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PRICE PAID for a fearless life



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SMARTWATCHES battle for your wrist

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Josh Duinker

LIVING TO SERVE



"The community owns the NSW Police Force, not me"
- NSW Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione

Reasons to smile

Biggest Loser weight loss champ tells her story of heartache and healing

With food as a comfort to mask her pain, Michelle Aguilar chose to join her estranged mother on USA's biggest television weight loss competition in 2008 and found a bigger transformation than she could have ever imagined.

"I think when you're at a place where you are so upset and out of control with a lot of things, it's an easy step to turn to food," Michelle says in a video by IAmSecond.com.



POUNDS AWAY: Michelle Aguilar today

The pain and confusion started at age 18 when she received an unexpected call from her mum to say that her parent's marriage was over.

"I couldn't help but think that her leaving meant that there was something wrong with me," Michelle says.

"I chose then to internalise all my pain and told my mum that because of her decision I was going to have to love her from a distance and I wasn't going to speak to her anymore."

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THE BIGGEST LOSER EFFECT - page 4

All eyes turned to New South Wales Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione during the terrifying Sydney siege at the end of last year. Though there were two casualties police were able to get the other 15 hostages out safely. The Commissioner said after the incident: "I don't think this could have been done any better anywhere else in the world by any other group."

Since joining the police force in 1980 and becoming NSW's 21st Police Commissioner in 2007, Andrew has been awarded the Australian Police Medal and the National Medal.

Andrew's first priority is to serve the community relying on him for their safety.

"The community owns the NSW Police Force, not me," Andrew told a Strength and Courage seminar for defence personnel in Canberra in 2013. "I'll own it one day, when I hang up my uniform and take a pension - that's when I'll own it because then I'll become solely a citizen."

"That's when I'll have a guiding interest that comes from a desire for my state and my family to be kept as safe and secure as we can be. Until then, I'm in service to you."

There is, however, one he serves even above the people he is responsible for.

"It's the God who delivered me when I was a 14 year old boy," Andrew explains, "who had His hand on my life before I was born, before I knew Him. He took me through the loss of a father. He took me through a marriage, which then grew into a responsibility as a father for my own children."

Though originally from the UK, Andrew grew up in the Western suburbs of Sydney.

He began attending a local youth group when he was 10 years old, at the recommendation of a neighbour.

There he met young Christian men and women who "didn't have it all together, but had something I didn't have." As he observed them Andrew realised he wanted it too.

"At 14 I made the decision to give my heart to Jesus Christ after a youth Bible study night. I can still see the chair that I sat in when I made the decision," he recalls.

Andrew soon discovered that being a Christian enabled him to face sad times with God's strength. Three months after deciding to follow Jesus, his father died and he was left to take care of his mother on his own.

"I went from being a boy to a man overnight. Although I wouldn't know it then, I was so blessed that I had God there behind me."

Andrew experienced support from the men in his Church, who mentored, comforted and taught him the way his father no longer could.

"These Christian men were the role models in my life that I know made the difference. They were the men that taught me," Andrew says.

To this day, Andrew struggles to understand how "a kid who came here in a boat as a baby" could now be "in charge of the biggest police force in Australia and probably in the Western World".

"When I consider my career, the role of Commissioner of Police wasn't necessarily a goal that I had. But looking back, God's plan is clearer now - I was placed into that position more as a ministry than as a job," Andrew says.

Alongside his wife of 35 years, Joy, Andrew seeks to lead by example and serve the members of his state in every possible way, never losing sight of the one he truly serves.

"I went from a boy to a man overnight"

WILL OUR VIOLENCE EVER COME TO AN END?

BY ALAN BAILEY

VIOLENCE IS HARD TO UNDERSTAND. There are countless creatures in the animal world that live more peacefully than many humans. Yet we have a much bigger brain. We have moral awareness and power to reflect and make decisions. We also have a conscience.

As far back as we can go in history, violence has been part and parcel of human life. Today, after all the years of progress and development that has taken place in some areas, we are no less plagued by the same old thing. The main difference is that we have more implements to hit each other with. It is in the home, on the streets and across the nations. It is even unsafe in the womb.

What it is about

Those who lash out are quick to point out the faults, misdemeanours and offences of others. Though they are unaware of it, their greatest concern is their own egos. Everything or everyone that runs counter to their plans is an enemy to be attacked. Whatever upsets their cherished enjoyments and indulgences stirs their anger.

The worst kind of treatment an ego can receive is to be doubted, or slurred or put down in some way. A man hates to be shown to be inadequate. If it is proven that he is a disgrace and should be ashamed of himself, the nastiness which is never far from the surface erupts, showering itself all around.

So what appears to be an attack is very often an act of defence—the defence of a shaky, inadequate self that refuses to face the truth.

An exception

Perhaps it is the case that we all have had our part in the giving and receiving of personal attack. We are part of a fallen race. See what happened when the sinless Son of God came into the world. There was an attempt by Herod to kill Him as a baby. All through His ministry hatred was lurking, looking for an opportunity to do away with Him. Then, this innocent one, having only done good to others, was taken and ridiculed, whipped, beaten unmercifully and made to carry a cross on which He was nailed and left to die.

Peter, a disciple who saw it all, writes later in this way. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth. When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly. He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live to righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:22-24).

It is a great thing when a person, tired of their own wrongdoing and shortcoming, turns away from it all, giving themselves to the risen Christ. What a change He brings! What a future He promises! No more violence then.

Soldier's metal reformed

Suicidal ex-soldier finds clean break as rehab director and street chaplain

Jack Jones had everything a man could want: wealth, women, honour and success from military service and million-dollar IT business deals, yet he despised what he had become.

"At age 35 I was at the very bottom: I was an alcoholic, a marijuana addict and sex addict," Jack confesses.

"Nothing was appeasing the hole in my heart. No success, no trophy, no drug, no woman— nothing was removing the torment inside. I attempted suicide numerous times."

Following abuse as a child, Jack tried to suppress these memories through smoking marijuana and alcohol.

Attempting to escape his personal vices, he joined the army at age 17.

"Far from making a man out of me, in the military; the better the drinker you were, the more women you had; the 'greater man' you were," Jack explains.

He was honoured to be part of the UN peacekeeping force in Cambodia, and while there recalls, "I saw first-hand the capacity for evil that humans truly have. I had no answers, and the pain of it dug deep into my soul."

He became even more depressed when every relationship he entered failed.

"I certainly could not love a woman as a man should and committed adultery numerous times," Jack remembers. "I hated myself and was suicidal more than once."

He remembers holding his automatic rifle to his head after hearing that his girlfriend had a nervous breakdown due to his unfaithfulness.

When his father died of a heart attack in 1999, Jack resigned from the military and thought that money would "cure" him.

Life felt like a dream come true working in website design for a company involved in an international takeover and global deals during the dotcom boom.

"It was a surreal journey, one that included million-dollar deals to build software for international ISPs, plus open-ended expense accounts," he recounts.

Despite all this, he admits, "My soul



FOUND NEW HOPE: "No success, no trophy, no drug, no woman... was removing the torment inside," says Jack Jones

remained in anguish and despair, so I drank more and pursued expensive cars, travel, and women. I still hated myself. I did not care if I was alive or dead."

By his eighth year in the IT boom, Jack was using marijuana daily, which he says caused "depression, bouts of mental illness and paranoia."

After an intense six months of drug and alcohol abuse, he was considering suicide when he remembers, "The Holy Spirit of God spoke to me, which terrified me initially, however my soul told me it was God because there was a powerful feeling of love concurrently.

"God said to me, 'You have been a soldier of this world, and loved everything in this world, and it made you sick, but now you will be my soldier, and you will love Me.'

"I now knew God was real, having previously been a hard-hearted atheist. I looked for God in many religions including Buddhism, Islam, New Age and Scientology, but their teachings did not match the sense of love I had experienced from God."

As he sat reading in a park, a Christian man invited Jack to a public concert that evening. After the music, Jack recalls hearing an ex-addict share her story that matched his experience.

