

## YOUTUBER'S 'HUMDRUM' HAPPINESS

Cole LaBrant is a social media sensation on his YouTube, Instagram and Twitter accounts where he frequently uploads funny family-friendly videos and shares beautiful pictures of him, his wife, fashion blogger Savannah, and his stepdaughter, Everleigh Rose.

He started filming videos while he was attending a high school in Alabama. His fame began to grow when he and two of his friends made videos together and entered competitions. The trio became known as Dem White Boyz and they soon found considerable popularity on the web. This led to Cole creating his own solo account.

Something that is very common for Cole to openly discuss on his public platforms now is his faith in Jesus Christ.

"Just give me Jesus," he wrote in a recent Twitter post. "Imagine purposely taking a murderers' death sentence in his place or doing the jail time a drug dealer deserves for him. We would never. But that's exactly what Jesus did for us on the cross. He willingly took what we deserved just so that we may

choose Him and be free."

Growing up, Cole lived a simple, happy life in a Christian home with five siblings and two parents.

As a result, he says in a recent YouTube video, that he always

felt that his story of coming to believe in Jesus was bland compared to many others.

"Whenever I hear a testimony about someone whose life was falling apart and they're suicidal or something, I could not personally relate," he says, "But I thought it was such an awesome, powerful testimony. It was great to watch and I was like, 'Man, God delivered that person and that's crazy but me, I have not done any of these things.'"

He felt that somehow his story wasn't worth telling. But God is at



Cole LaBrant with wife Savannah and daughter Everleigh Rose: 'You can still love Jesus while having fun.'

**INSET:** Cole LaBrant at the beach, under his social media handle 'thesupercole' he is a social media influencer with over a million followers on the musical.ly app.

work in the humdrum as well as the dramatic and every story of faith is inspiring in its own way.

Cole admits that he has "struggled

with lying, dishonesty, lust, anger and all these other things. I was not on drugs, I was not addicted to alcohol, but I was far from perfect.

"I cannot remember an exact moment in my life where I was like, 'Now I believe in Jesus,'" Cole shares. "I remember that it was at some point around the ninth or tenth grade where I was like, 'I'm going to start pursuing Jesus instead of pursuing the world.' But there was no determined point in my life where Jesus revealed Himself to me. It was like His goodness has always been there. I think that's just a part of growing up and being blessed with a Christian family in a Christian home."

Cole confesses that, as a young boy, he struggled to find meaning in church. "I did not really like church. It was so boring," he says with a laugh. "You didn't go to church because you loved God or wanted to have your life changed. You just

went to feel good. My church was full of people who did not want to change a single thing in their lives; they just went there to make themselves feel better."

● Turn to page 3

## TAKEN "AS IS," FLAWS AND ALL

BY CAROL ROUND, ASSIST NEWS SERVICE

HAVE you ever purchased a product labeled "as is?" We trust the lowered price of the item we've bought will be worth whatever hidden flaws might emerge later on.

On her 50th wedding anniversary, a woman revealed the secret of her long and happy marriage. She said, "On my wedding day, I decided to make a list of 10 of my husband's faults which, for the sake of the marriage, I would overlook."

One of her guests asked her what some of the faults she chose to overlook were. "To tell you the truth," she replied, "I never did get around to making that list. But whenever my husband did something that made me hopping mad, I would say to myself, 'Lucky for him that's one of the 10!'"

Author Steve Goodier once shared that humorous story and I saved it as a reminder not to expect perfection in another while ignoring my own faults. We're all flawed and imperfect. Wouldn't life be boring if everyone were perfect?

Goodier adds, "Even pottery may be closer to perfection than we humans, if Belleek Pottery in Ireland is any example."

According to Goodier, every finished piece of pottery undergoes a final inspection. To examine for imperfections, each pottery piece is held up to a bright light and examined for flaws. If even the slightest defect is discovered, the cup, plate, vase or sugar bowl is destroyed—smashed to pieces. Blemished items are never sold as "seconds."

● Turn to page 2



SHOT PUTTING  
FOR A PURPOSE



# HOW TO BE AN OPTIMIST

BY ALAN BAILEY

**THERE** are many definitions of optimists and pessimists. I heard that an optimist is a man who, having fallen off a twenty storey building, was heard to say as he passed the window of the second level, "I'm OK so far."

A pessimist is a man who wears a belt and braces too.

So the optimist is the person who looks on the bright side, feeling that better things are up ahead. The pessimist is afraid that things will turn out badly.

## PESSIMISM ON PARADE

Today, you don't have to try hard to find a pessimist. Ask an unemployed person, the person who has just lost money in business or has scrambled out of the wreckage of a broken family. Why, not a news bulletin goes by, not a daily paper printed, without a good dose of gloomy forecasts. Aids, the economy, trends in crime, the environment, the threat of climate change, questions of peace and war. All fit well with the pessimist's outlook.

Finding an optimist is harder, but not impossible. There is still a good deal of confidence that eventually human beings will get it right; that at last we will conquer our problems and enjoy peace and tranquillity. Science will be our saviour. With knowledge we will overcome. Cynicism would suggest that it is mainly politicians looking for votes that speak about the good days up ahead.

## WHERE DO WE FIT?

Little people like you and me must

either be optimists or pessimists as we face the future. But then, we say, it all depends. It depends on how we feel at a given moment. We are a bit like children in a playground. Now back and forth on a swing, or up and down on a see-saw, or going round and round on the roundabout until we don't know what we think.

The best thing to do is to live for today, forgetting the question of whether there is hope for tomorrow.

## GETTING A LOOK AT THE FUTURE

The Bible shows us that optimism and pessimism both have their place. In a clear way, the Bible shows that the human race is heading for a sticky end because the majority are choosing to live without God. It speaks of trouble and destruction of this earth, then judgment by God that lasts forever. That's pessimistic.

But then it speaks of great and glorious things up ahead. It tells of people who are "more than conquerors"; then it tells of people for whom "all things work together for good". It goes on to say that nothing in all the world can separate them from the love of God.

## ON WHICH SIDE?

It all depends on which side you are. For those who shut God out of their lives, who never experience the saving power of Jesus Christ, a pessimistic future is right in line.

For those whose trust is in God who has brought them to Himself in Christ, there is a most optimistic future, better than anything we can imagine.

There is a world of difference in these destinies.



# The challenge of forgiveness

BY RICK LEWERS

**I** have always needed forgiveness and I live in a world surrounded by people who need me to be forgiving. The difficulty is that accepting forgiveness or offering forgiveness can be a real challenge.

Such a challenge came with a morning phone call telling me my friend had been arrested the day before. I was informed that 40 years ago, my friend began hiding what he had done.

I was reminded of those oft quoted words, "be sure your sins will find you out". I don't know why people think they can hide their sins. If people don't catch you out, the guilt will trap you in.

A family member said that he had been living with guilt all those years. I loved my friend and so much of his life was good but past mistakes carried a life time of regret.

It is this that makes forgiveness so precious. I know of few heavier loads than guilt. My guess is that the 40 years made the guilt heavier.

The years certainly heightened the shame. Every one of his successful years of life made his downfall worse, leaving no doubt that a sin quickly dealt with is better than a long hidden secret finally exposed.

An early confession may have been painful but the outcome may have been better than a long-hidden guilt and escalating shame that ended with the second most shocking piece of information - my friend had taken his own life.

It will take me some time to come to terms with my friend's past and his suicide. Amid grief I have been left bewildered, disoriented and suffering all the emotions described in the seminars on suicide I have attended.

