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# WHY SUFFERING STIRS US

**Horrific accident seriously injured Dan's mother and left him seeking answers to his suffering**

**W**ill my mother die, or be a vegetable? Will she be normal again someday? These were the questions that shattered a fun family holiday and the beliefs of nine-year-old Dan Paterson after a car crash ripped away the mother he had known. Though Dan's mother survived her shocking brain trauma, she

lost part of her vision, her ability to self-regulate emotions, and had to relearn basic tasks. "Watching a parent, who you think is an immovable object in your life, face their mortality – you start to wonder what is going on in the world," Dan says sadly. Up to that point, he remembers, "I had believed that God has a wonderful plan for your life, but that no longer matched my experience."

His reaction was to withdraw from the God he thought had betrayed him because He "offered nothing for me." After high school, he searched for purpose in life when he realised that most of his friends were just living to escape theirs. "On weekends they found some escapist experience, usually with alcohol, only to hate their everyday life," he explains. "That lifestyle seemed empty to me."



REVIVED: Dan Paterson is now an itinerant speaker on life's tough questions

The purpose of suffering and guilt also began to play on Dan's mind. "Maybe it was a hangover from my Christian upbringing, but there was something gnawing in me that wouldn't let me feel okay doing what my schoolmates were happy doing." Dan read the entire Bible in two months after a Christian co-worker suggested that it would provide him with some answers. "My questions about purpose, suffering and guilt were completely confronted in the New Testament accounts of Jesus Christ. As I read about Jesus' life I moved from atheism, scepticism and doubt to believing that this is a God whose character I can trust," Dan says.

"Jesus said, 'The greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And the second is like it, love your neighbour as yourself.'

"This meant that I was made for a relationship with God and to care for people outside of myself. Pointing upwards and outwards made sense to me, because when I was just trying to have fun experiences they eventually seemed to get empty again." On his question about suffering, Dan shares that Jesus' death on the cross – the "suffering of God on my behalf" – showed Him that "God suffers with us, and that He loves us." Dan also points out that the cross of Jesus made sense of his guilt. "This guilt was not just a psychological hang-up but a helpful part of my conscience telling me that I was outside the moral boundaries God designed for me to operate in, and that not everything is right between

me and God. Jesus' sacrifice was His provision for my guilt and separation from Him – it brought me back into a relationship with Him." This realisation led Dan to respond in commitment to Jesus' offer of forgiveness and new life at age 18. "I didn't hang up my questions. I didn't check my brain at the door," he adds after his decision. "Knowing God personally brought me into the security of a relationship where I was able to explore my questions and doubts, and I found an intellectually compelling way of interpreting human experience, human history, religions and philosophies." After volunteering in his church's youth ministry, Dan gained a Master of Arts in Theology and is now a church pastor and itinerant speaker for Ravi Zacharias Ministries, a global Christian apologetics movement.