"I ran forward to pray and give my life to the Lord Jesus Christ, whom that [ex-addict] knew, and I have not

stopped running to Jesus since. I read the Bible in two months; I could not get enough of it."

Jack says Jesus released him from alcohol and drugs almost instantaneously, except some isolated relapses for a couple of years due to the level of his addiction.

"There are no earthly words to proclaim the depth of Jesus' love for humanity, and His ability to turn the sinner righteous— to make what was unclean, clean— has no boundary," Jack enthuses.

As he got to know Jesus through the Bible, church and prayer, he went on to gain a degree in theology and for several years has been a missionary pastor and volunteer street chaplain.

Jack also has a heart for mentoring ex-addicts through rehab and serves as the Australian managing director of the Christian drug rehabilitation program Harvest of Hope, which operates in Kenya and Cambodia. In the near future they also plan to build a rehab centre in Western Australia.

"None of the things I do are a chore for me, but it is a joy," Jack concludes.

"Today, thanks to Jesus Christ alone, I am clean and the pain inside is gone. As Jesus said to a leper, 'I am willing – be clean!'"

Contact Harvest of Hope Australia at harvestofhope.com.au



Jack Jones serving with the United Nations in Cambodia in 1992

Crossword

ACROSS

1 Stress (9)	9 Hopping mad (5)	14 Wreck (5)
7 Gets ready to travel (5)	10 Bird home (4)	15 Cease (4)
	11 Flu symptom (5)	18 Where to hear an aria (5)
		19 Pigeon perch (5)
		20 Helper (9)

DOWN

2 Sunrise direction (4)	3 One atop a golf scoreboard (6)	4 Uncared-for (9)
5 Gumption (5)	6 Batiking need (3)	8 Shoppers (9)
12 "___ Five-0" (6)	13 Go over the limit (5)	16 Immediately (3)
17 Scheme (4)		

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

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

SOLUTION PAGE 11

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PRICE PAID FOR FEARLESS LIFE

WHAT ARE WE TO LEARN FROM ANZAC DAY AND EASTER?

At this year's 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing on April 25 and at Easter we recall those who died for us

BY ANDREW LANSDOWN

IN APRIL Australians celebrate two important holidays – Easter and Anzac. A moment's reflection reveals several striking similarities between these two memorial occasions.

On Anzac Day we remember events that happened long ago – almost a century ago. We think of Australian soldiers who died in the First World War, and in subsequent wars. On Good Friday we also remember an event that happened long ago – almost twenty centuries ago. We call to mind the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

On Anzac Day, local communities conduct simple ceremonies in remembrance of the deaths of our soldiers. We gather to lay wreaths at stone monuments and read names

from brass plaques. On Good Friday Christian communities also conduct simple ceremonies in remembrance of the death of their Saviour. They gather to break bread and drink wine to remember the Lord's Supper. The bread represents Christ's broken body, and the wine represents His shed blood. Like war plaques and monuments, these emblems are a reminder "lest we forget".

On Anzac Day we remember how the soldiers laid down their lives for their friends. On Good Friday we remember how the Lord Jesus laid down His life for His friends. Greater love has no man than this.

On Anzac Day we recall how the soldiers died to save us from a dreadful tyranny – the tyranny of fascism, National Socialism (NAZIism) and communism. On Good Friday we



MARCH 3, 2015: A Wall of Remembrance covered in poppies stands in front of the Queen Elizabeth cruise ship in Sydney to remember 11,500 Australians and New Zealanders who died in the Gallipoli campaign that began April 25, 1915

recall how the Lord Jesus also died to save us from a dreadful tyranny – the tyranny of Satan, sin and death.

These are some of the similarities between the two remembrance days. But there are also several important differences.

On Anzac Day we remember men who died, and are still dead. However, on Good Friday we remember a

Man who died, but is now alive! Jesus did not remain in the grave but rose triumphantly from the dead. So while Easter is a sombre occasion, it is not a sad one. We commemorate Christ's death, certainly. But more than this, we celebrate His resurrection and anticipate His return!

Another difference is that on Anzac Day there is no communion with the

fallen soldiers. They are absent. But on Good Friday there is communion with the Lord Jesus. By the power of His Spirit, He is present in and among those who love Him. He is in our midst.

The soldiers laid down their lives for their friends. So did Jesus. But the difference is that He also died for His enemies. While we were still sinners, hostile in mind and doing evil deeds, Christ died for us.

Although many soldiers lost their lives, none of them set out to die. They all hoped to survive. They quite properly intended to win the war by killing the enemy. The Lord Jesus, however, intentionally set out to sacrifice his life. His death was not accidental but deliberate. He came not to kill his enemies but to be killed by and for them. His sacrificial death was not only necessary for victory over evil, it was the victory.

Finally, there is this difference: At best, the soldiers won us a partial and temporary freedom. But the Lord Jesus won us a full and permanent freedom. Jesus sets us free from the penalty and power of sin, now and forever.

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. On the first Good Friday, He died on the cross in our place, bearing our sins and suffering our punishment. In this way He made amends to God for all the wrong that we have done and said and thought. That God accepted His sacrifice for us is demonstrated by the fact that God raised Him from the dead on Easter Sunday.

Because of what happened at Easter, everyone who calls out in genuine sorrow for sin and faith to Jesus will be saved from the slavery of Satan and the punishment of sin and the fear of death.

"Oh, Lord Jesus, forgive me, save me, govern me!" Any person who earnestly cries such a prayer will receive forgiveness for sins, friendship with God, purpose in life, and life in eternity.

Thank God for the soldiers who died for us in the wars. We rightly remember them on Anzac Day. But thank God all the more for His Son who died for us at Calvary. What a victory our Saviour won for us on the cross! We ought to remember it with awe and gratitude every day, not just at Easter.

Snow white after tragic past

Life was no fairytale but Annie's story will inspire all women with a dark past

BY JOANNA DELALANDE

When Annie Lobert heard from a girlfriend in Hawaii how much cash she could earn working as an escort, she knew that something was not right but still accepted the offer to join her.

After a childhood of feeling unloved by her father and a cheating high school boyfriend tore her heart apart, Annie wanted power. She wanted revenge. She wanted to be someone important. And she mistakenly believed money was the answer.

She left her three jobs, flew to Hawaii and on her first night there sold her body as a prostitute.

"It's like I had this ring that I put on and I couldn't take it off," Annie describes in her online *I Am Second* video testimony.

Charging thousands of dollars an hour to sell herself gave Annie the power she thought would satisfy her.

She also began working as a stripper and met a man who made her feel loved, intelligent, beautiful, and told her everything she needed to hear from her dad, but never did.

When she came home from a few jobs one night in Las Vegas, that same man choked her and kicked her till she bled, telling her he was a pimp and she was going to work for him, threatening her with death if she ever tried to leave.

"That night it's like I died inside," Annie says. She stayed with him for five years. And she did what he told her to do because she knew if she did not she would die.

"When you leave a pimp," she says, "you leave with nothing."

Annie got cancer a while later, and as a result

became addicted to painkillers and cocaine.

At night in the motels she would look at herself in the mirror thinking God must be angry with her.

"I would get in the shower and I would scrub my body and I would think, I will never, ever be clean," Annie recalls sadly.

"One night I decided I would get higher than I had ever been because I wanted to erase all the pain. The pain of my cancer. The pain of my uncle, my sister and my grandfather all dying within three months of each other... The pain of losing everything I had ever made."

That night Annie had a brush with death. "I knew that I was at death's door," she says. "I knew it was over."

So she cried out to God. She said, "Jesus, please save me. I do not know if you are real, but I do not want to die."

When the ambulance arrived the doctor told Annie she should be dead from all the drugs in her system and that God must be with her.

"And I knew," Annie recalls, "that Jesus heard my prayer. I had this peace come over me that was nothing like I had ever

felt in my entire life. And I knew God gave me a second chance."