I know God has answers to all things but that does not mean He lets us know what the answers are to all things. So, I must live by faith in God amid my confusions and life's imponderables.

My friend let a lot of people down and misrepresented himself and we could resent that forever but forgiveness is better. It is better for those guilty of sinning against us and better for those hurt by such sin.

I note that forgiveness has nothing to do with deservedness. Forgiveness comes as an undeserved grace. It says volumes about the forgiver while for the forgiven they find healing. I have discovered that the most forgiving, merciful and gracious people in life are usually those who have been forgiven themselves.

Forgiveness is costly to give because we must turn aside our anger. We have to lose a little or even a lot of ourselves to offer forgiveness.

It is a humble and generous gift in an age where selfish pride so often resists. But if we can let go of our hurts sufficiently to forgive we might just save a few lives.

Indeed that is what God does. He turns away his anger from us and to offer forgiveness Jesus Christ loses His life in order to give us life.

Forgiveness is not easy to give but equally forgiveness can be hard to accept. It requires a humility that allows oneself to be loved.

You can't give anything for it, it can't be purchased or repaid. The only thing the forgiven can do is be thankful. And to be loved and thankful is a great start for a better life beyond our sins.

Oh, that I had had the opportunity to talk with my friend about forgiveness but may this article prove a life saver for others.

# Jesus in jeans Pt 2: The fancy banquet

BY JODY BENNETT

## A modern rendering of the parable in Matthew 22:1-14

**THERE** was a tycoon who threw a party at a swanky restaurant. He issued an invitation in the local press that "whomsoever" wanted to come were invited. The only proviso was that they had to be dressed properly in the dinner jacket that he provided. His Son had gone out and, at much cost to himself, bought enough jackets to provide for all possible attendees.

Well, the poor beggar man was only too pleased to exchange his raggedy coat for the fancy dinner jacket and go into the party. He was overflowing with gratitude and couldn't believe his good fortune.

Likewise the scantily clad woman who was cold in her fashionable but inadequate outfit, happily traded in her crop top for the lovely jacket and didn't care whether it matched her denim skirt or not. She knew she could never have afforded such a beautifully cut piece of cloth.

The businessman, however, was rather offended that his suit jacket wasn't good enough for the party and argued that he should be able to get in as is. His clothes were clean, expensive and just as good as anything the tycoon offered, he maintained.

When the doorman insisted that no other jacket would do but those provided, the businessman insisted he would pay for it or not accept it at all. When he heard the astronomical price, he went off to try and earn enough money to pay for the jacket, because he was too proud to accept it as a free gift.

The man in cultural robes was offended too - how dare the tycoon insist that he conform to the tycoon's tastes and manner of dress! Didn't he know that this man's ancestors had been dressing like this for thousands of years and that his robes held symbolic and sentimental meaning for him? It would be denying his whole people group to exchange his robe for that dinner jacket! He flatly refused.

And the runway model, when offered the expensive and well-made jacket, scorned that it was "so last season", of an outdated cut and "not very fashion forward". It also didn't match her outfit and "advanced outmoded patriarchal ideas by expecting everyone to dress as a man". So she refused.

The religious man took the proffered jacket but, before he went into the party, decided he would add his own adornments to it - a few sequins and bows and a tassel or two, maybe a nice big symbol. There, that looked more impressive. The tycoon couldn't object - after all it was the same jacket! But as he was taking his seat at the table, the tycoon came by and asked him why his jacket had been embellished. The religious man, ashamed, had no answer for him and was thrown out of the venue.

God, (the tycoon) has prepared an eternal feast and invited all humanity to attend. Jesus, His Son, has acquired for us robes of righteousness that we could never earn ourselves. He is willing to give them to us, free of charge, if we are humble enough to admit our need and to exchange our self-made morality and independence for His holiness. It requires us to conform to God's rules and to change, but it is the only way into the party of heaven.

## Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10				
11						
12			13			
14			15			
				16		17
	18	19	20	21	22	
23	24	25		26		
	27					
28				29		
	30					

**ACROSS**

- 3 Selected, with "for"
- 8 Darjeeling and oolong
- 10 Verbally disagree
- 11 Public-health concern
- 12 Battery fluid
- 13 Artist's stand
- 14 Take a dislike to
- 20 In a tidy manner
- 23 Mental activity while asleep
- 26 Ballet move
- 27 Unexpected meetings
- 28 Volcanic rock (pl.)
- 29 Nervously irritable
- 30 Onetime Japan capital

**DOWN**

- 1 Shalom
- 2 "All kidding \_\_\_\_"
- 4 Fancy liver spread
- 5 Criminal group
- 6 They can be inflated
- 7 Seaside sandhills
- 8 Winter Palace residents
- 9 Biscotto flavour
- 15 Convert raw hide to leather
- 16 War horse
- 17 Wanderer
- 18 A pause for rest
- 19 Chocolate source
- 21 Modify
- 22 The "L" of XXL
- 24 Grudging admiration
- 25 The bulk

**SOLUTION PAGE 11**

## Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

Puzzle Level: Medium

7								9
			4		2	8		
		8			2	7		
	3		2	5		6		
6								8
	8		1	6		5		
		1	7			8		
	4	6		5				
2								1

**SOLUTION PAGE 11**

# Taken 'as is' flaws & all

● From page 1

The Japanese have a word for the art of finding beauty in imperfection. Called wabi-sabi, the term emerged in the 15th century as a reaction to the then prevailing trend of using lavish, ornamental and rich materials in their surroundings.

Wabi-sabi is a reminder of our transient life. Our bodies and the world around us are in a perpetual process of returning to dust. Growth, decay and erosion can be found all around us: in the wrinkles and liver spots of an aging person, the frayed edges of worn-out jeans and the rust of an old, abandoned car. If we look closely, we just might find the beauty in those imperfections.

Christ has seen us at our best and at our very worst, but He still accepts us "as is." It's a reminder for us to see others through His eyes, loving and accepting one another in spite of the imperfections. When we do, God gets the praise.

The Christian life isn't about perfection. It's about the transforming grace of Jesus Christ, the only perfect man to ever walk this earth.

In Philippians 3:12, the Apostle Paul says, "I don't mean to say I am perfect. I haven't learned all I should even yet, but I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ saved me for and wants me to be." God takes us "as is," and His amazing grace transforms us into the best deal ever.





# Memory loss shows what matters most

**P**rofessor Arlene Chan, an oncologist who specialises in breast cancer treatment, was involved in a motorcar accident while she was at university, which left her with broken bones and a severe head injury.

She had retrograde and anterograde amnesia for about three months, losing all memory of events in her life for several weeks before the accident, all memory of the accident itself and for a couple of months after the accident.

“The ensuing months of lost memories meant that I could not return to my studies at medical school,” Arlene says as she remembers how difficult this period of time was in her life.

Growing up, Arlene was the “typical teen who wanted to be popular with my friends, took my good health and homely comforts for granted and, coming from a Chinese family, wanted to achieve good marks as I knew this would be pleasing to my parents”.

When asked if she had ever thought about God or spiritual things as a child, she answers, “I knew about the Christian faith but really only had ‘head’ knowledge of it. It was never personal for me.”

Arlene shares that she started really thinking about her belief system mid-way through medical school. “Seemingly, I had everything I thought would make me happy,” she admits, “Friends, comforts, doing the



Arlene Chan with her family.

university course that I had chosen – yet, there seemed to be a void. Even though, materially, I seemed to have everything I wanted, I thought there must be more to life than this!

“I recall [a day] when I broke down in tears,” she says. “I saw how meaningless a life I had chosen to

live. It became clear to me that the offer of a new life with a new purpose could only come through knowing and accepting Jesus as my personal Saviour.”