● Turn to page 2

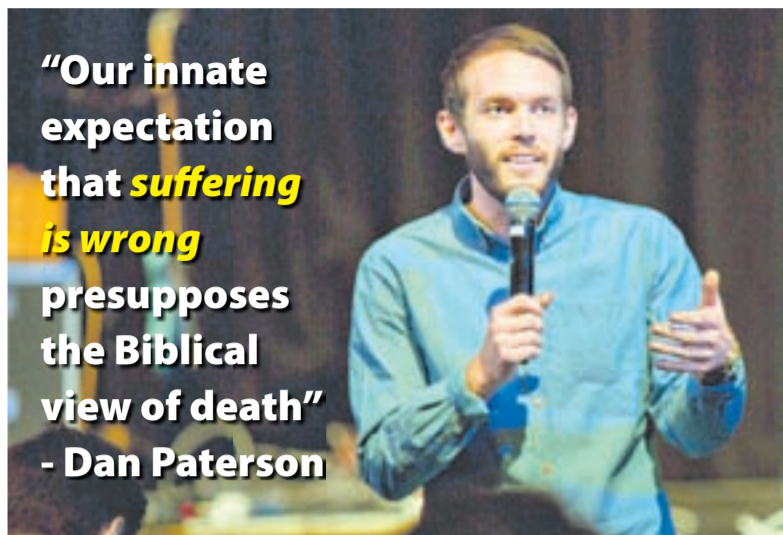
## Searching for greatness

**"I would give up everything to... play the game [again]"**  
- Michael Jordan

**MICHAEL JORDAN** is often described as the greatest basketball player of all time. In the minds of fans he will live on for decades as an icon of the sport, the holder of many trophies, and the face of his own shoe brand. But in reality, that person no longer exists. Michael turned 52 this February and retired from the NBA in 2003. All that is left of the sports star aside from his legacy is a man filled with nostalgia and unsure of what to do with himself. "I like reminiscing," he told ESPN writer Wright Thompson after he turned 50. "I do it more now watching basketball than anything. "Man, I wish I was playing right now. I would give up everything now to go back and play the game of basketball."

● Turn to page 2

# WHY SUFFERING STIRS US



**“Our innate expectation that suffering is wrong presupposes the Biblical view of death” - Dan Paterson**

● From page 1

“The Christian response to suffering,” Dan shares enthusiastically, “makes the most sense of our innate expectations and reactions to suffering.”

“If I were to reject the Bible, I would have to put something else in its place. According to other worldviews suffering is either deserved, an illusion, meaningless, or bad cosmic luck – none of which are illuminating or helpful.”

On the common charge that suffering disproves God’s existence, Dan responds, “Our innate expectation, that suffering is evil or wrong for humanity to experience, actually presupposes the Biblical view that suffering and death are enemies of humanity.”

“The Bible says that suffering is not the original state we were created into, nor is it the ultimate fate in which we are meant to exist. Finally, suffering is not going to be the eternal state for those who walk with God.”

What about natural disasters and weather events?

“There are meaningful responses to that as well,” Dan says. “C.S. Lewis said that perhaps suffering is ‘God’s megaphone to rouse a deaf world’, because without suffering we would be indifferent to the fact that all is not right between the Creator and His creation.”

Dan observes that when somebody is actually suffering, they do not need a philosophy, but a friend.

“The God of the Bible says He is near to the broken hearted and carries us in the midst of our suffering,” Dan shares.

“If you read the claims of Jesus for yourself, I think some will be surprised how far off the stereotyped caricatures of Jesus truly are.” ●

# Searching for greatness

● From page 1

Michael will give up everything? Meaning what? His wealth? His fame? His family? His children?

It seems a strong statement to make, although Michael probably meant it in that moment.

His entire identity is tied to basketball and to the persona he has built around it.

Having come to the end of his career he is confronted by his own mortality, his finality. He is forced to live exclusively in his own mind, through memories of a brighter past.

Michael is realising what all of us will one day have to come to terms with: that no matter how successful, famous, rich, or respected we become, those treasures are temporary.

Everyone – whether they are the emperor of their own army or the most loved artist of their time – will at some point be faced with the inevitability of their death, and the subsequent insignificance of everything they have accomplished while they were alive.

Faced with such comforting thoughts, it is no wonder Michael has become nostalgic, choosing instead to reminisce about his better days.

His successes on the field were usually celebrated with fist-pumps and shouts of victory, but not all basketball players do it that way. When he makes a shot or a good pass, young NBA player Stephen Curry pounds his chest and points to the sky.

Stephen says that sign symbolises his heart for God.

“It is something that my mum and I came up with in college, and I do it every time I step on the floor as a reminder of who I’m playing for,” Stephen says. “People should know who I represent and why I am who I am and that’s because of my Lord and Saviour. I can’t say that enough.”

Stephen might be one of the most talented players in his field at the moment, and was named NBA Most Valuable Player for 2014-2015, but his identity is not tied to his success in the sport.

He knows what Michael perhaps never knew: that his happiness cannot be linked to something as temporary and fragile as his sport, not when one injury could mean never being able to play again.

Stephen’s happiness is tied to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is not only constant, but eternal. He knows his



DIFFERENT CELEBRATIONS: Michael Jordan in 1997 and Stephen Curry in 2015

greatness and success comes not from himself but from God, and that it could easily be taken away. So he chooses to be grateful for what he has, to remain humble, and to not let success be his ultimate goal in life.