Annie took it. She started reading her Bible and, despite initial fears, she soon felt loved and embraced by people at a church she started to attend. In everything she felt God healing her from the inside out.

"I started to stand on Jesus' words that I am whole, that I am healed, that I am pure. That I am a virgin in Him," she says, referring to her spiritual purity. "And that gives me peace."

She finds confidence in this from the Bible's book of Isaiah chapter 1 verse 18 which says, "Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as



There is redemption for everyone, says Annie Lobert

crimson, they shall be like wool."

Later God told Annie to go back to the strip club where she had worked and to tell the girls there how much He loved them.

In 2005, *Hookers for Jesus* was founded along with *Destiny House*, a safe haven for women dealing with the trauma of sex trafficking.

As a survivor of post-traumatic stress disorder, domestic violence, sexual abuse, cancer, drug addiction, abortions, miscarriages, pornography, anorexia, and bulimia, Annie lives to spread the message that transformed her life: "God loves you...No matter how dirty you feel, there is redemption. You are white as snow."

For net Fallen: Out of the sex industry and into the arms of the Saviour.

Reasons to smile

• From page 1

Eating to feel better, Michelle says, also became a “guilt thing”.

“You realise that you’re eating and you feel bad while you’re eating and it’s just making things worse.”

Trapped in “this vicious cycle”, Michelle admits she put on almost 45kg.

When people asked her how she was going, Michelle says she hoped her smile would mask her feelings enough to “get me through the conversation”.

“The moment I would close the door of my car I would just cry because it was all fake. In my mind I thought that if I tell everybody [what] I’m going through then they will leave me too.”

Weighing in at just under 110kg, Michelle applied for *The Biggest Loser* competition through a friend’s suggestion, motivated to feel better about herself and hopefully lose the highest body fat percentage for the US \$250,000 prize.

When her application was accepted, Michelle’s father suggested reconnecting with her mum by entering as a mother-daughter team.

When her mum agreed to join her, Michelle says: “I really felt like God was saying I am going to give you an opportunity to start over and change from the inside out.”

Having grown up in a Christian home, Michelle had made a commitment to follow Jesus at a young age but knew that she had not been fully trusting in Him the way she needed to.

The rigorous training, restrictions on food, tough competition and TV drama revealed this to her as she noticed the relationships between the other contestants and their partners.

“While everybody had somebody that they loved and felt really connected with, I was there with someone I hardly knew. When I looked at [my mum] I saw the source of my

pain and of my weight gain,” she thought to herself at the time.

Michelle’s emotional pain was fully exposed when she painfully chipped a tooth during a tough water tank challenge.

“I completely lost it. I felt like somebody had just stripped away that armour and said ‘now, look at you! Your smile’s gone now; what are you going to do?’” Michelle says.

“I remember just lying there in a complete state of brokenness. I told God, ‘Okay, I get it! I can’t do it... if you can use me and if you want me to work on this then I will stay and I’ll give it all to You.’”

From that point forward, Michelle says, “It was like I let go and my whole body let go of everything I was holding onto, all the junk in my life.”

By the end of the competition Michelle had lost 50kg – 45.5% of her body fat – and was named *The Biggest Loser* champion of the season.

“When I showed up at that finale I was a changed person. I really truly began to walk in love and forgiveness towards my mum,” she says.

“The scale ultimately wasn’t going to define me. My weight wouldn’t define me. The smile on my face wasn’t defining me. It was God all along that was defining me. To

know that I could truly hand it over to God, who was in every way big enough to handle everything, and that He wasn’t going to see all the junk and run away.”

Michelle explains that “being in control is really me being out of control” which drove her to put her faith, trust and obedience in Jesus Christ alone.

“So that’s why I have Christ first in my life, ‘cos I know that in Him is really my full life,” she says, concluding with one of her favourite verses from Psalm chapter 121 verse 1 to 3.

“I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let [my] foot be moved; He who keeps [me] will not slumber.” •



Michelle Aguilar's 2011 book



Undeniable reality

A car accident, a chaplain’s words and the constant presence of a cross confirmed the indisputable truth for Sandeep

While his highly religious Indian family worshipped an unknown god, Sandeep Dhaliwal felt unsettled with a deep inward sense that his Creator was knowable both personally and physically.

“As a young boy I was so devout I would walk bare foot 10km to the temple to pray to an unknown God,” Sandeep recalls.

“When I asked my brothers who God was, they always said, ‘God is one’. I always replied, ‘I know God is one, but who is He?’”

“Nobody, not even the writings of this religion’s gurus could tell me who God was. Everyone was simply following a religion of traditions and culture, but not having a relationship with God.”

Sandeep investigated the multitude of gods of other religious systems, but was unimpressed by the lack of physical evidence for their existence.

“These religious stories seemed fanciful and mythical, because they were not grounded in any archaeological facts or a geographical location. The realm of the gods was always separate from our physical existence.”

Sandeep decided to dismiss all religion and soon turned to excessive partying at university but was kicked out for poor academic performance.

He later collided head-on with a truck after drink-driving and as blood pooled around him in his crumpled car he was gripped with fear that he was about to die.

He remembers crying out, “Whatever God is real, save me!” Immediately two men pulled him out of his car. Hanging on the mirror of their car was a cross, a symbol of Christianity.

Still more interested in partying than God, Sandeep took his father’s offer to study in Australia, so he could party even harder. The first day he arrived in Perth, a street evangelist handed him a Bible which he tossed aside.

Despite his religious indifference, Sandeep remembers feeling drawn to Notre Dame, the only religious university in Perth, and chose their highly-rated nursing degree so he could help people.

“You can also imagine my surprise at seeing a cross in every classroom and throughout the university,” he says.

Sandeep was immediately drinking with fellow students but encountered more of Christianity when he became

friends with a Christian student at his first nursing lab.

“He was a Christian pastor and he spoke of his God, Jesus Christ, as if he knew Him and had a personal relationship. He would pray before exams and include me in the prayer. I definitely felt anxiety disappear each time and amazingly passed every single exam, whilst so many people failed.

“As his prayers were answered before my eyes, I realised that Jesus is real – not a myth nor a religion but a real living God you could interact with.”

As he struggled with an assignment and his own beliefs, in the university library Sandeep uttered his first genuine prayer to Jesus: “If you are real help me with this assignment.”

“Again, immediately I felt a hand on my shoulder and a staff member asked, ‘Can I help you?’ I was shocked, it was instant answer to prayer.”

Despite receiving another Bible from his student friend, Sandeep did not read it until a chaplain gave him another one during his nursing practical at a nursing home.

The chaplain told him, “God has chosen you and is reaching out to you.”

“I was amazed,” Sandeep says. “This was God, the God who died for my rebellion against Him on a cross, the God who saved me from a car accident reaching out to me once again.

“I started to read the Bible, and within three months I understood what Jesus had done for me and gave Him my life in a flood of tears.”

Sandeep has now finished nursing studies, with credits and distinctions despite English being his second language.

“I no longer drink or smoke,” he says gladly, “and for the past year I have volunteered as a Street Chaplain in Perth. This street ministry sends people out on the street at night with a first aid kit to ‘nurse’ people in need and show the love of Jesus.

“It was Jesus who opened the door in that car crash and it is Jesus who I asked to save me from my failure.

“My search is over. I know God is the one and same God who revealed Himself to us in His son, the Lord Jesus Christ. I now know who God is.

“As Jesus said, ‘Seek and you will, find knock and the door will open, ask and you will receive.’” •

THE BIGGEST LOSER EFFECT

BY JIMMY YOUNG

UPON reflecting on why people do not follow through on big decisions or life choices they make, I have discovered that it comes down to ‘The Biggest Loser Effect’.

If you have been living under a rock for the last decade, *The Biggest Loser* is a reality-TV show where overweight contestants train, diet and get help to shed the kilos.

You know what is surprising though? Many winners of the Biggest Loser in America put back on significant weight.

First season winner Ryan Benson started *The Biggest Loser* at 149 kg, and won the show with a weight of 94 kg. His last known weight was 136 kg.