Arlene recounts the life-changing event as “I recognised that I was a sinner and Jesus’ sacrifice of His

life on the cross paid for my sins and allowed me to become a child of God – the Creator of everything. My understanding of science and the world, the importance of relationships, the desire to help others – all became clear to me as I saw this was God’s intention for me and for all people.”

A few months after Arlene committed her life to Jesus, she suffered the car accident that should have killed her. Instead, as she was recovering from her injuries, Arlene saw the accident and the amnesia that resulted from it as “God protecting me from the pain of my injuries”.

When Arlene could not return to medical school, she had to place her trust fully in God. “These were the times that taught me how faithful God is and as I look back at those days, the accident was clearly part of God’s perfect plan for my life,” she says.

It took several months for Arlene to fully recover from her injuries and, to her great joy, she was allowed to resume medical school; but she had to repeat her fourth year of studies.

“The following year was a time that I learned to depend on God’s sovereignty and grace, as I slowly resumed my life,” Arlene smiles. “The accident focused my thoughts on how precious life is. It showed me that if I was given the opportunity to work in the profession that I had chosen, that this was a gift and was my way of serving God and sharing His love with the people that I would care for as a doctor.”

She explains that “becoming a Christian means that I know where I come from, why I am here and what I am to do in this life that I have been given. I never would have met my husband had I not had my car accident; and for that, I am ever so grateful. Having experienced a few trials and tribulations in my adult life, God has shown me [through them] that He is always consistent and will never allow me to experience more than I can bear.

“These situations have taught me

to trust Him more, love others more and be more like Jesus,” she continues. “My passion for helping others solely stems from the example that Jesus showed me of how great His love is for me by His sacrifice, and I want to be like Him in how I care for others.

“The purpose I have and my assurance of being with Christ when I die, leads me to want this certainty

for all people I know – my children, family and others in my life. I have His Word to guide me and I have prayer to enable me to communicate with Him regarding the needs of others and for myself.”

God has provided Arlene with many high points in her life, including the birth of her two children after the loss of her first pregnancy.

“Seeing my daughter come to Christ and watching her life and relationships blossom is such a blessing,” Arlene says happily. “The knowledge that God has given me the skills and the opportunities to help others – to see the relief and diminution of fear in the faces of those who I help, is truly rewarding.

“I feel God’s protection, guidance and blessing every day – this includes the good health and physical endurance to deal with the needs of those that are under my care with breast cancer.”

Arlene is blessed to have the joy to bring cure and prolong the life to some, but only through God’s strength can she support and minister to others who face death from the disease.

“It is only His strength that gives me the capacity to help shoulder the hurts faced by my patients and their loved ones,” she says. “I learn my compassion from Jesus and am reminded that unconditional love for others, which was first shown us by Christ, is the one gift that we have to offer others.”

In short, Arlene says that “knowing Jesus has given me absolute clarity in why I am here and confidence that every event is in His control”.

**“KNOWING JESUS HAS GIVEN ME ABSOLUTE CLARITY ... AND CONFIDENCE”**



## Youtuber’s ‘humdrum’ happiness

● From page 1

Cole says “that’s how I grew up in my church for a long time. I knew God and I knew He was real and all this stuff but I did not love God. I had absolutely no desire to change the world, do only good things for God or live for Him.”

It wasn’t until Cole’s early high school years, when he was a part of a “great youth group” that he began to see things differently. “I realised that you could still love Jesus while having fun,” he says. “I think that is so important because nobody is going to want to become a Christian or live for Jesus if we are all uptight about everything and pointing out faults in everybody while we ourselves are living these hypocritical lives. Maybe we have secret sins or we are prideful or maybe addicted to pornography; things that people don’t really find out much about. As Christians, we need to show God’s love and have so much fun while doing it.

“[As a boy] I had an awareness that God was always there. I always knew what was right and what was good and I stuck with that. Obviously, Satan intervened in so many ways and even now, I struggle with countless sins. I am not perfect by any means. Just because I have never drank alcohol and do not go around having sex with everybody and being addicted to drugs and growing up in a bad family life; whatever it is, it does not make me anymore or any less of



Cole LaBrant and his family make life look fun.

a Christian than someone who has gone through those things.

“We are all sinners and regardless of what we have been through, the end destination is still Jesus; and until or unless we get to Jesus, it does not matter if you had an easy good family life or if you grew up and never knew Jesus; whatever it is: until you find Jesus, it doesn’t matter what you have been through, Jesus is the end goal.”

Cole finishes with a statement that he hopes will touch other people’s hearts. “Lives are never changed through an argument or a fight with

someone about whether God is real or not. We need to disperse that love that Jesus has given to us to others. You cannot explain God, you can only experience God. I have experienced God and I have experienced the world and I know which one I will choose. The closer I try and get to perfection, the farther away I am.

“Fear, shame, guilt, greed, pride, hate ... Over time you will listen to those voices. But there is only one Voice that will silence every other if you choose to listen to it, the One that whispers that you are so loved. Only Jesus.”



# BORN TWICE, DIE JUST ONCE

Growing up in communist Cuba in the 70s and 80s, Victor Manuel's grandparents bravely taught him about the God of the Bible, despite there being a strong threat of persecution and a general rejection of religion in society.

Victor's biological father was a communist and an alcoholic, and his step-father was a communist too. However, while Victor was still a young man, his mother became a Christian by accepting Jesus as her Saviour and Lord, and began praying for her son.

By this time Victor had fallen into alcoholism himself, begun smoking and was working as a bartender in a nightclub. But a single phrase was about to change his life forever.

"One day my mother, who knew how much I liked the English language, invited me to a service where an American evangelist would be that night. I accepted the invitation to go but was unable get inside, so I stayed outside looking through one of the windows. That man of God said a phrase that acted as a trigger for me. He said: 'Those who are born once, die twice; those who are born twice, die just once'.



Victor with his wife Elaine, daughter Keren and son Victor Samuel.

"That phrase impacted my life and I reflected on it for several weeks after hearing the message," Victor recalls.

The preacher had been referring to Jesus' teaching in John 3 in the Bible that no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again. Jesus then goes on to explain that the second birth is a spiritual one.

About a month later, Victor witnessed a fatal accident and heard God say clearly inside him: "You could have been one of them."

"That night I decided to go to church and three days later I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. God took my sins away and He made me a new person in Christ. I was baptized [immersed in water as an outward sign of dying to my old self] on September 24, 1995. From this time on I felt a strong desire to serve the Lord. A year later I gave up my work as a bartender because that place was not compatible with my new life in Christ," Victor shares.

Initially unable to find work, Victor began volunteering in his church. God provided for him financially and made his work so successful that he realised God was calling him to become a pastor.

In 1997 he married his wife Elaine and they have since had two children together. The following year Victor started studying towards a theological degree with a seminary in Eastern Cuba.

"The Lord has allowed me to continue studying, obtaining a Master's degree in Old Testament and, if it is God's Will, I aspire to start a Doctoral degree," says Victor. Besides this, he has been kept busy running a Christian conference centre, teaching at a seminary, serving on the board of his denomination and spreading the Good News of the story of Jesus to his community in Baire, in southern Cuba.

# Gangster finds amazing grace

Japanese mobster thought he needed God like a hole in the head – until he got one!



ABOVE: Yasumasa Aoki displays his tattoos and mutilated fingers. LEFT: Aoki speaking at his graduation from Bible college in this Youtube screen grab.