After years of riding a wave of fame and importance, the great Michael Jordan is left wondering: “How can I enjoy the next 20 years without so much of this consuming me? How can I find peace away from the game

of basketball?”

But Stephen knows what his answer to that question will be when his own greatness begins to fade.

“I love to play the game, and I love when good things happen,” he says.

“But when I get home, it’s about my family and just enjoying the blessings in my life without letting [basketball] define my personality or my character.” ●

- STORY BY JOANNA DELELANDE

## Crossword

- |                |                            |                    |                          |
|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>  | 8 Cross (4)                | 16 Established (9) | <b>DOWN</b>              |
| 1 Predator (5) | 9 Sounds (6)               | 18 Doesn't go (5)  | 1 Agronomists' study (5) |
| 4 Clogs (5)    | 12 Boss (6)                | 19 Burrows (5)     | 2 Vet's patients (7)     |
| 7 Meddle (9)   | 13 Docs for dachshunds (4) |                    | 3 Toy with a tail (4)    |



- 4 Regret (6)  
5 “The loneliest number” (3)  
6 Outbuildings (5)  
10 Slight (7)  
11 Powers a bike (6)  
12 Hurts badly (5)  
14 Puts into piles (5)  
15 Messy dresser (4)  
17 Water expanse (3)

SOLUTION PAGE 11

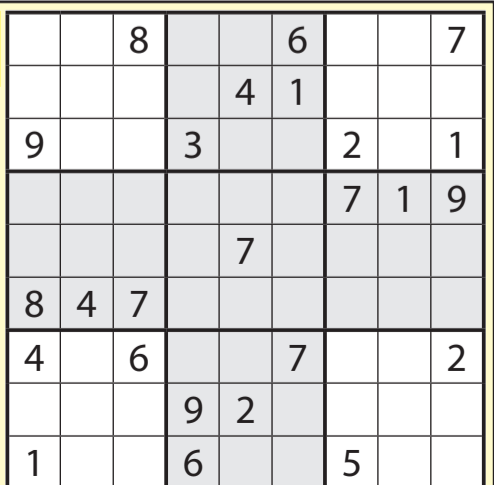
## Sudoku

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

Puzzle Level: Medium

6 3 8  
4 2 9  
7 5 1

SOLUTION PAGE 11



## STRIKING IT RICH

### What's more valuable than money?

BY ALAN BAILEY

**Have you ever dreamed of receiving a lot of money all at once? Be honest.**

Surely at least nine out of ten people have entertained some hope or fantasy about sudden wealth. For a few it happens. Their numbers come up in the lottery draw, they win on a TV show, or their assets or stocks rise on the markets, and they are instantly rich, or perhaps even millionaires!

Wow! What could you do with all that money?

The popular answer would be pay off all debts, or build a dream home. Next, a flash car or two. Then, overseas travel. The list could go on endlessly.

But every now and then someone asks the important question:

**“Will all this bring the happiness you want?”**

For some, getting rich quickly has been a disaster. There are pitfalls in having money and being known to have it. Many strangers will want it and ask for it relentlessly or take it by force. Relatives can expect a share or become offended if they don't receive any. What starts out as a blessing can soon become a curse.

Added to this, there are many people who simply cannot handle money. They spend it like water or invest it unwisely and lose it at breakneck speed. We have all heard stories of people whose marriages have broken down through arguments over money.

**There are positives**

There will be other scenarios. Some folk will be wise and anonymous about their abundance, keeping things in perspective. They will have the opportunity to do something worthwhile with their financial windfall. This is especially true when the needy are helped.

The statement “Money is the root of all evil” does not appear in the Bible. That book says, “The love of money is the root of many kinds of evil.” This cannot be denied. We should try and lose any fascination or affection we have for money, seeing it as useful but not the essence of life.

There are many things that are better than money and what it can buy. The love of a person close to you; respect and personal dignity; the simple enjoyments of life such as appreciation of health and beauty.

Importantly, there are gifts from God, like forgiveness, peace of mind, eternal life and simply knowing Him. Knowing God and His good gifts through Jesus Christ is wonderfully satisfying to the point that hankering after the things of this material world seems tawdry.

We must ask ourselves, “What really matters? What is of real value? God gave His Son for the world, paying a supreme price so that life could be ours as a gift.