Third Season Winner Erik Chopin started *The Biggest Loser* at 185 kg and won the show with a crazy weight of 87 kg. He then ballooned to 166 kg, then came down again to 111 kg.

These are people who saw the benefits of their

decisions and hard work, but still were unable to maintain their ‘winning’ weight. According to the Myspace blogs of Ryan Benson and Season 3 winner Kai Hibbard, both dehydrated themselves in the sauna and ate and drank as little as possible in the week before the final weigh-in.

The Biggest Loser happens in a controlled environment with no connection to the real world.

In the real world, people who work out six hours a day for weight loss are not inspirational, they are obsessive-compulsive.

Contestants are not taught to exercise or how to eat well in a way that fits into real life. Once the show is over, they go back to their 9-to-5 lives, which do not include controlled diet and exercise.

The Biggest Loser Effect happens when decisions do not last in the real-world. It happens when you have not let the decision travel from your mind to the everyday decisions that you make.

Decisions and life changes can only work if you plan for living them every day, asking questions like:

“How am I going to make this decision today?”

“What can I do to make this change stick?”

“What can I avoid doing so this choice lasts?”

If you wake up in the morning and decide you want to quit drinking or smoking, you have not magically changed your behaviour. It is the decisions you make after that which changes your behaviour.

If you decide to start eating healthier, but do not live out that choice when you decide what to eat or what to buy then what good has it achieved?

Decisions that last are the ones that are made every day. Decisions that do not last, never make it to the everyday aspect of life.

It does not have to be like that. Make your decisions count, live your choices every single day and kill The Biggest Loser Effect. •



Destiny: NEVER TOO LATE

TWO THIEVES WERE SEALED WITH THE SAME FATE BUT THEIR DESTINIES WERE OPPOSITE

As the most disgraceful form of execution under ancient Roman rule, crucifixion was designed as a punishment to maximize pain and suffering for the worst of criminals.

These criminals were flogged and made to carry their cross before being nailed to it and hung up under a sign with their crime written on it.

The most famous and unusual of deaths by crucifixion was Jesus Christ the Nazarene.

While the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate found no grounds to crucify Jesus, he gave in to the demands of a jealous crowd stirred up by the religious mob.

Hatred towards Him had arisen when He claimed to be God and challenged the religious authority of the day with His piercing teaching about God's forgiveness for those who are humble of heart and His miraculous signs that proved His divine authority.

Hanging on a cross at Golgotha, the sign under Jesus mockingly read "This is the King of the Jews".

On both sides of Jesus hung two thieves who had been sealed with the same fate.

Joining the mocking crowd, one thief shouted out to Jesus "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" (Luke chapter 23).

He hurled insults despite his situation but was quickly rebuked by the criminal on the other side of Jesus who retorted, "Don't you fear God since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

Turning to Jesus this thief humbly added, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom."

Having acknowledged that he was getting what his deeds deserved and yet that Jesus was God and without sin, something amazing happened.

Jesus turned to this thief and answered him saying, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

This man came and Jesus received him instantly into his everlasting Kingdom as they were dying together.

Suddenly the cruelty of death lost its sting and the guilt of past sins was replaced with a reassurance that Jesus did not hold anything against this thief because of his humility and faith in Him.

No matter what you have done, where you have been or what experiences you have had in life, know this: it is never too late to turn to Jesus in this life.

Like the example of the thieves next to Jesus, God's everlasting promise to you is that He "resists the proud but gives grace (undeserved kindness) to the humble" (James 4:6).

His arms are always open ready to receive you if you humbly come to Him in faith with a genuine desire to submit everything to Him. •



Not forsaken in fear and doubt

There was only one thing to do when Paul's fearless pursuits did not satisfy...

Paul Yow was forced to look to his childhood for answers on how to radically alter his lifestyle when alcohol, girls and computer games, left him feeling guilty, depressed and suicidal.

"I didn't know anyone who was more miserable than me and I knew I needed something to change," Paul says.

"I used to get drunk often, sometimes so drunk my memory would go blank. I also felt jealous of others and I treated women poorly – I really just wanted them for what they could give me."

Paul felt haunted by the guilt of his lifestyle especially since he had learnt in Sunday school and at a religious primary school, that he was not living in a way that pleased God according to the Bible.

"I always believed in God and in Jesus but I did not surrender to His will and His teachings, I still wanted to live life my way," Paul shares.

"Sometimes I felt terrible for what I was doing and would often think about God. I didn't like being around people and believed there were evil spirits around me because of how depressed and anxious I was. I always felt like the most uncomfortable person in the room."

When days spent sleeping and playing computer games did not help, Paul plotted to end his own life.

"My plan was to commit suicide after I had run out of money but I didn't end up going through with it," he confesses.

Eventually he decided to accept an invitation to attend church with his brother, who had recently become a Christian.

"I thought that maybe I would give my search for God one last go and some people from church prayed with me after the service," Paul recalls.

Thoughts and feelings of anxiety and depression continued to fill him, however, until the day he remembers praying a simple prayer to God.

"I remember praying, 'God I hardly have any strength left and I have hardly anything to offer You but whatever I have I give it to You'. In that moment, when I gave my life over to Jesus, something changed," he says.

"Suddenly I felt happy and at peace and all this darkness that was on me was no longer there! I believe that it was God helping me to pray because it was not something that I could have done on my own at that time."

From there Paul remembers that things got easier and says he felt "God's loving presence" and a joy he had never experienced before.

"I started to enjoy being around other people and began praying and going to church. I even felt motivated to go back to work and finish my apprenticeship."

Yet, four years later, doubts and fear started to creep



Paul Yow

back into Paul's life and old habits resurfaced.

He says that for the next three years, "I just felt like I had no relationship with God because I did not 'feel' God's presence like I used to. I began to fear that I would die without Jesus and go to hell."

Yet despite this, he remembers feeling a glimmer of hope when a movie scene or the lyrics of a song reminded him about God's grace and forgiveness.

"Then I began to feel God's presence and joy again when I sang to Him and this just kept building as God began to restore me to Himself," Paul says.

Ultimately Paul realised that, despite his doubts, God will never abandon those who have trusted in Jesus.

He read in Romans chapter 8 verse 38 and 39, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Having returned to church and reconnecting with his Christian friends, Paul says God has shown him that true joy, love, hope and peace come from continually looking to Jesus in faith.

"I don't think the true Christian life is supposed to be easy, there are some painful lessons to be learnt – we need to be disciplined and we need to 'die' to selfish desires – but the reward is worth it.

"It really is true that God loves everybody and forgives our sins, but we have to accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour and truly believe it to experience the fullness of His blessings in our lives." •

"I always felt like the most uncomfortable person in the room"

Do miracles still happen today?

MANY PEOPLE don't believe miracles occur, explaining them away as coincidences. In the past, I did the same, until I began to recognise God's fingerprints on my life, I remembered past trials, including a serious illness that sent me to the hospital when I was only seventeen. It wasn't until ten years later, after another surgery, that a different doctor told me I was lucky to be alive. Lucky? I don't think so. Blessed? Yes, that's more like it. A miracle? You bet!

According to Webster's Dictionary, the primary definition of a miracle is: *an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs*. Synonyms for miracle are marvel, phenomenon, revelation, surprise and wonder.



BY CAROL ROUND

RR Niebuhr, a Harvard Divinity School professor, said, "It's not that modern man cannot believe in miracles, it's just that he needs to be shown how."

We need to live with the understanding that life in itself is a miracle. God wants us to appreciate the miracles all around us – the miracle of changing seasons, the miracle of our complex

bodies with all parts working together to keep us alive and the miracle of each breath we take. The list could go on.

Knowing God is a miracle too!

In an article titled, *Can You Recognise a Miracle?*, Dr John Chirban of Harvard Medical School said, "The person who is spiritually attuned knows God." And note what Soren Kierkegaard wrote: "Prayer does not change God, but it

changes him who prays. The natural (human) cannot know the supernatural (God), but prayer is the supernatural medium by which humans can make contact with God – and be transformed. What do the spiritually attuned accomplish? They exercise their capacity, their potential to know God, which is the transforming miracle of their life."