Yasumasa Aoki's tattooed and mutilated body bears testimony to his criminal past. Since 18 and for most of his life, he was a member of the Yakuza, a powerful Japanese organized crime syndicate. Aoki is covered with a full-body tattoo and is missing parts of his fingers, which he chopped off in Yakuza rituals to show penance or apology.

"As a teenager, I landed in youth prison twice and five times in juvenile homes. Between ages 16 to 20, I spent only six months out of prison. As an adult, I was jailed another three times," Aoki admits.

In the Yakuza society, power is obtained through violence. As a Yakuza leader, Aoki attacked and killed people with a katana (a samurai sword). He was also into alcohol, gambling, fights, drugs and other vices.

"At age 47, I was caught by the police in a case considered taboo even among the Yakuza. Three people died and five committed suicide because of this case. I was sentenced to 15 years in prison. The police also told me that a rival gang was after my life and there was a bounty of \$500,000 on my head," Aoki tells the students at City Harvest's School of Theology during their graduation ceremony.

"True enough, an inmate from the rival gang attacked me and smashed my head with a hammer. I was admitted to hospital with a skull fracture. When I woke up, there was a Bible by my bedside. When I read Psalm 23:4, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You



are with me,' I felt peace for the first time in my life," he shares.

During his prison term, Aoki was relocated to a prison in Kumamoto for hardcore prisoners. There he met a pastor who came to speak to the prisoners regularly and who led Aoki to pray to God for forgiveness for all his sins and for the strength to live right.

In September 2005, Aoki was baptized [immersed in water as an outward sign of his commitment to Jesus].

"I will never forget the gratefulness I felt that day, that Jesus would save a wretch like me," Aoki says.

His pastor continued to mentor him and gave him devotional books to read, which Aoki used to teach a small group of other inmates.

On 3 March 2011, Aoki completed his 15 years in prison and started attending church on the outside and heard about the School of Theology run nearby.

"I had a deep hunger to know more about God so I prayed fervently for a way to go to theological college. By God's grace, I received a scholarship.

"At college my mind had been renewed by the Word of God and the presence of the Holy Spirit [invisible power of God] each day. I've learned to broaden my heart so that God can use me to make a difference in this world.

"I have learned Christianity is about loving people different from us with God's love," Aoki, who once killed his enemies, says.

"I am now 64 years old and I've spent half my life doing worthless things," he admits, "but I have a dream to start a halfway house for former convicts to provide a safe environment for their rehabilitation and to bridge them into mainstream society and employment."

Aoki's story is a strong reminder that no one is too evil for God to save.

"And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Corinthians 6:11.

## LEARNING TO LET GO OF HIS ANGER

Duane Golliday was a lost soul. He had never been a follower of the crowd, but had never used his leadership ability in the right manner either. He just didn't have the drive he needed in order to succeed in life.

"I had no ambition and no realistic goals in life," Duane admits sadly. "I didn't respect women, my peers or authority very well at all."

At the age of nineteen, Duane experienced the devastating loss of his grandmother. Her death caused something within him to change.

Although Duane had become familiar with the Bible at 10 and his mother had made sure to get him involved with church, Duane did not really know God.

"[After my grandmother's death], I started to keep to myself a lot, and began praying on what God would have me to do," Duane states. "It took a few months but through prayer and numerous talks with family and my pastor,

I found myself getting heavily involved in ministry at my church."

Duane also got spiritual guidance through his older sister, who was a Christian. His conversion came about through prayer, discussions with other believers, and a conviction [strong internal prompting] from the Holy Spirit.

"One Wednesday night, Bible study night, on November 22nd 2002, I responded to the invitation and was led in a prayer of commitment," Duane explains.

"I acknowledged the fact that I was a sinner and accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Saviour.

"My journey towards this commitment involved a sense of God at work in my life.

"I started reading and studying the Bible. I became more involved in church. I started teaching Sunday school and Bible studies and even preached on occasion."

Through many different and difficult circumstances, however, Duane went through

a time of regression in his Christian walk.

"I came to realise that I needed to own my faith and not allow circumstances to dictate how my Christian life was travelling," Duane shares. "I have learned to listen to the spirit and follow my conscience. Now that I know more of God's Word, I have the ability to discern right from wrong and am more familiar with His will for my life."

Duane says that God changed his attitude. He had held a lot of anger against his Dad for the way he treated his Mum, but he realised that he still needed to respect his father. He had to let go of his anger.

"God has done so much for me," Duane shares happily. "He has taught me how to be committed, honest and bold. He has shown me through His Word how to live. The things I used to do, I no longer have to do. Grudges I may have held against people, including my Dad, I don't hold them anymore.

"I have learned to trust in God, not in man. He has delivered me from so many things. I can't help but thank Him."

### "I NEEDED TO OWN MY FAITH"





nudge

WITH KARL FAASE

## Forsake the vanity of the crowd

**THESE** days most people are on digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Youtube trying to build the number of their followers. Gaining and maintaining your social media crowd often



depends on feeding your followers what they want to hear.

At its worst this is just vanity and ego. Most people believe that these failures are a very modern problem. You may be surprised to know that vanity is an age old problem.

Early church leader Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who lived around 100AD, wrote these words: "Let us, therefore, forsake the vanity of the crowd and their false teachings, and turn back to the Word delivered to us from the beginning."

And even earlier, the Apostle Paul wrote in the book of Philippians: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." (Chapter 2, verses 3 and 4.)

# Finding truth amid hypocrisy

**R**ock band drummer Jen Ledger saw the hypocrisy around her in the church and youth group she attended as a young teen and decided Christianity was "a load of rubbish".

She shares in a YouTube video "you turned up [for church] on a Sunday but basically you did what you wanted for the rest of the week. Growing up, my life looked no different to someone who wasn't a Christian.

"The youth group leaders and the teachers and everyone older than me that I looked up too were sleeping around, partying and doing all the stuff that they say we should not do," she recalls. "I remember going to this Bible course that our church was running and we were reading about Satan. Then the leader tells us, 'Satan's not even real, you know, lies and stealing – that's Satan'."

Jen got home and told her mother faith was all a load of nonsense and she was done with it. "I was so over it," Jen admits. "It was just really hypocritical people trying to feel better about themselves and you know what? I was just done."

For the next while she lived for herself. "I tried to find fulfilment in the normal things that every teenager would: becoming popular, being sporty, being good at stuff, and having a cool boyfriend. I thought my life was so cool [without God]."

Jen, from Coventry in England, began drumming as a 13 year old and was a finalist for the United Kingdom *Drummer of the Year* competition in 2006. When she was 16, she relocated to the United States to major in drums with a scholarship at a school in Wisconsin.

But the year before, her life and her assessment of



Jen Ledger of Skillet performs at MAPFRE Stadium on May 20, 2017 in Columbus, Ohio. (Photo by Jason Squires/Getty Images)

Christianity were radically challenged when she went along to a church camp and encountered the presence of God.

"It happened during the music session: suddenly I'm in tears and I'm feeling something I haven't felt before," Jen shares. "It was all the same Bible stories that I had heard before and I am with the same Christian people as before, but all of a sudden I just sensed God's presence. He's real, He's asking me to come forward right now and I don't know what to do because I don't want to and I hate all of these people and they're all liars.

"Then someone said, 'If you feel like you're meant to do something with music in your life, come forward,' and all of a sudden, I'm at the front. I don't know what I'm doing, I'm weeping, someone's praying for me, I'm on the floor crying. It was a bizarre moment when God moved on me and I did not know what was happening."

Later, a pastor called Jen up to the front and told her, in front of a room filled with hundreds of people, that she needed to change her life.