“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift” (2 Corinthians 9, verse 15). ●

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# 'Help me before I kill myself'



## Peta recovered after she looked beyond herself

BY JOANNA DELALANDE

**A**fter 20 years of drug addiction, regular trips to jail and an overdose that nearly cost her life, Peta Walker is speaking at an addiction and recovery seminar 18 months clean and sober.

"I feel I am a blessing to my family now, not a burden," she says. "I am able to send money home to support and encourage my parents and three children Portia, Peter and Declan."

It is hard to believe the 38-year-old was not always so hopeful and full of life, as she spent over half her life controlled by drugs.

Peta grew up in a loving, supportive environment and attended church with her parents but rebelled from her family during her teenage years.

Struggling with insecurities and discomfort with who she was, she turned to alcohol and later drugs as a way of escape.

"I started drinking socially and smoking pot before moving to speed, heroin and methadone which was my drug of choice," she says.

She explains the times she spent in jail became a sort of relief, giving her a break from

her hectic lifestyle of chasing illegal substances.

Even after a particularly severe overdose landed her in a coma doctors doubted she would fully recover from, Peta returned to her life of drug abuse.

"During those 20 years I gave up on everyone," Peta recalls. "I even gave up on God. I couldn't look in the mirror because I hated what I saw."

It was not until three years ago that Peta, desperate for change and healing, remembered the God her family served.

She said: "God, if you are there and you love me, you have got to help me because otherwise I am going to kill myself."

Her prayer was answered through the Perth-based Fresh Start Recovery Programme, where medical treatment, counselling and rehabilitation helped her beat her addiction.

With new friends, new hope and a new job working as housing coordinator and Aboriginal liaison officer, Peta today is filled with confidence and a sense of purpose.

She credits only one person for this transformation in her life.

"I absolutely know that God has done this work in my life," she says. "I tried doing it on my own and with numerous rehabs but the only lasting way is God. When you let go and let God rule in your life He does amazing things for His glory."

"It's all about God now. I give him all the praise, honour and glory because my life is all about Him."

Peta encourages current patients at Fresh Start to beat their addictions and gives them the promise of a better future.

She hopes her story of a changed life will bring hope to the people around her and glory to the God who saved her.

"God is not just a Sunday God," she says. "I read my Bible daily and live my Christian faith every day. I thank God every day for what He has done, what He is doing and what He is going to do. I am excited about my life because I know that this is only the start."

FRESH START is based in Subiaco, WA, and can be contacted online at [freshstart.org.au](http://freshstart.org.au), or call 08 9381 1333

## NEW LIFE AFTER FATHER'S WOUND

### Lacking a male role model was no excuse for selfishness, Rod says

**W**ith dad absent and many financial struggles, Roderick Manton shares how he found freedom from his inner hurt and addictions.

"Dad was violent towards our family so my parents split," Rod explains.

"There were many areas of hurt in my heart because I grew up in a single parent home where we really struggled for basic needs. Life was tough, either bills were paid and we had no food or vice versa."

During this time there was one thing that always stood out to Rod, every time the family were in need his mum would gather the family together to pray.

"Every time we prayed to God for our needs, He answered in miraculous ways," he recalls.

Due to his father's absence Rod says he developed "daddy issues", had a low self-esteem and constantly sought attention from women in the wrong ways.

"I had no father figure to teach me how to treat women and to be a man," he says.

"I used to make excuses for the wrong things I did, like my addiction to pornography. I always saw myself as a victim. I lied to myself about it all saying I deserve to be selfish because of my family situation and what we had been through."

Meanwhile he says it was easy to view himself as "a good person" because he went to church. Yet he would judge his friends at footy for the wrong stuff they did rather than taking a closer look at his own life.

Rod's turning point came when his Christian girlfriend, Maddie, broke-up with him on their two-year anniversary.

"She found out that I had been flirting with other girls and lying to her about these things," he explains.



Rod with his wife Maddie

**"I had no father to teach me how to treat women"**

"I lied to her about the fact I was addicted to pornography. She couldn't trust me any more so we broke up and it knocked me right over."

Suddenly the consequences of his wrongs caught up with him and Rod realised that he had been a hypocrite and a liar.