Maybe we are too consumed with worry, responsibilities and the distractions of life to recognise the miracles. Maybe we take for granted the life we have been given. But we have not earned life. We have been given life through a marvellous miracle, a gift from our Creator God.

Albert Einstein, who had a deistic belief that a God exists, once said, "There are two ways to live: you can live as if nothing is a miracle; you can live as if everything is a miracle."

Which way are you living? •



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"The void that I had in my heart is now filled," says Erin DeOtte

Love beats depression

Erin is no longer in a "pit of despair" due to friend's suicide

Adopted by loving parents as a miracle survivor of infant heart problems, Erin DeOtte knows God loves her even in the midst of battling depression.

Erin was given six months to live after being born with a rare heart ventricle disorder but today, at 18 years of age, she credits her survival as "a miracle from the Lord."

"God provided everything for my family, from plane tickets to rooms at Ronald McDonald house, to a Christian doctor and nurses whom I was under the care of," Erin says.

It had been a severe test of her adoptive parents' faith in God but they stood strong and were later able to encourage Erin to surrender her life to Jesus as a little girl.

"My little six-year-old self was so excited about the good news of Jesus, I told everyone I could, and even led several of my friends to know Him," she says.

Over the following years Erin felt a growing desire to become a missionary overseas but her confidence in pursuing this dream was shaken after a personal tragedy.

"Fear of my inability deepened into depression when my best friend of six years committed suicide out of the blue. Although it wasn't my fault and there was nothing I could do, I blamed myself and thought that God couldn't use me because I was afraid," she explains.

Pushing through these fears, Erin travelled to Brazil to "make a difference in Jesus' name" but her passion for God dwindled quickly when she returned.

"I was in a fight with a good friend and hurt several others. I felt alone, desperate for attention and love, and saw no light in the world," she explains.

Suicidal thoughts soon surfaced as her depression deepened.

"There was always something stopping me from suicide: God – but I didn't know it at the time," she adds.

A month after her high school boyfriend broke up with her, broken-hearted Erin was pushed to the edge and sent a text message to her best friend, saying "I can't do this anymore".

Thankfully the next morning, she recalls, "I had a message from my best friend, and he reminded me of the love that he, my other friends, my parents, my sister, and most of all God had for me.

"If I hadn't read that text, I wouldn't be alive to tell my story. I continued on, but this time with my best friend at my side, both of us working to get back on the right track with God."

Erin honestly shared her struggles with leaders and her youth minister at a Christian camp, but even as she felt close to God and to her friends, she did not understand why she was still hurting and hating herself.

Three weeks before another mission trip to South Africa, Erin remembers God intervened through a visiting speaker at a youth camp, who shared about what she had been

pushing away: God's forgiveness.

"I did not think I was worthy of complete forgiveness because of the things that I had done. I sobbed as the speaker closed his message.

I hadn't ever thought that little, depressed, broken and scared me, could ever be forgiven by the God of the universe.

"But I had forgotten one thing: 'If God's grace is an ocean, then we're all sinking'. Oh man, I wasn't just sinking, I was drowning in His undeserved kindness.

"Every time I had felt love, stopped from ending my life, seen a light at the end of the tunnel, I had accredited it to human works, but all this time it was God, calling me back to Him."

Going to South Africa with this new

hope dwelling in her, Erin felt God's unconditional love flow through her to the children she worked with and she soon rededicated herself to becoming a missionary worker.

Since learning to show love in this new way, Erin says, "The void that I had in my heart is now filled to the brim and pouring over with knowledge of God's everlasting love."

Although knowing she may always struggle with depression, "just as lying or stealing may be someone else's 'thorn'", but, she adds, "I know now that there is nothing my God cannot handle."

Despite her depression, Erin says she does not doubt that God has the best plan for her life.

"Though I was hurt and in a pit of despair, God used my depression and my brokenness that I may help others that I may relate to those who are like me; He will use my journey for His good."

Believe it or not

BY CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Moral code affects behaviour



"In an article in the Wall Street Journal entitled "Why we lie", Dan Ariely, author of the new book *The (Honest) Truth About Dishonesty*, overturns popular modern-day ideas about morality.¹ He recounts how experiments he and colleagues performed at the University of California showed conclusively that cheating does not correspond to the established rationalist model of human behaviour. That is, the idea that people lie and cheat if the perceived benefits (say, money) outweigh the costs (the possibility of getting caught and punished). Instead, Ariely's team found that simply reminding people of the 10 Commandments had a dramatic effect on their behaviour.

In one experiment, Ariely and his co-researchers split 450 participants into two groups. He recalls: "We asked half of them to recall the Ten Commandments and the other half to recall 10 books that they had read in high school. Among the group who recalled the 10 books, we saw the typical widespread but moderate cheating. But in the group that was asked to recall the Ten Commandments, we observed no cheating whatsoever."

No cheating whatsoever—a dramatic effect indeed. And that wasn't all. "We even reran the experiment on a group of self-declared atheists, asking them to swear on a Bible, and got the same no-cheating results yet again."

Ariely concludes: "This experiment has obvious implications for the real world. While ethics lectures and training seem to have little to no effect on people, reminders of morality—right at the point where people are making a decision—appear to have an outsize effect on behavior." Or more simply, in the TV series *NCIS*, the character Dr Donald "Ducky" Mallard (played by David McCallum) was asked to explain the difference between ethics and morals. Ducky answered, "Well the ethical man knows he shouldn't cheat on his wife, whereas the moral man actually wouldn't."

FIND OUT MORE AT CREATION.COM

1. Why we lie, online.wsj.com, 26 May 2012.

MYTHS ABOUT HEAVEN

BY MARTIN DUFFIELD, ST JOHN'S ANNERLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Myth #3 – Heaven exists, Hell does not?

A.C. Nielsen survey results published in 2009 showed that 56% of Australian respondents said they believed in Heaven, but only 38% believed in Hell. Life-after-death has, for nearly half of the population, been abandoned. Nearly two thirds of us see no place for Hell as a place of final justice, for unforgiven wrong-doing and permanent rejection of God.

We may well ask at this point, is our behaviour and belief really relevant to our eternal destiny after this life? Can we actually "raise hell" now and yet expect "Heaven" later?

Firstly, the most powerful argument for Hell's necessity comes from the simple demand for justice. Without an afterlife, mass murderers receive the same final fate as charity workers. Everyone receives the same for their wrongs in this life, no matter how serious they are – physical death, alone.

Further, if there is a Heaven but no Hell, there is still no complete justice. In the end the mass murderer and the petty criminal are punished the same – no Heaven. But Hell, with its preceding judgement, addresses all human evil as to degree and frequency through God who sees, knows and judges perfectly.

Secondly, what is it like? Jesus described it in very daunting terms. He said it was a place of "outer darkness". He spoke of sorrow in terms of "weeping and grinding of teeth". He said it was "prepared for the Devil and His angels" thus not designed for humans. The last book of the Bible, "the Revelation of Jesus Christ", calls the final place of the rebellious "the lake of fire".

Lastly, it is described in several places as a prison. Why? God has (ten) laws, as every ordered society does. And when God's laws are violated it is called "sin." The "wages of sin" is physical, death, after which comes the "second death" which is "the lake of fire" (Revelation 20, verse 14). However, Hell is also unlike earthly jails – there is no parole, no escape. The duration is forever and that is Hell's worst feature. Wishing Hell is not there will not help. Public opinion cannot change it; only avoiding it will – God's way.

English writer C.S. Lewis once said that "Hell is locked from the inside". In part, it is true because, as he says elsewhere, God has done everything necessary to enable you to avoid this place. You can avoid it, as you can earthly penalties, through a pardon.