"I go home and I don't change a thing," Jen confesses. "I knew I was being asked to

get rid of stuff that I loved, I knew I was being asked to change my life and I just did not want to.

"The whole of that next year, my life looked no different at all. What had happened was an amazing moment that I quite easily forgot."

But when Jen was 16, she and her family moved to America to attend a Bible school. "I had to leave my entire life behind," Jen says. "God ripped me out of my life and I never realised that I was never going home. I thought I would go back in a few months but God removed me from my situation and I met Him in a way that I didn't think was possible."

According to *The Blaze*, Jen's whole family came to faith through the Bible school.

"I realised that God was real," she states. "If God was real, then this [Bible] story that I am reading is incredible! All of a sudden, things became exciting! [In the Bible] I was reading about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and how they got saved from fire. They were thrown into a fire so hot that the people throwing them in died [Daniel 3:8-25]."

"That's the same God you're saying I know? It was like everything changed because it became real. I thought my life was awesome and great but I didn't realise it could get better. It wasn't until I was 16 years old that I met the Lord in a way that I didn't think was possible and it's changed my life completely since. Now I'm doing things I never thought I'd do. God is real and you can

do things when He's with you."

During Jen's stay at the Bible school, she was discovered by Grammy Award nominated Christian rock band Skillet when they toured her school and invited her to audition. She was 18 at the time, secured the gig and has been a part of the four-member band for the last ten years.

She is also starting to branch out on her own, and released her debut EP, Ledger, in early April of this year.

Jen knows who deserves all the praise for her success – in life and music. "God just really radically intervened, and He changed me...It's only by His grace (undeserved love), and goodness, and power that I've achieved anything. It was nothing to do with me and all to do with Him."

## A letter from God to those feeling unloved

BY JODY BENNETT

**DEAR** Child, I heard when you said today  
That your life has no purpose or worth,  
And I cried because it's had meaning  
Since before the foundations of earth.

I knit you together in the depth of the womb  
And I've numbered the hairs on your head.  
I've cherished each smile, I've caught every tear  
I've heard all the words that you've said.

I've remembered your birthday when others forgot  
I've chartered the course of your life  
And I've been there in the sickness, the sorrow  
and pain  
In the hurt and the anger and strife.

But each time I've come close, You've pushed me away,  
And said that you don't need the church.  
But I'm not a tradition - I'm a person, a Friend,  
I'm the answer, the end of your search.

'Cause as long as you try to find meaning  
In the meaningless things of this world  
You'll continue feeling lonely and broken,  
Purposeless and unfulfilled.

If your body is aching and your heart is a wound  
And your mind is a place of despair,  
Place the mess of your life in My Almighty hands  
I made you and I can repair.

You see, nothing you've done is so awful  
That I can't forgive or restore  
Because the blood that I shed at Calvary  
Can cleanse all your sins and then more.

I stand at the door of your heart and I knock  
And I want to come in and bring peace  
To reveal all those things that you long for  
Blessings, abundance, release.

My name's Jesus Christ, My Father is God,  
His Spirit's the one who is guide  
Child, you'll never know healing or wholeness  
or love  
'Til your heart is the place We reside.



**Let PSSM introduce you to God through FREE Bible lessons!**  
pssm.com.au

Complete your details below and PSSM will send you your first lesson or visit our website for online lessons!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: / /  Male  Female

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature (if under 18 years): \_\_\_\_\_

**Delivery Address:**  
PSSM Mailbox Club  
PO Box 357  
Morayfield 4506  
Queensland

**We are looking forward to hearing from you!**  
(07) 5433 1628  
info@pssm.com.au  
pssm.com.au



**Challenge**  
NEWS PAPER

WWW.CHALLENGENEWS.ORG

**Testimonies • Children's pages  
Lifestyle articles • Sports**

Published 11 months of the year by Challenge Literature Fellowship (ABN 98 206 125 814) in association with the international family of Challenge newspapers.

Editor: Carl Carmody.  
Staff writers: Jody Bennett, Ainsley Gaebler.

**PRICING**  
https://au.challenge.news/pricing/

Order Challenge from  
Challenge Literature Fellowship  
PO Box 978 Cloverdale WA 6985  
Call 08 9453 3311  
Email: accounts@challenge.news.org



# Acclaimed scientist's most amazing find

**D**r James Tour is a brilliant scientist who was voted one of the 50 most influential minds in the world, has written over 650 research publications, is the holder of over 120 patents, the starter of more than half a dozen companies and is in the US National Academy of inventors. He works in areas that range from computer science to electronics and material science to medicine.

"But more than any of that," he states emotionally in a Youtube video, "what means the most to me is that I am a Jew who believes that Jesus is the Messiah."

He grew up in a Jewish neighbourhood outside New York City and thought that everyone was a Jew. James felt no particular interest in religious things as a child but attended synagogue and bar mitzvahs. He remembers once trying to talk to a Rabbi and getting the brush off.

"There was very little explanation [of religion] for me," he says.

When he went to college he started meeting a number of people who called themselves "born again Christians", which he thought was an odd term. "What did they mean by 'born again'?"

One day, in the laundry room, one of these Christians used an illustration to explain what he called "the



Dr James Tour shares his story in this screengrab from Youtube.

Gospel" [literally 'good news'] to James. He drew a man on the edge of a cliff, with God on another cliff, on the other side of a huge chasm, labelled "sin".

James immediately said, "Well, I'm not a sinner. I have never killed anyone or robbed a bank."

His fellow student then got James to read a passage from the New Testament in Romans 3:23: "There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

James says that in modern Judaism, sin is not mentioned. "I don't remember EVER talking about sin in my home," he says.

Then the student pointed James to the passage in Matthew 5:28 where Jesus says "I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Unbeknown to this guy, James had recently got addicted to pornography through some magazines and this passage hit him like a punch in the

chest. He realised he WAS a sinner.

"All of a sudden, Somebody who lived 2000 years ago was calling me out on it!" he exclaims. "I felt immediately convicted. When I understood from the Scriptures what sin was, I knew I was a sinner. How was I going to get across the chasm to God?"

As a Jew, James knew that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

Isaiah 53, which is part of the Jewish scriptures, gives a beautiful description of how the perfect Lamb of God, would come to suffer and die and atone for the sins of the world by His dying in our place for us (on the cross).

James realised that Jesus was this Lamb. He was God in human form, taking upon Himself all of James' sin.

"The Perfect God comes and gives Himself for us," he realised, amazed. "I started to see how Jewish the New Testament is. It's so Jewish! It was all about Jewish people!"

On November 7, 1977, James knelt by his bed, filled with the realisation that "Yeshua" (the Hebrew word for Jesus) was the One who died on the cross for him.

"Lord, I am sinner," he prayed. "Please, forgive me. Come into my

life." He says: "All of a sudden Somebody was in my room. That man, Jesus Christ, stood in my room. This amazing sense of the presence of God filled my room and - I wasn't scared - I just started weeping. The Presence was so glorious and an enveloping sense of forgiveness came upon me.

**"HOW COULD YOU DO THAT?! YOU'RE JEWISH!"**



"I didn't want to get up. I didn't know who to tell. Here's this Jewish kid from New York City - what am I going to say?!"

James' family and extended relations were very shocked. "How could you do that?! You're Jewish!"

His mother wept when James told her he had invited Jesus into his life. His parents weren't happy at all. His mother said she didn't blame the Jews in Bible for killing Jesus after the things that He said. She felt Jesus, this young man in his thirties, had deserved it for daring to criticise the religious leaders of his day.