"I cried and I cried, I was at the lowest point I have ever been in my life," he says.

"But God used this to help me see my sin for what it really was. He helped me see that my sin hurts God and other people around me. I saw that I am a liar, greedy, selfish, proud, and arrogant. I had a wrong view on women and sex and the list could go on.

"I was confronted by God, our perfect heavenly Father, who always answered my family's prayers when we were struggling. He never failed me. Whatever excuses I had seemed weak and pitiful."

It was at that point Rod remembers crying out to Jesus for forgiveness and a fresh start at

following Him.

"I really saw my need for Jesus to save me, not 'cos I am a good person who has made mistakes, but because at the core of myself I am sinful and it was separating me from God."

Suddenly God began changing his life, he says, and he felt motivated to connect with Him through prayer, reading the Bible and worshipping Him at church.

"Even though I still sometimes sin, the Holy Spirit reminds me that I am forgiven and it motivates me to want to do what God wants me to do instead of just my own thing," he explains.

"This meant that I had to call people and ask for their forgiveness. I had to forgive my dad for what he did to me and my family. I went through a two-year process of cutting off things in my life that caused me to sin, including certain friends, the computer and television – anything that would stir up temptation in my heart.

"I have also found that if we can't confess our sin to a close friend or our spouse, that sin still holds us captive."

Every time Rod feels tempted to go back to his old ways, he asks himself: "Do I really love and trust that obeying Jesus is the best thing for me? The answer has to be yes! Why? Because Jesus was willing to die for me!"

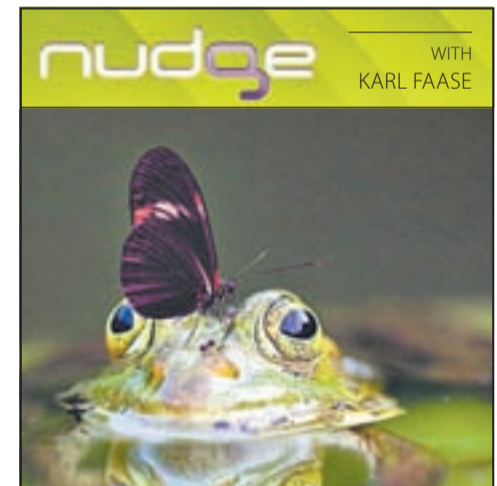
Ultimately, Rod believes there is freedom in obeying Jesus.

"Even though it might seem like we are missing out on life by denying our selfish desires; it won't matter in 1000 years when we're celebrating in heaven. I know that God loves me because of what He has done in and through His son Jesus Christ."

Back on track with God, Rod later got back together with Maddie and they married in June 2013.

"She has shown me much more love and forgiveness than I deserve," he explains.

"Every day we pray together and read the Bible together, knowing that its Christ's love for us that allows us to love each other in the way He calls us to."



## Clear pointers to truth

There are many who hold to an atheistic world view; who believe that not only is there no God, but that there is no evidence of God.

Many disagree with that view, including Gregory Ganssle, Senior Fellow and lecturer in Philosophy at Yale University, who contends that there are clear pointers to God's existence in our universe. He provides four of many such elements that an atheistic view cannot adequately or reasonably explain:

1. The universe is ordered rather than random.
2. It's a world with consciousness, rational investigative thought and reflection.
3. We are in a world of free agency. People can think and act independently.
4. It's a world with objective moral obligations – we instinctively know right from wrong.

Our universe is far from random.

For more Daily Nudge by Karl Faase, see [Nudge.org.au](http://Nudge.org.au)

# AWARE OF REAL SPIRIT WORLD

## Ill-fated experimentation shed light on the truth, says Ben

**D**oubts about the existence of a spiritual dimension persisted in Ben Hartnett's mind until they were banished by his shadowy experience of Eastern mysticism.

"I gave eastern meditation a try, not realising what I was getting myself into," Ben explains.

"After a while I had a few experiences that confirmed for me that the spirit world was indeed real."

What he did not expect, Ben says, was the "negative side effects".

"I was becoming more introverted, and occasionally experienced anxiety and irrational fear for no particular reason. In hindsight I believe I was lucky that I never experienced anything worse than this."