While God is just and cannot ignore the guilty, He can actually satisfy justice and offer mercy. How? If you can accept that Christ went to Hell on the Cross as full payment for your breaches of God's Laws (justice), you can be forgiven (mercy). If you will cease from sin and submit to His will, you can avoid eternal "jail." If not, you must justly suffer for your own sins as He said, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

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Sleepless without love

BY JOANNA DELALANDE

From fists to knives and guns, Nicky Cruz had tried them all, but to his surprise love turned out to be a more powerful weapon.

Nicky was born in Puerto Rico to parents who were followers of spiritism. He witnessed his mother being possessed by the devil and to this day he recalls with disgust the animal sacrifices, the blood, the repulsive smell, and the evil spirit that used to manifest inside his mother and fill him with terror.

He spent hours locked in a room with pigeons and was knocked unconscious by his mother numerous times.

Years later in New York, Nicky

became the leader of Brooklyn's notorious Mau-Mau gang, exercising the same kind of violence he had experienced as a child.

"I wanted to do to [others] what my mother did to me," he explains in his video testimony.

"I wanted them to know how it feels to get hurt. And I used to feel good when I hurt people.

"You can get high on sex, you can get high on alcohol, you can get high on all kinds of drugs," Nicky says. "I was high on hate and violence."

But his vengeful acts of violence did not appease his brokenness. "Loneliness became like a seductive woman that would crawl inside of my chest and eat me," he describes vividly.

"The most you can live the way I used to live is 20 years," Nicky says. "I was 19 already. In one year I would be dead."

That is until preacher David Wilkerson told Nicky of God's love for him. Nicky threatened him and David replied; "You could cut me up into a thousand pieces and lay them in the street, and every piece would still love you."

With that one sentence Nicky was exposed to love in a way he had never been before.

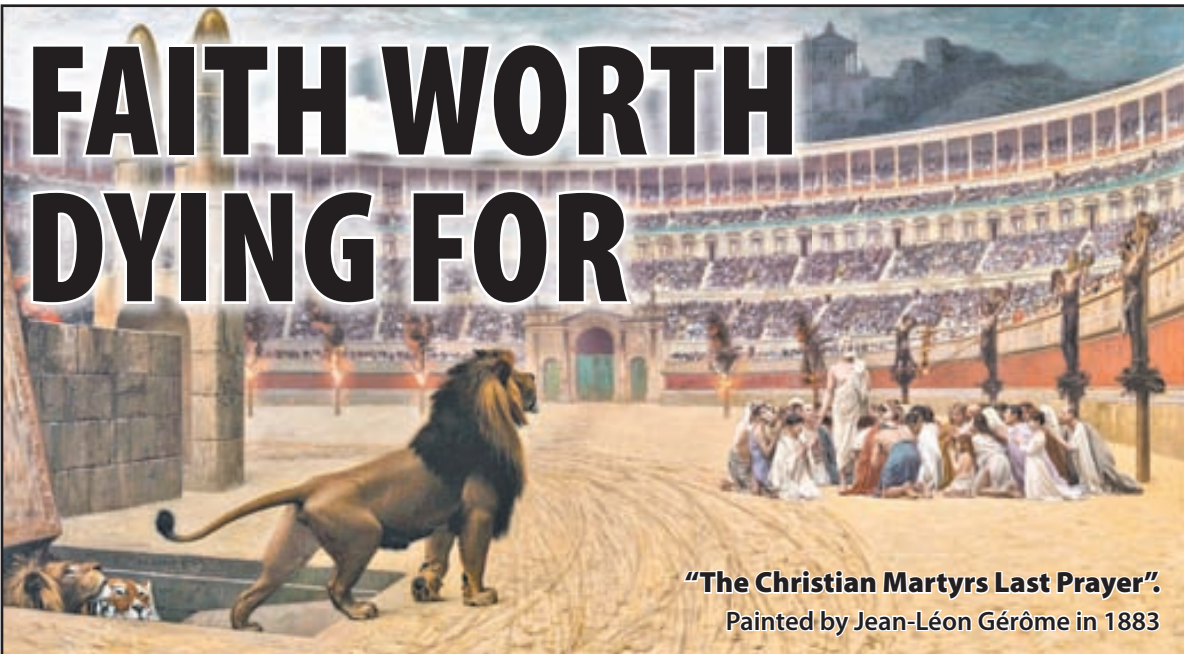
"For two weeks I could not sleep thinking about love," he says.

Nicky brought his gang to an evangelistic meeting David was speaking at in an attempt to "teach (David) a lesson".

In the end it was Nicky who learnt a lesson; one about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and what that meant for his life. He

"I used to feel good when I hurt people"

FAITH WORTH DYING FOR



"The Christian Martyrs Last Prayer"
Painted by Jean-Léon Gérôme in 1883

BY CAITLYN CHOVEAUX

I WAS immediately sick to the stomach when I saw the beheading of 21 Egyptian Christians in Libya recently.

This sort of evil is nothing new I remind myself, as if somehow this will lessen the impact, which it does not.

Over the centuries, millions of Christians have died for affirming their faith in Jesus Christ – from facing gladiators and animals in the ancient Roman arena to this recent jihadist execution-style killing.

Christians are the world's most persecuted religious group with around 7-10,000 Christians killed every year for their faith, according to Professor Thomas Schirrmacher of the International Society for Human Rights.

With the increasing threat of violence, some have argued that terrorist bombings and Christian martyrdom are the same and that dying for one's religious faith is illogical and perhaps downright stupid.

In response to this, well-known Christian pastor and author John Piper clarified the Christian view of death:

"Christians do not love death. They love Christ. If He bids them come and die, they count it an honour to suffer and die for the sake of the Name [of Jesus] (Acts 5:41). Jesus showed Peter 'by what kind of death he was to glorify God' (John 21:19). And He promised His disciples, 'some of you they will put to death' (Luke 21:16).

The Bible describes Christians as those who proclaim that Jesus is Lord over the Universe and who will never deny His love, goodness, and supremacy above all powers, even under threat of death.

In many countries, leaving your family's religion and identifying as a Christian can result in the death penalty or, at least, being completely ostracized from one's family and community. Syria, Pakistan, Iraq, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia (to name a few) carry some of the heaviest penalties for Christians today.

Countries that operate under extreme dictatorship, namely North Korea, will imprison anyone found with a Bible in their hands and send them to "re-education" camps.

With such penalties, why are Christians in these places prepared to risk death to proclaim their faith in Jesus?

They sacrifice their lives because Jesus sacrificed His life for them on the cross and asked them to proclaim God's love and salvation offered to all mankind through Him.

"Love your enemies," Jesus said, "bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:44)."

The Apostle Paul, who wrote many books of the Bible's New Testament, changed from being a persecutor of Christians to a Christian missionary who blessed his persecutors after encountering the resurrected Jesus Christ. After beatings, many whippings and years in jail Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans, "Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse." Many of those who guarded Paul in the Roman jail also trusted in Jesus due to his influence.

According to historical record, Paul was eventually tortured then beheaded for his faith in Christ by Roman Emperor Nero in 67 A.D.

Before His death and resurrection, Jesus warned people saying, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of [God] who can destroy both soul and body in hell ... Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven (Matthew chapter 10)."

Jesus Christ warned people that life would not be easy if they followed Him but it would be worth it. He died to bring people life – not this life as we know it but eternal life with Him in heaven.

In Australia we do not face the kind of persecution others experience but let us not take things lightly. If you are afraid of what others may think if you decided to become a Christian, consider the weight of eternal consequences. This life is just the beginning of eternity – your eternal destiny is your choice. What would you die for?



Nicky Cruz turns over a former weapon to David Wilkerson for a Bible (Image courtesy of Worldchallenge.org)
TOP: Nicky Cruz today

learned how much God loved him. He learned he could be forgiven for all the wrong he had done.

Tears began pouring down his face and he fought them, but then he gave in and surrendered to the Lord. "I let Jesus hug me," Nicky describes. "I let my head rest on his chest. I said: 'I'm sorry. Forgive me.' And for the first time I told somebody I loved them. I said: 'I love you, Jesus'."