Then she carefully read the whole Old Testament, which are all the books of the Jewish Scriptures. James asked her, "What did you think?"

"God warned us over and over again [that we would be judged for our sin]," she said in realisation.

Years later she had a long talk to her granddaughter - James' now 15-year-old daughter - who explained the Gospel to her. Then James' mum read the New Testament as well as the Old and, at the age of 72, she called James on the phone to say, "Jimmy, you won't believe what happened. I was reading and it just hit me the way Jesus gave His life for me! I believe it now! Jesus is the Son of God!"

## Celtic star survived rock 'n roll lifestyle

**M**any know Moya Brennan as 'the voice of Clannad' - the family folk band that shot to fame in the seventies, graduating to chart success in the early eighties.

She is also the sister of famous Celtic soloist Enya.

Today, Moya's performances are still a family affair. Back in 1970, she joined her two brothers and twin uncles to form a talented quintet. On her 14-date UK tour last

March, she was accompanied by daughter Aisling and son Paul, both gifted musicians.

In a soft Irish accent, she talks about the journey that

led to success, heartache, and eventually spiritual fulfilment. "Growing up in rural Ireland, I had a lovely childhood," she reminisces. "My dad had a show band while my grandmother played drums. I think she was

**"GRADUALLY, I BEGAN TO NOTICE GOD WORKING IN MY LIFE AND MY FAITH BLOSSOMED."**



the first lady drummer in Ireland! My mum was a music teacher, so naturally she was keen we should learn to play an instrument. I started out on piano, although I did not want to practise. I am so blessed that my parents insisted."

As well as music, Moya's parents taught her another important lesson.

"We learned about God and read stories from the Bible," she shares. "My parents wanted to lay a strong foundation [for my life] so they involved us in church activities, and I loved singing in the choir. I remember having a real sense of God's presence and the feeling that He would always take care of me."

But by the time Moya was a teenager, the faith of her childhood was receding.

"Suddenly, going to church and reading the Bible was not cool anymore," she says. "Later, when Clannad became successful, I was launched into a party culture that, at the time, seemed exciting. We may have been a folk band but we were still exposed to 'sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll'."

"On tour, we were always being invited to parties where alcohol and drugs were freely available. I have to admit, at first I did not like the taste [of booze], but it was 'cool' so I persevered. It is the same today: young people think they are having a 'good time' so they end up involved with an unhealthy lifestyle."

The further Moya wandered from her childhood faith, the



Moya backstage at Glastonbury 2011

more heartache she found, including the trauma of an abortion.

"Thanks to the prayers of my mum and dad, I never did become addicted to drugs or drink, but my life was a mess," she confesses. "I realised I could not fix it. I came across an old prayer book my grandmother had given me and as I read, I began to pray and ask God for forgiveness."

"I told Him, it is up to you now, I cannot do it alone.

There was no immediate transformation but I felt that a huge weight had been lifted. Gradually, I began to notice God working in my life and my faith blossomed."

It has been over 40 years since the young Irish girl set out to earn her title, 'the first lady of Celtic music'. Along the way, she has added others such as 'wife' and 'mother', but the most important one that will last for eternity is 'child of God'. •



Clannad, left to right: Pól Brennan, Ciarán Brennan, Moya Brennan and their twin uncles, Noel Duggan and Pádraig Duggan.

## GRATITUDE IS GOOD FOR YOU

**IT'S** so easy to get caught up in running errands and checking items off your to-do list, but what's the point of getting all that stuff done if you never stop to be grateful for it?

In fact, researchers have found gratitude isn't just good for your mind, it's practically a magic pill with all kinds of health benefits! For example, researchers studied law students (think: high stress) and found that those who identified themselves as more optimistic actually had more blood cells that protected their immune system by midterms, compared to their pessimistic classmates.

Another study even found people who count their blessings are less likely to have a heart attack!

So grab a pen and paper and write down five things you're grateful for. Big or small.

Congrats! You just improved your health.

Credit: Morning Smile by inspiremore.com



# Maths Youtube sensation explains why the universe is beautiful

An award-winning high school mathematics teacher says the elegance of maths points to the intelligent design of the universe.

Eddie Woo is an innovative maths teacher and internet sensation who was named 2018's New South Wales Hero. In 2015 he won the Premier's Prize for Innovation in Science and Mathematics in NSW, in 2016 he gained the ChooseMATHS Teacher Excellence Award, last year Sydney University honoured him with a

Young Alumni Award, and he was a top 10 finalist in the 2018 Global Teacher Prize. He has been given the title "master teacher" in the NSW Department of Education, and travels the state mentoring students and teachers.

But Eddie is not wooed by arguments that say science has explained God away. He says you only have to scratch a little beneath the surface of any science subject to find the design of God in the world, and with mathematics it's so obvious.

"We talk about the fact that the universe is designed in this way and you can find all of these patterns; do you think that that's a coincidence?" he asks. "One of the things I love to point out is we call the universe the cosmos, which means to be ordered and structured and designed, as opposed to chaos; and the reason why we can find these mathematical principles is because there was a Designer.

It didn't just spring into being. It has immense beauty.

"I mean, how can it be that mathematicians and physicians all agree that one of the primary criteria for judging whether something is mathematically true or not, is whether the equations are beautiful? Why on earth should the equations of the earth be beautiful? And the answer is we have a beautiful Designer who designs things beautifully. So for me it's a source of marvelling at the way



ABOVE: Eddie Woo doing what he does best - explaining maths to a student.

RIGHT: Eddie and his family (Photo: Tealily Photography)



that God crafted the universe."

Eddie's faith is the reason he became a teacher. "My faith is integral to my identity and what I do. I'm not a teacher who's a Christian. I'm a Christian who's a teacher," he states.

He became convinced of God's reality in Year 9, after seeing how other students changed for the better when they embraced Christianity: "I recognised that it changed their character and their decisions day to day - for many of them it changed the whole trajectory of their lives, which was a revelation to me."

But he first heard the Gospel and accepted the stories of Jesus as explained in simple terms by his older brother, Kevin, who had always been trustworthy and reliable, "so, why not?"

Born in Sydney, Eddie said his Chinese-Malaysian parents took the family to church because they thought Australia was a broadly Christian nation.

"And I had great Christian teachers [at the public selective school I attended] who showed me how people can live out their faith in a secular context by demonstrating their faith in a way that makes a difference in other people's lives."

This is an example Eddie has taken on board. As well as his day job, he is a volunteer at the University of Sydney, where he has guided more than 1400 students from disadvantaged backgrounds, a father to three small children and a Youtube star whose free Wootube channel has over 280,000 subscribers and more than 14 million views worldwide.

## Believe it or not

### Biggest dinosaur ever found?

BY CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

ON the basis of a significant number of fossilized bones found in Patagonia, Argentina, scientists believe a plant-eating dinosaur they have named *Dreadnoughtus schrani* to be the world's biggest—and that it was still growing when its life ended.



Estimated to weigh 60 t (65 US-tons) and at 25 m (80 ft) in length, the dinosaur is still only about a third of the weight of God's largest creature, the blue whale, at about 170 tonnes (190 US-tons) and 30 m (100 ft) long.

Some researchers claim another giant Argentine dinosaur, *Argentinosaurus*, may have been bigger—about 82 tonnes (US-90 tons)—but base that on far fewer skeletal remains than the *Dreadnoughtus* specimens. And the supposedly biggest dinosaur of all, *Amphicoelias fragillimus* (claimed at 40–60 m [130–200 ft] long and 122 t [135 US-tons]) is known from only one incomplete vertebra that has been lost.

