the only religion that made sense was Christianity," he declares. "I testify there is no clash between any of these disciplines

and the Bible. In fact, the Bible is the foundation and the truth. It is correct in all things, about all matters. God cannot be wrong."

As a biologist, Samuel knows firsthand that evolution is not necessary for science to progress.

"[Evolution] has thrown up so many false leads that have prevented progress. For example, in our HIV mutations work, we found that even without obvious selection pressures,

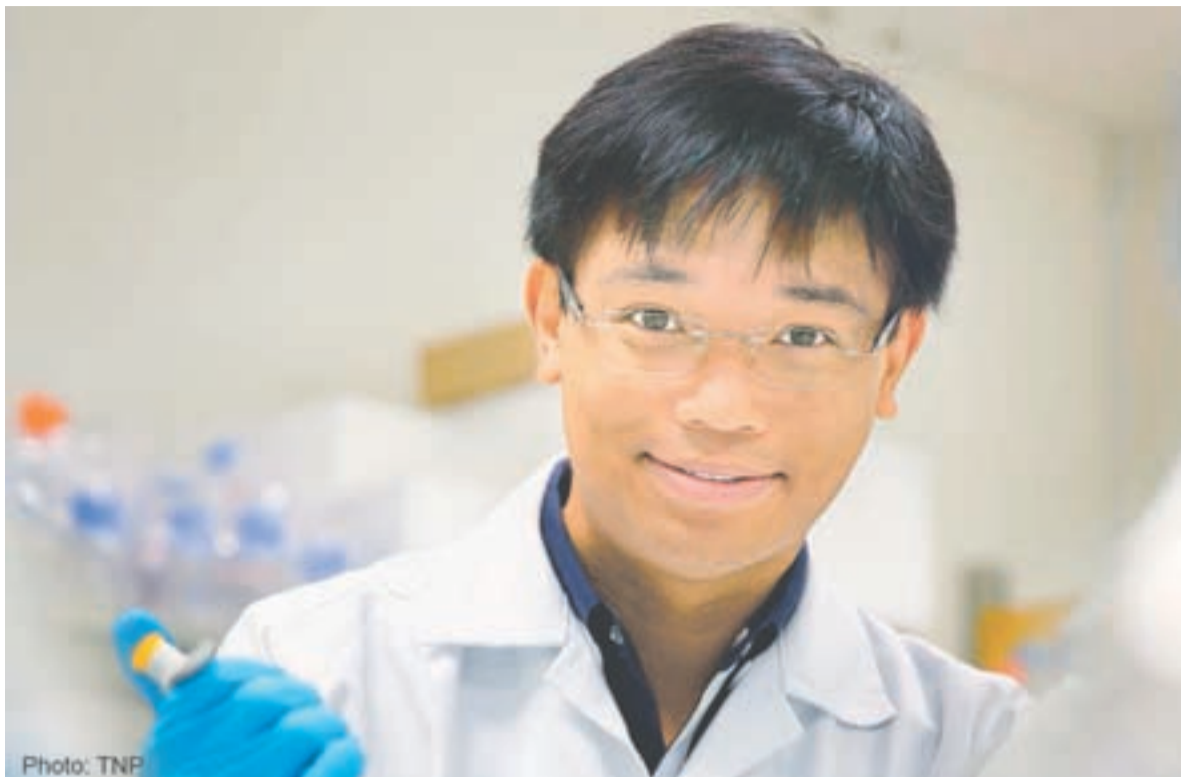


Photo: TNP

HIV drug resistance mutations are not random.

"Such knowledge can help guide us to knowing the limits of the virus resistance mechanisms and assist in the pre-emptive designing of new drugs. But by working on a premise of anything being possible left to chance, there would be no limits set in the design.

"So, rather than being 'active' in drug design, they become 'passive', waiting for the next drug resistance to emerge before designing drugs."