"When I opened my eyes I had a new heart. I had been born again. I was a child of God."

Nicky left the gang and joined Bible College where he met his wife. Together they set up *Teen Challenge*, a program to help troubled teens.

Nicky even brought his brother, father and his mother to Christ in what he described as the greatest success of his life.

The father of four now travels the world as an evangelist and head of

Nicky Cruz Outreach spreading this message: "You can take all of this deep pain and this hurt and this deep rejection and do what I did: give it to Christ. And you're going to be happier with your life."

Nicky's full story is available through his two autobiographies, *Run Baby Run* and *Soul Obsession*, as well as the 1970 film version of his conversion *The Cross and the Switchblade*.

Easter: unfinished business

BY RICK LEWERS

Do you ever have trouble finishing things? The Easter long weekend coming up is a good time to get things finished.

I have to say that the worst unfinished things in my life have always been relational ones. Forgiveness not given, sorry not said, truth not declared, issues in life not properly addressed, needed help not sought. Of course, when it comes to having a relationship with God, it is unsaid prayers, God's unread Word, insufficient trust to do His will and a failure to enjoy His friendship. For you it may even be an unwillingness to trust in Him at all – and that is the most dangerous unfinished work in your life.

It is one thing for us to have unfinished business with God, but for God to have unfinished business with us, that is quite another thing. When Jesus came into our world, He came to finish the work God the Father had given Him to do. It was a remarkable work, designed to rescue all humanity. That includes you.

It was on that first Good Friday, as Jesus hung crucified from the cross, that He said, "It is finished". On that day, man and devil had done their worst while God displayed His best in a completed work. The wrath of God was spent as Jesus paid the wages of our sin, enduring the cross until all was sufficiently done to end hostility between God and man and offer a reconciling hand.

On that first Easter Friday, condemnation gave way to a gracious forgiveness.

At the end of that day, there was no unfinished business for God and by the end of that first Easter Sunday, Jesus' resurrection ended hopelessness with the promise of a full and eternal life. In this world there's always unfinished business, but for anyone who puts their trust in the finished work of Jesus there is no unfinished business with God.

Have you put your trust in Jesus Christ? That is the big Easter question.

If not, then you must understand that God still has unfinished business with you. And that is concerning. Please contact your local Christian church and let them talk with you further about the Easter truths of God's great love for you, expressed in Christ.

Have a great and safe Easter.



GARDENING

BY ANNE DAVIES

Kill pests without chemicals



Most home gardeners use more pesticide per hectare than many farmers. This is not good for our health and can lead to various pests diseases and weeds, developing resistance to many chemical products.

A better way is Integrated Pest Management (IPM), a system that reduces or eliminates the use of toxic garden pesticides. This will require more knowledge of your garden's ecosystem, but this will come from observation and experience.

Lower stress improves plant health:

- 1) Keep adding compost and mulch to your garden, because healthy soil produces disease-resistant plants;
- 2) Try to use plants that are suited to your climate and soil; your local nursery can advise you with your plant selection;
- 3) Avoid 'mono cropping' by planting a good mixture of plants (with similar growing requirements such as water and fertiliser);
- 4) When buying plants or receiving plants from a friend's garden, always inspect for pests and diseases.

Healthy ecosystem

Create a garden that is friendly to pest predators, such as frogs, birds and insects (like lady beetles). Ponds, flowers, rocks and logs provide habitats and food; where possible, create an area in your garden that has plants native to your locality.

Instead of chemical products, use organic sprays such as garlic, chilli and pyrethrum which repel the 'bad' bugs, but don't harm the 'good' bugs.

Try this quick and easy organic spray recipe:

- 8-10 chillies, finely sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed and cut roughly
- 1 tablespoon of soap flakes
- 1 litre of boiling water

Combine in a glass jar and set aside for 24 hours. Strain and pour into a spray bottle; keeps for two weeks.

Another way to get rid of pests is remove the larger ones by hand and squash them (or try using a vacuum cleaner to suck up bugs). Yeast-based lures, such as Vegemite and beer traps, work well to attract and drown bugs, while barriers, such as grease bands and hessian can deter pests from climbing up plants to the foliage. Try keeping snails and slugs away from small seedlings by placing sawdust around them. Good hygiene also reduces pest and disease. Disinfect hand tools after use (always disinfect them after removing dead or diseased growth before moving on to the next plant). Remove rotten fruit and diseased leaves from the garden.

Rotate your crops in your vegetable patch and use companion planting. Many plants help repel pests – for instance French marigolds repel nematodes (colourless, microscopic worm-like animals), and garlic, chives and onions can repel plant-eating insects.

Anne Davies is a qualified horticulturist and is the nursery supervisor and horticultural trainer at The Salvation Army's Tom Quinn Community Centre in Bundaberg, Qld.

Courtesy Salvation Army Warcry magazine

Building Better Marriages

CAPTAIN COOK'S RADICAL STEPS TO SAVE THE ENDEAVOUR

BY ROB FURLONG

The mid to late Eighteenth century was a high point for British navigation and exploration of the world. In 1770 Captain Cook charted the Eastern coastline of Australia and in 1789, following the mutiny on the Bounty, Captain William Bligh navigated a seven-metre boat carrying 18 other crewmen 6701 kilometres to Timor and safety.

It was an era of remarkable acts of courage and seamanship but there was one thing every seaman feared: running their ship aground on an uncharted reef which inevitably signalled disaster for both ship and crew.

The problem was not so much running aground on our coastline's numerous reefs but the high likelihood that waves would pitch the ship on its side. Constant pounding of the ship's topside by waves crashing over the reef would quickly break up the

ship – a possible death sentence for those on board.

Captain Cook had a close call when the Endeavour ran aground on the Great Barrier Reef, near to Cooktown as we know it today. Although the ship did not immediately pitch onto its side, Cook ordered the crew to dump into the sea whatever was unnecessary to their immediate survival, including the ship's valuable cargo and protective cannons. During high tide the lightened ship might then float off the reef towards shore.

The plan worked. The Endeavour and its crew were saved because Cook made the hard decision to throw off whatever was literally dragging the ship down to a watery grave.

Think in terms of your life being like a ship which has to navigate its way across the sea of human existence – our experience of life. At the end of the journey we all like to think that we will make it to port, to a safe harbour, secure in the knowledge that we have journeyed well.

Along the way we experience times when our ship of life is sailing well; the wind is for us and we make good headway. But sometimes the wind is against us and there is the ever present danger of unseen "reefs" that we can run aground on.

The "reef" may be a marriage breakdown or a rift with a close friend. It could be the loss of a loved one, a life threatening illness, depression or a breakdown. These reefs are threatening, they are very real and from time to time the ship of our life will crash into them. But they need not spell total disaster!

Like Cook, when we hit the reef, it is time to take stock of the situation, assess the damage that has been done to our "ship" and if necessary, throw overboard the excess cargo that we are carrying that will then enable us to re-float our ship.

The Apostle Paul spoke exactly of this experience when the ship of his life ran aground on the biggest reef he had ever encountered – the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus. Years later when he wrote about this experience Paul described his life as a ship that was filled with valuable cargo – his Jewish heritage, his ancestral lineage, his religious fervour and his commitment to the Jewish religion – but he came to the conclusion that "whatever was to my profit I now consider loss" (Philippians 3:7).



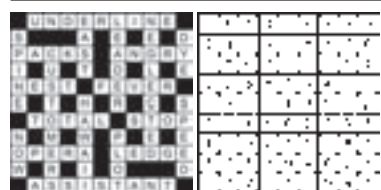
HMS Endeavour replica near Cooktown (Wikipedia)

In other words, the very things that he regarded as being valuable and that would assist him to gain a right standing with God he threw overboard that he might "gain Christ" (Philippians 3:8). Paul knew that he had to throw off everything that would hold back the ship of his life from making

it safely to shore.