As with all dinosaurs, *Dreadnoughtus* would not have been much bigger than a football as a baby, and it's likely that it went through a 'teenage' growth spurt like other dinosaurs. So a juvenile pair of the dinosaur kind to which it belonged would have easily been able to walk through the door of Noah's Ark. See also [www.creation.com/dreadnoughtus](http://www.creation.com/dreadnoughtus).

*Dreadnoughtus* makes *T. rex* look puny, news24.com, 9 April 2014, Astoundingly huge dinosaur discovered (video), livescience.com, 2014.

### WHY ON EARTH SHOULD THE EQUATIONS OF THE EARTH BE BEAUTIFUL?



BY JIM DENISON

ZYLER and Kady Sharpe are three-year-old fraternal twins living in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Which is a boy, and which is a girl? According to their parents, that's a question only the children can decide.

Nate and Julia Sharpe have kept their children's biological sex a secret from their birth. They have not taught them to associate their body parts with being a boy or a girl. They are going to allow their children to determine their gender. Such children are known as "theybies."

Other parents are making the opposite decision.

Model Chrissy Teigen and her husband, singer John Legend, made headlines when they announced that they had selected the sex of their unborn child. They used in vitro fertilization to become pregnant. This process creates embryos in the laboratory, which are then implanted in the mother's womb. Teigen and Legend asked doctors to select a female embryo for her to carry to term.

In related news, "sex-selective

abortion" is now common around the world. When a couple learns that their unborn child is not the gender they wanted, they have the baby aborted. According to *Newsweek*, such abortions "are rife in the U.S."

Letting a child choose his or her gender, choosing a child based on gender, and aborting a child based on gender are all symptoms of an underlying condition. At their heart, they succumb to the temptation, "You will be like God" (Genesis 3:5).

The Bible clearly teaches that God created us in His image as "male and female" (Genesis 1:27) and values males and females equally (Galatians 3:28). He has a purpose for our lives before He makes us (Jeremiah 1:5).

For several decades, however, our culture has embraced the lie that truth is what we believe it to be. Such relativism explains the sexual revolution of the 1960s and the legalization of abortion in the US in 1973. It gave birth to same-sex marriage. It makes our bodies and lives our own to do with as we wish.

To paraphrase Dr. Phil, how's that working for us?

Billy Graham's daughter, Anne

## How's that working for us?

DR. PHIL

# MAYBE BABY, I'M A 'THEYBIE'

Graham Lotz asks, "Can you imagine the chaos that would result if a multilane highway had no painted markings to give direction to the traffic? Accidents and confusion would be the order of the day. No one complains about or resents the markings because drivers know the painted boundaries exist for their own benefit and safety.

"Today we are surrounded by a

generation of people who have grown up living according to their own moral codes, defying the boundaries set by God. As a result, it is a generation with no peace or sense of security. Rather than inhibiting us, moral guidelines free us to live in peace and security. The statistics on crime, divorce, abortion, and suicide give eloquent witness to the danger of living outside God's boundaries."

GET ANSWERS FOR YOUR FAMILY

Young people struggle to find purpose in life, believing that 'science' has made God irrelevant. CREATION MAGAZINE provides answers for your family.

CREATION

HUMMINGBIRDS

- Affirms the complete reliability of the Bible
- Refutes evolution with real-world evidence
- Helps Christians share and defend their faith

ONLY \$32 A YEAR

4 ISSUES A YEAR

Subscribe at [CREATION.COM/CMAG](http://CREATION.COM/CMAG)

CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL



# Building Better Marriages



## FATHERS MODELLING FORGIVENESS

**“WE MUST LOVE THEM CORRIE.** We must show them that love is stronger than hate...”

Those words were uttered by Betsie ten Boom to her younger sister Corrie, as Betsie lay dying in Ravensbruck Concentration Camp in 1944.

They may sound like strange words to quote at the beginning of a Father's Day piece but they are words that changed my life.

I first read them in Corrie ten Boom's autobiography, *The Hiding Place*, when I was about 14 years old.

I say they were life-changing because of the context in which Betsie spoke them.

Sharing her vision with Corrie of what they might do once the war was over, Corrie thought that Betsie was referring to them both loving and

bringing healing to the lives of the women who had been shattered by the Nazis through the brutal Concentration Camps.

But Betsie was actually speaking about their captors and her heart was to minister the love and forgiveness of God to them.

As Corrie said, when she looked at the guards she saw only hate-filled people, but Betsie saw broken human beings.

What does any of this have to do with Father's Day?

Good question.

I have been thinking a lot lately about the number of things that we men will face in life but no one ever prepares us for and it has led me to reflect upon the things that I would have liked my Dad to have modeled to me in my growing up years.

One of these was the importance of practicing forgiveness.

My Dad did not find it easy to forgive and there is a history of grudge holding in my family that goes back through the generations.

On one occasion, after hearing

the testimony of a couple who had publicly forgiven a drunk driver who had killed their son, my Dad replied, “I could never do that.”

I realise that forgiveness never comes easily, especially in a situation like that, but it left me wondering whether my Dad was even willing to try and forgive.

Forgiveness is one of those principles that is vital for us as men to both practice and teach to our children.

Consider the number of men in recent years who have murdered their children and then taken their own lives as their way of responding to the breakdown of a relationship or family. It is the ultimate payback and devastates not just individuals but whole communities.

When men experience depression (and they will) and bottle up their anger they leave a legacy of destruction that is passed on from generation to generation.

I have seen men who nurse hurts and grudges for years ultimately becoming angry bullies to everyone around them, reacting in violent rage at the merest of provocations.

Inevitably they isolate themselves from everyone and become increasingly resistant to change and the

support of others.

“It is to one's glory to overlook an offense” said King Solomon.

Persistent unforgiveness and stuffing your anger down deep inside will destroy your life in the end.

Which is why Betsie ten Boom's words are so precious to me.

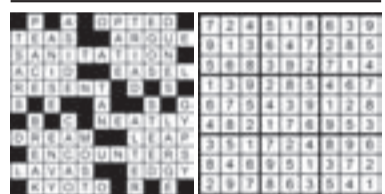
As impacted as I was by them as a boy of 14, it has taken a lifetime for me to learn to put them into practice.

And with the help of my Heavenly Father, I have learned and practiced the wisdom of them again and again and experienced the healing that comes with them.

It is a principle that I have endeavoured to pass on to all of my children.

It is a principle that has set me progressively free from the past and which I first encountered all those years ago through *The Hiding Place*.

And it's a principle as men we must both practice and model to the generations to come.



## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Age and occupation (it helps) \_\_\_\_\_

Challenge Literature Fellowship PO Box 978, Cloverdale WA 6985 / Fax (08) 9453 3006 or email info@challengenews.org

All overseas enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

## Lessons from a golfer - Pt 1



BY PETER BRAIN

I AM sure you have all heard the stories about intrepid golfers.

There is the one about Bill. Nothing ever phased him. His concentration was legendary. He could not be distracted. Imagine the surprise of his mates when he interrupted his putting on the 11<sup>th</sup> green (that is the green near the main road) to remove his cap and stand to attention as the funeral procession drove past. When his mates asked him why he interrupted his golf he replied, “She was a good woman; we had been married 38 years!”

Golfers are keen, if they are nothing else.

My father-in-law reckons that it never rains on the golf course. Not at the 19<sup>th</sup> hole anyway!

But what has all this got to do with God? Well, let me explain.