As to the claim that evolution explains the diversity of life via mutations and natural selection, Samuel says his investigations into HIV show that "while mutations and natural selection have a role in generating some diversity, the diversity is at the micro-level—modifying existing features, not generating any new functions.

"Furthermore, it is mostly detrimental to the virus's fitness. For evolution to explain the diversity of life would entail impossible chance events that would never happen—even with the secular 14-billion-year timeline.

"Nobody has been able to show any monkey-like creature turning into a human being or any change in kind."

He maintains the church's duty is to uphold and proclaim this message to a lost, blind world. "As a scientist bought by the precious blood of Christ, I have a Christian duty to show the world (especially scientists), the inerrancy of the Bible.

"The Genesis accounts of Creation and the Fall are foundational to the Gospel. Preaching only of Christ dying on the cross for the sins of the world is like sending people right into the climax of a movie without providing the circumstances that led to that point.

"But if we just teach the history of creation, many dismiss it due to the false science of evolution. Today many theologians/local churches incorrectly teach or compromise

biblical creation, many wrongly indicating that a Christian just needs to know the New Testament without acknowledging much of the Old Testament.

"If we restrict the Bible to being just spiritual, allegorising everything else, then we fail to live every aspect of our lives in accordance with the Word of God."

Samuel acknowledges: "The foolishness I had in my younger days would have been avoided had I had more of the wisdom of God. The evolution confusion, the struggles, all came from the lack of knowledge of God's Word. It is wise to get godly wisdom as early as possible.

"When you have famous theologians who advocate for God using evolution to create, you are in effect

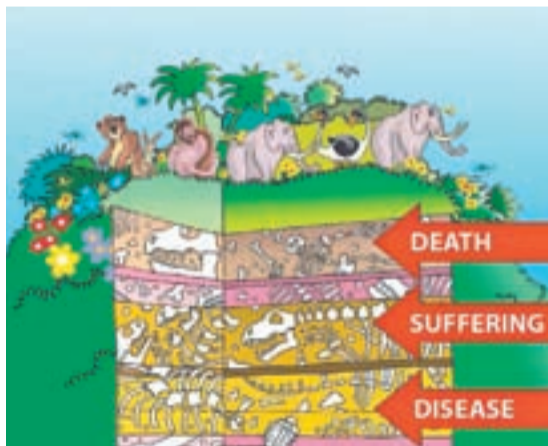
undermining God's word."

Dr Gan's testimony demonstrates that believing in biblical creation is clearly no hindrance to a high level of achievement in science. Rather, it is a great advantage.

## LIFE AROUND US CLEARLY DIDN'T HAPPEN BY ITSELF



## ATHEIST LOGIC



*Dr Samuel Gan is also the founder and Managing Director of APD SKEG Pte Ltd, a startup that produces e-publications, workshops, and mobile apps for science. He is an adjunct lecturer at the Singapore University of Social Sciences and at Republic Polytechnic, and an adjunct associate professor at the Singapore campus of James Cook University. He has a B.Sc. (Hons) in molecular cell biology, a B.Sc. (Hons) in psychology, an M.Sc. (merit) in structural biology, and a Ph.D. in allergy studies. He has certificates in biblical studies and religious knowledge, and is also an associate of King's College, London. He is currently pursuing a diploma in theology from London Reformed Baptist Seminary and also attends Far Eastern Bible College, Gethsemane Bible Institute, and Chin Lien Bible Seminary as an audit student.*

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# BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

## DON'T TRY TO BE A MIND READER

BY ROB FURLONG

WE have been talking this year about ways in which we can improve the quality of our relationships by learning and practicing some new skills.

This month, I want to talk about how we can avoid the damage done to our relationships when we make assumptions.

Carole Mayhall, co-author with her husband, Jack, of *Marriage Takes more than Love*, recounts a humorous story from their own experience, which highlights the danger of making assumptions about people.