The reason all of this is possible is because of what took place at the first Easter some 2000 years ago. Christ died for the sins of the world on Good Friday and then rose physically from the dead on Easter Sunday to demonstrate His victory over sin and death. And since that time, millions of people have found hope and security in Jesus when the ship of their lives have been threatened to be sunk by the reefs of life. By throwing overboard the cargo that held them back from knowing Jesus they have discovered new spiritual vitality, forgiveness from sin and the knowledge that their ship will safely make it to shore at the end of their journey.

What do you need to throw overboard this Easter?



COULD GOD LOVE SOMEONE LIKE ME?

Yes, He **LOVES** you and has a plan for your life

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**
"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (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.

"Lord Jesus, I need You now. Please forgive me for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Saviour and Lord. Thankyou that You loved me so much that You died on the cross for me. Take control of my life. Make me the person You created me to be. Amen"

The Lord Jesus says: "He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." (John 7:38)

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) _____

All overseas enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

Challenge Literature Fellowship
PO Box 978, Cloverdale WA 6985

Fax (08) 9453 3006 or email
info@challengenews.org

Computers & Technology

Smartwatches battle for your wrist

BY DARRYL BUDGE

This year the competition is hot for the crown of the most desirable and smartest watch that pairs with your smartphone via Bluetooth. In the race for your cash are the AppleWatch, Google's AndroidWear platform and Pebble (plus many fitness trackers not covered here). Here is an overview that will help you avoid buyers regret:



Pebble-Time Steel

PEBBLE (getpebble.com): Pebble was the first to sell 1 million smartwatches by focusing on 50m water resistance, up to 7-day battery life, step and sleep tracking, buttons-only, iOS and Android notifications with vibration, an e-paper screen visible in bright sunlight, phone music control and weather/news/stock updates via 6000+ customizable apps and watch-faces from developers. The plastic B&W-screen Pebble (out 2013) is \$140, or \$270 for Pebble Steel (out 2014). Time and Time Steel models (\$270 & \$390, out May 2015) with a 64-colour screen add a mic for voice responses to Android-4.3+ notifications and Gmail on iOS. 'Smartstraps' to add GPS, heartrate monitor, etc., and a time-scrolling interface will be added to all Pebble models ever sold. Best prices are on Amazon.com (check if currency conversion is the best deal).

ANDROID WEAR (android.com/wear): Like Android phones, Google works with Samsung, LG, Sony, Asus, Huawei and others to add their Android Wear operating system into a round or square full-colour smartwatch. On its own you can track steps or heart-rate, play stored music via Bluetooth headphones, or use one of 200 available Wear apps and games. Some models have built-in GPS, plus Android Wear will later support NFC for contactless payments (which some models have) and a SIM-card for data/calls. Paired with WiFi-internet or an Android 4.3+ phone, you can say "Ok Google" plus a query or action using Google Now, like write or respond to a message, search on Google, manage your calendar, and control music or your Chromecast. Google Now alerts appear based on time, location, your calendar, transit routes or flight time. Downsides: low-power mode can be dim outdoors; most models splash water resistance; ~2 day battery; Android 4.3+ phones only.



"Apple Watch"

APPLE WATCH (apple.com/watch): Compatible only with an iPhone 5 or above, this can be ordered from 11th April in 3 models: Apple Watch Sports (\$499+, aluminium bezel and toughened glass); Apple Watch (US\$799-\$1629, steel bezel and sapphire crystal screen); or Apple Watch Edition (18ct yellow or rose gold bezel, \$14,000+). All models detect heartrate and come in two case lengths, 38mm or 42mm, plus a variety of bands and buckles. Besides "Hey Siri" voice input, basic uses are calendar, maps, 'Apple Pay' (contactless payments), activity tracking, controls for music, camera, Apple TV and iTunes. Downsides: 18hr battery, no built-in GPS; all models just splash resistant



LG G Urbane (Wear OS)



Asus Zenwatch (approx. \$270)

For more on all smart wearables see wareable.com or techsmartwatch.com



OFF-COURT ADVANTAGE

Height and strength are on his side, but character matters most to Josh Duinker

Just shy of 7 feet tall, Dutch-Aussie centre Josh Duinker says it fulfilled a dream to slam baskets for his childhood heroes the Sydney Kings.

"It's been a dream to play in my home town," says Josh, who turns 26 this April. "And it's a real pleasure to play with these high character guys."

After a scholarship with Richmond University in the USA, the 104kg Kings No. 8 gained experience in the Spanish league, then had a stellar 2014 in Holland as the league's best rookie and centre, earning him a place on the Dutch national team.

The intrepid traveller's next stop will include an all-too-brief hon-

eymoon with American soon-to-be wife Courtney Dixon as he joins NZ NBL team Nelson Giants from April, right after the King's NBL season ends.

Josh recognises it has been a tough year for the Kings due to losses and injuries but points out "it's not all doom and gloom" with big wins against Perth and New Zealand.

While expressing his hope that Sydney's oldest team will regroup into their former glory, Josh told *Challenge* about his character reformation during his youth.

Like many on college campus, Josh admits he was "mainly building my life around myself".

"I would go crazy at parties and drink a lot," he says. "I tried to pursue pleasure, but it would never satisfy."

"Basketball became an avenue where I could get rid of my anger and frustration and leave it on the court."

"I felt there was an empty space in my heart. I knew there was a God and that I was not right with Him. I felt there was something more."

The answer came to him on a bus trip with his college team the Richmond Spiders.

"I saw two teammates on the bus reading the Bible. I thought, 'No-one ever reads the Bible!'"

"They said, 'You can have a personal relationship with Jesus.' That was really foreign to me."

One of those teammates became his roommate and invited him to meetings held by FCA, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, where he heard "really interesting testimonies of

athletes who live for Jesus and play sport."

"I believe in the Bible and I knew that I was not perfect in the eyes of God; I had done wrong, and that I needed to have a means of knowing forgiveness for my sins."

"I looked at other religions, but I knew that Jesus was the only Saviour who had laid down His life, paid the punishment for my sins, and He rose to life so that I could live."

He then weighed up whether he wanted to give up partying and female conquests to know Jesus' love and forgiveness. A fellow athlete then explained that what he was giving up was nothing compared to what he would gain.

"I will never forget what a baseball player in college said to me, 'Knowing Jesus is like giving up a bowl of cereal for a four course meal.'"

Josh began thinking, "Maybe I am limiting God – maybe He does have more in store for me than what I think."

In October 2008, his second college year, Josh recalls, "I asked God for help. I acknowledged I couldn't do it on my own and I needed Him to live the way He intended me to live."

That December he was baptised in water as a public declaration of his new life in Jesus.

"I was baptised with many of the guys I had been partying with in the past. To make a stand together for Jesus was really big. God was doing something special on campus."

After this, Josh says, "God changed the desires of my heart. He

replaced my 'heart of stone' and gave me a heart of flesh with new desires, as Ezekiel 36, verse 26, says.

"Immediately the desire to go out and go crazy at parties and drink a lot was gone. He gave me the desire to just want to please Him in everything, even in basketball."

His on-court anger faded away, he says, because "when I understood and experienced the love of God I had what the Bible calls 'the peace that passes all understanding'."

This love of God also changed the way he viewed his former lifestyle and gave him "a love for people".

"A relationship with Jesus means experiencing His love. He is a loving God and He wants us to know Him and His good purpose for our lives."

Now on the court as Kings No. 8, Josh says, "I am reminded of the eternity symbol, the everlasting life I have in Jesus, and that I want to glorify God with the tools and abilities He has blessed me with. The source of my passion to play basketball

comes from God."

Josh encourages those on the fence to freshly consider that "God always has the best intentions for our lives, so no matter what we're going through, good or bad, you can never go wrong if you pursue Jesus." •

Follow Josh on Instagram @joshduinker

"I [left] my anger and frustration ... on the court"



Kings centre Josh Duinker slam dunks against the Perth Wildcats in Sydney on December 18, 2014



Josh and Courtney Duinker

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