I first started playing when I was about 10 with a “Hickory shafted nib-lick” found in my grandfather's garage. That was almost 40 years ago. I do not think I play a whole lot better than then, but I have enjoyed the game and the company. I have been taken by the similarities with life.

Let me share 18 of my thoughts – one for each hole, in the hope that they might help you.

1. **Golf is a great leveller.** I can remember sinking a 14-metre putt and on the next hole taking four putts from three metres. As in life, it is not wise to become arrogant about one's achievement. *Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18*
2. I've enjoyed teaching my three sons to play. They have often heard me ask them after they have miss-hit a shot ... “**which is the most important shot in golf?**” They reply “the next one”. You can't play it again, what's done is done. That's life. It's so easy to ruin life by dwelling on the past. The past may need to be put right or learnt from. God forgives those who are genuinely sorry for past wrong and promises to help us learn from past mistakes. *For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. Psalm 103:11-12*
3. In life it is ever so easy **to blame others** for our actions. It is not much fun playing golf with someone who is always blaming the clubs, the poor greens, or even the trees planted in the wrong places! None of us are perfect. It is great to be able to accept that ... especially for those who have got to play the game of life with us! *For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one.” Romans 3:9-10*

• TO BE CONTINUED

## Ask Y

Peter Meadows answers your questions about God.

**‘Born again’ sounds weird – what does it mean?**



It does sound strange, doesn't it? And unfortunately it's often associated

with a certain 'brand' of Christian – those who come at you full-on.

Despite that, it still gets used a lot, way outside of the church. For example, Volkswagen once advertised a new Golf with just two words in the headline – ‘Born’ and ‘Again’. So they must have assumed we all understood!

And I guess we do, up to a point. The advert implied the well-known model had been recreated from scratch. And many headlines have described the careers of politicians, celebrities or sport stars as ‘born again’ if they have made a comeback – but it's nothing to do with faith.

In each case the meaning is clear: a ‘totally new start’. What most have probably forgotten is that the words originate from Jesus – and carry much more meaning.

Jesus told one of the most religious people of His day: “You must be born again.” Jesus wanted this sincere and enquiring God-follower to understand that obeying religious rules, in which he had a triple-A star, was not the way to a living encounter with God. Instead, Jesus was saying that something had to happen ‘on the inside’.

Using the term ‘born again’ was Jesus' way of explaining that pleasing God is not something we can do by our own outward efforts. Rather, it involves being transformed from the inside. We need such a radical change of heart that it's like becoming a new person and starting life all over again. That's not something we can do for ourselves. We need a spiritual birth to have a relationship with God, who is Spirit.

Being ‘born again’ is about having the same kind of relationship with God that there is between an infant and its parent. Not rules and rituals, but a relationship. It's why, when we have been born spiritually into His family, we are able to talk of God as our Father.

How does it happen? We stop trusting in our best efforts to please God, realising we will never be good enough, and ask God to change our hearts. Only He can do it. It's a wonderful relief to understand that God does that for us. We just need to turn away from our old life, genuinely ask for His freely-given forgiveness, and then go forward with His power to help us live His way.

Peter Meadows is co-author of *The Book of Y, the basics for the Y Course that explores life's biggest questions. If you have a question about faith or God, Peter will do his best to answer it. Write to: goodnewseditor@ntlworld.com with ASK Y in the subject line.*





US' Michelle Carter competes in the woman's shot put during the Diamond League athletics competition in Doha, in May 2017. (Photo: Karim Jaafar/AFP/Getty Images)

**INSET:** Michelle Carter attends the 2016 USATF Black Tie & Sneakers Gala in New York City in 2016. (Photo Steve Mack/Getty Images)

# PUT HERE BY DESIGN

**A**merican shot putter Michelle Carter knows what she was designed to do and Who designed her for it.

The champion took gold in the 2016 Olympic Games after setting the American record in the event with a distance of 20.63 m. In doing so, Michelle became the first United States women's athlete to win the event since it became an Olympic sport in 1948, and only the second American woman to win an Olympic medal in shot put.

She is also a three-time bronze and one-time gold medallist in the World Championships and has been named a National Champion six times.

The 32-year-old, however, is characteristically modest about her achievements.

"The best piece of advice my father gave me was to always work hard," Michelle says.

Shot putting runs in her blood. Her dad, Michael Carter, won silver for the sport in the 1984 Olympics. He is now Michelle's coach, but he was not the one who got her into the sport.

"My junior high coach asked me to try out for the team, and I came home, and [my dad] was like, 'Alright, how do you feel about it?'" Michelle recalls. "I informed him that I was ready to go and from then on, it was full steam ahead."

Michelle admits that "people have higher expectations for me because of my dad's success and

the opportunity to have him as my coach."

However, she says that she cares about something much more important: her personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

"I grew up in church. I do not know anything different," Michelle shares. "I received Jesus as my Saviour and was baptized [immersed in water as an outward sign of confession of sin] when I was around six or seven years old. So my faith has always been a big part of my life.

"I remember at the age of eight, I could not [even imagine] that God was not real. I remember times as a child when I would be in my bed praying about a problem. I always knew that whatever was going on, I could pray and God would take care of it."

For Michelle, the real test came when she went away to college, away from her structured life.

"I was faced with all the things that were going on around me that I was not accustomed to facing on my own," she recalls. "Enjoying my new-found freedom, I put my relationship with Christ on the 'back burner'.

"That's when I realised how hard life is when you are not close to Him. I knew that if I continued to stray away from Jesus and not do what He wanted me to do, I was not going to win in life. The older I get, the more I realise the things that I was taught at an early age apply to my life now."

Michelle acknowledges that her faith in Christ helps her to deal with the pressure that accompanies being an elite athlete.

"It is easier to deal with things that are not going my way on the track," she says. "I know the kind of God I serve and I know what He can do through me. I have been taught to believe and to have faith in Him and His plan for me."

Michelle is always careful to put God ahead of her career. During an international competition in Istanbul, Turkey, she and some of her teammates from the track wanted to have a Bible Study before the competition.

"There was no one else around so I opened a devotional book I was personally reading through and shared it with everyone," she states. "We talked about giving everything we had to God and trusting in Him. I even had a couple of teammates come up to me afterwards and tell me how God used that to speak to them."

That is what Michelle's goal is: to be a faithful witness for Christ wherever she goes. "I understand now that Christ [wants to] work through me so that others can get to know Him," she says. "If I want more people to get to know Jesus, I have to work hard to exemplify His presence in my life. I started thinking about how this is not about me, it's about Him; and by letting Him work through me I will be blessed and be a blessing."

But not everything has been a smooth ride for Michelle, especially in 2011.

"It was a hard year for me in my sport," she admits. "I almost wanted to quit and I started thinking about the pros and cons of continuing to throw. I was by far one of the weakest throwers, but I threw further than most. [Then I realized that] there has to be a reason why I was doing what I was doing with little effort. This has to be one of my gifts, a God-given talent."

Besides being involved in the sports field, Michelle is also a certified professional make-up artist.

She has focused on body image both on and off the field, talking to young women about confidence through her program, *You Throw Girl*.

"You have to understand everyone's body was built to do something," she explains. "I was built to do something, and that's how I was built. I think the world is realising we were promoting one body type and there have always been many."

Michelle has realised that her influence extends beyond the realm of athletics.

"People notice how I am living out my faith," she tells *Athletes in Action*. "Sometimes it takes me by surprise how much they notice. Even when no one is looking, the way I act is important because it is a reflection of how I walk with Christ.

"I have Christ in my heart, I already have the victory. Through Christ all things are possible." (Philippians 4:13) ●

**DISTRIBUTED BY:**