“One evening Jack and I were looking at a full, lovely moon. It was an incredibly beautiful evening, and I said, “Isn’t that a beautiful moon?”

What was I really saying? Jack could see the moon. I certainly wasn’t pointing it out to him. What I was really saying was this, “This beautiful evening with that full moon makes me feel very romantic!”

When Jack answered, “Yes, it is bright enough to shoot a golf ball by,” he grinned very quickly so I knew he was kidding, or I would have dissolved into tears. We had been married long enough by that time for him to pick up on my feeling and to respond to it.”

Not every situation like this ends so well. Too often people in relationships hear, observe or experience something they do not fully understand, but instead of checking out the facts, they assume they think they know what is going on, only to

cause much harm to themselves and the other person.

In his course on growing emotionally healthy relationships, Peter Scazzero warns about how damaging unchecked assumptions are to relationships:

“The ninth commandment reads: *‘You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour’* (Exodus 20:16).

“Every time we make an assumption about someone who has hurt or disappointed us, without confirming it, we believe a lie about this person in our head. Because we have not checked it out with him or her, it is very possible that we are believing something untrue.

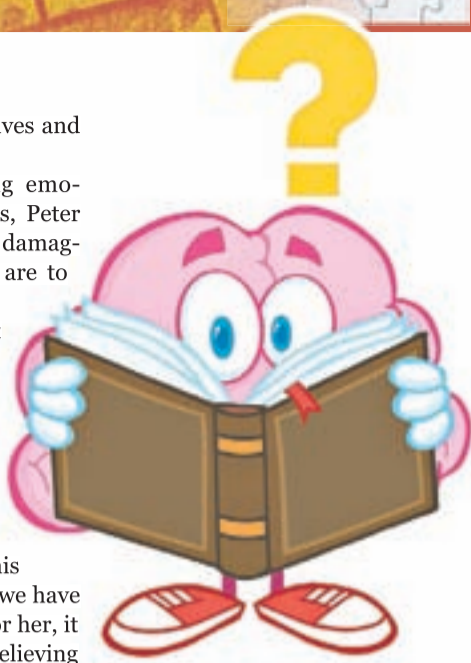
“It is also likely that we will pass that false assumption around to others. When we leave reality for a mental creation of our own doing (hidden assumptions), we create a counterfeit world.

“When we do this, it can properly be said that we exclude God from our lives because God does not exist outside of reality and truth. In doing so we wreck relationships by creating endless confusion and conflict.

“The Bible has much to say about not taking on the role of judge to others (Matthew 7:1–5). The application of a simple skill—Stop Mind Reading—holds within it the key to preventing large-scale misunderstandings in your friendships, family, workplace, and church. This skill provides practical help for loving others well by eliminating untold numbers of conflicts in our relationships.”

Thankfully, there are some very simple steps we can take to break the habit of making false assumptions as well as protecting us from them in the future.

Scazzero suggests the following:



- **Never assume you know what the other person is thinking or feeling.** I think this is the most difficult step of all because we are all so prone to assuming we know what the other person is thinking. Time and time again I have fallen into this trap myself, only to discover later how wrong I was!

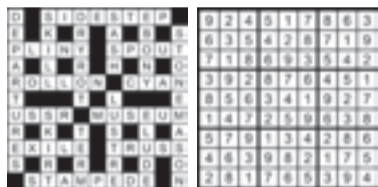
- Instead of assuming, simply ask the person this first question: “Can I check out an assumption I have?”

- If the person agrees then ask, “I think that you think...is that correct?” or “I am wondering...is that correct?”

It is that simple!

Why not try this out over the next month? You could do so by applying it to a situation that may arise in any of your relationships or to a recent conversation you have had with someone which could have gone better.

Relationships flourish when both people accept that they cannot read each other’s mind!



## How can I become a Christian?

**Anyone can gain the eternal life offered though Jesus Christ**

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

**OUR PROBLEM:** Separation from God  
“Everyone has sinned. Nobody is good enough because God’s standards are perfect” (Romans 3:23)

ADMIT

**GOD’S REMEDY / SOLUTION:** Jesus died on the cross  
“God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8)

BELIEVE

**OUR RESPONSE:** Trust Jesus by receiving Him  
“To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12)

COMMIT

Here is an example of how you can pray.

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

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

**AS A NEXT STEP :**

**If you prayed the above prayer, tick this box**



I have prayed this prayer.

- Please send me:
- Bible
  - Some ‘starting off’ literature
  - Information on a helpful church

**If you have NOT prayed the prayer at this stage, tick this box**



I would like to think about this.

- Please send me:
- More information as I am inquiring about being a Christian.
  - I have a problem (see attached letter)

\* Please tick and write clearly \*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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## Want to explore more?

Here are some **free**, helpful, Christian online resources:

Online Bible - <b>Olive Tree app</b> (we recommend that you start with an easy-to-read version like the ESV)	
Audio Bible - <b>Bible.is app</b> , or <b>Youversion Bible app</b>	
Christian radio station - <b>CBN radio app</b> (different channels for all genres of music)	
Christian podcasts and sermons - <b>Edifi app</b>	
Christian movies - <b>New Faith Network app</b> (7-day free trial)	
Daily thoughts and inspiration - <b>Our Daily Bread app</b>	
Advice on specific issues, Bible reading plans and studies for new believers - <b>Youversion Bible app</b> .	
The Bible explained with visual aides - <b>the Bible Project on YouTube</b> .	
<b>Alpha Film Series on Youtube</b> - an online introduction to Christianity.	
For kids - <b>Superbook Kids Bible, videos and games app</b>	
Comic book Bible online- <b>goodandevilbook.com</b>	
More inspiring faith stories - <b>back issues of Challenge News at challengenews.online</b>	

## Lessons from a sausage dog (Part 13)

BY JODY BENNETT

AS I was saying goodbye to my husband the other morning, the dog shot out of the door and cornered a green parrot (locally known as a 28) under the bushes, badly injuring it. After initially trying to save the poor bird, I realised it was past help and I let Carrie finish the job rather than have the parrot suffer indefinitely.

My dachshund not only killed the bird, she ate the whole thing, head, feet, feathers and all, apart from about six wing feathers.

I was shocked! Here is my little, cute lap dog behaving like a wild animal. My pet that eats titbits from my hand was unceremoniously ripping the head off a bird and chewing enthusiastically on its innards!



It reminded me that all dogs, no matter the breed, are originally descended from wolves. Although we can tame them, teach them tricks and dress them in pink collars, they are, underneath it all, still controlled by primeval impulses.

The same is true for me really. Although I have been a Christian for decades, it doesn’t take much for my “fleshy nature” to surface again. Just the right combination of tiredness, frustration, unmet expectations or low blood sugar, and a harsh word, an expletive, a rush of rage, or some very prideful, judgemental thought gushes up. It is usually quickly followed by shame and remorse, and I pray for forgiveness. However, I am left very much aware that “sin is [ever] crouching at the door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it” (Genesis 4:7) and that I need to constantly submit myself to God and resist the Devil (James 4:7).

We need God’s power and grace daily to fight the temptation to fall back into instinctual patterns of behaviour, and to respond to others with love rather than our own selfishness. Our salvation (rescue from the consequences of our sin) happens instantly when we ask for it, but our sanctification (rescue from the power of sin in our lives) takes a lifetime and is only fully accomplished when we die and our spirits are finally liberated from our flesh and its desires.

Next time I become pleased with my own goodness or judge others harshly, may I remember my sausage dog with a mouth full of feathers, and blush. How easily we can default to our baser nature. There but for the grace of God go I.

Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10:12)



Jeremy Lin #17 of the Toronto Raptors dribbles the ball as Henry Ellenson #13 of the New York Knicks defends during the second half of an NBA game at Scotiabank Arena on March 18, 2019 in Toronto, Canada. (Photo by Vaughn Ridley/Getty Images)



# INJURIES HUMBLE YOU

There was so much excitement about Jeremy Lin's rise to basketball fame and success that a new word was coined to describe it – Linsanity.

Jeremy started his National Basketball Association (NBA) career with his hometown Golden State Warriors in 2010, joining the New York Knicks the following year.

It was during this season that he led a winning turnaround for the team and Linsanity was born.

He helped the Knicks make the 2012 playoffs and he was at the top of his game, being named as one of *The Time's* 100 most influential people in the world.

He also won the ESPY Award for the Breakthrough Athlete of the Year.

The 33-year-old is one of only a few Asian Americans to play in the NBA and the first to win an NBA championship.

After playing with several teams, he suffered injuries later in his career, eventually leaving the NBA in 2019 and signing with the Beijing Ducks in the Chinese Basketball Association.

Jeremy writes in a blog post on his website, "There are few things more humbling for an athlete than an injury.

"They are a reminder that as much as we would like to be, we are not in control of our lives and careers...

The reality is that even when we plan for things to go a certain way, sometimes God has other plans."

He writes that sometimes he feels defeated and wants to yell at God in frustration.

But he has been here before.

"I've faced lows and seen how God has led me out of them," he explains.

"I'm quicker to gain perspective and remember His sovereignty and ability to turn my setbacks into life lessons and opportunities."

Sharing his story in 2011, Jeremy said he attended church weekly as a child but it didn't really make sense to him. He was a class clown and a bully and would make his Sunday school teachers cry.

It wasn't until he was in high school that he began to take his faith more seriously. He started attending youth group and was baptised.

Jeremy said that's when everything started to make sense.

He attended Harvard University, where he says he struggled for the first year and a half as he didn't have a faith community. Then he joined the Asian American Christian Fellowship and his faith started to grow again.

After his basketball career started,

Jeremy received a lot of media attention and his life changed overnight.

However, he lost his confidence as a player.

"I put so much stress and pressure on myself, I couldn't sleep at night," he admits.

He wrote in his diary at the time, "This is probably the closest to depression I've been. I lack confidence on the court, I'm not having fun playing basketball anymore... I feel embarrassed and like a failure."

He says he lost his joy, passion and purpose.

"None of the pay checks, the car, the fame, none of the NBA lifestyle, my dream job, dream life, none of that meant anything to me anymore, cos I was in a really tough situation.

"Basketball had consumed my time, my energy, my thoughts; it consumed my happiness. My happiness was dependent on how well I played. If I didn't play well, I wasn't happy.

"And at that point I started to realise, this is becoming an idol for me, it's my number one priority in my life.

"That's when I realised I need to start trusting in God more."

In an online blog post, he writes about a little girl he knew called Ava

## BASKETBALL HAD CONSUMED MY HAPPINESS.



Bright Lee, who passed away after a long battle with cancer.

"My situation is nothing like hers, yet she lived with supernatural joy through adversity," he writes.

"In only eight short years, Ava understood what's taken me so many more years to stubbornly begin to learn.

"We don't get to control what happens to us and we won't always like our circumstances.

"But we can choose to lie down and give up or we can pick ourselves up and try to joyfully make the most of what we've been given.

"Whatever setbacks you are facing right now, I hope we can all be like Ava and choose the latter."

Outside of basketball, Jeremy founded the Jeremy Lin Foundation to love and serve children and youth by providing hope, empowerment and leadership development.

His foundation website states, "Because Jeremy believes God first loved us, we have the capability and opportunity to love others through our actions and giving of our resources."

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Jeremy pledged \$500,000 to serve communities facing hunger and provide protective equipment for healthcare workers.

This year he is playing for the Santa Cruz Warriors in the NBA G-League.

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