"I have since heard of people going through all sorts of mental and spiritual issues as a result of dabbling in Eastern meditation practices, which involves clearing your mind of thoughts."

"I would warn anyone interested in this stuff to stay away."

Ben's experiments with meditation

came after high school friends questioned his religious beliefs.

"I was raised in a loving Christian family and always believed in God as a child, but in my later teen years friends challenged me with some difficult questions, which planted seeds of doubt in my mind," Ben says.

At university he began a double major in mathematics and computer science, as well as a deep search for metaphysical truth.

"I would spend hours of my free time studying the sciences, philosophy and religion," Ben remembers.

"After a period of time I realised that I didn't have any personal or experiential evidence for the existence of God so I decided that I was an agnostic."

This led to his exploration of Eastern spiritual philosophies and experiments with meditation.

"These ideas appealed to me because they claimed to connect with the spirit world personally through meditation."

The negative outcomes confirmed to Ben that the spiritual world was real and scary and, as a long-term

relationship began unravelling, his perspective on his parent's faith in God changed.

"This long term relationship was getting more difficult over time," Ben recalls.

"I believe God used this period of my life to humble me to the point where I knew I was (spiritually) lost and I needed something more to truly satisfy me."

"I also realised that there was and is so much suffering in the world. In my heart I knew this suffering cannot be normal, so it really is the result of the sin-cursed world we now live in."

"I realised that the Bible is true because it explains the world we live in so well."

His interest in the Bible reinvigorated, he holidayed with his parents in Adelaide, where he recalls his mother showed him some "really inspiring" online videos.

"I was really moved by these people's stories of how knowing Jesus personally had changed them."

"I realised that I absolutely needed God in my life, and nothing in the world would make me truly happy or satisfied except Him. Only God can provide the faith, hope and love that we all need in this world and in the life to come."

Back in Adelaide Ben continued watching dramatic YouTube videos of people seeing their need of Jesus Christ.

**"I was lucky that I never experienced anything worse"**



"I needed something more to truly satisfy me," says Ben Hartnett

"I became convinced once again that the Bible is the true Word of God and that I truly was someone who had broken God's eternal laws, and I desperately needed a Saviour who had paid the price for my sin by dying on the cross."

"One night I just broke down in tears and decided to give my life to Jesus Christ, asked Him to forgive me, and immediately felt a great peace come over me, which I now know the Bible calls the peace of God that surpasses all understanding."

He immediately told his girlfriend

about his new faith in Jesus.

"She thought I was going a bit crazy, which just pushed us further apart. Soon after that we broke up for good," he says.

"It was sad and difficult for both of us but I believe it was for the best because God had something better in store."

Ben has now settled into a church his uncle recommended to him.

"This church feels like an extended family to me, and I'm really looking forward to seeing what God has in store for the future." •



**LOVE OVERFLOW**

Out of the overflow of love for God and in obedience to His commands, Christians have laid a strong foundation of care and compassion, bringing about significant social change and advocacy in our Western society. While the word "Christian" conjures up negative images and thoughts for some people, it is important to reflect on the many positive things that characterise the true nature of God and His Word, the Bible.

### Healthcare and education

In-patient medical care in a hospital as we consider it today was a 4th Century invention driven by Christian mercy and Eastern Orthodox (Byzantine) innovation (Source: McClellan & Dorn, 2006, *Science and Technology in World History: An Introduction*).

Today, Christian-based churches (protestant and Catholic) operate the lion's share of healthcare and education in the world, working especially in some of the poorest countries where there is no other care available. While Physician Thomas Percival, a zealous social reformer, drew up the first professional code of ethics in the 18th century. From that time Christian thought has shaped much of the modern profession's ethical conduct, promoting personal integrity, truthfulness and honesty within the field of medicine.

### The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights

In 1948 the UN put forward the declaration of human rights. These rights were so clearly based on Christian principles that some Muslim states objected and refused to sign on that basis because it conflicted with Sharia law. Karl Marx also acknowledged, and rejected, human rights as a product of Christianity. Well-known atheist Jurgen Habermas stated that, "the individual morality of conscience, human rights and democracy, is the direct legacy of the Judaic ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love." •

Adapted from an article posted on [christiangoodinsociety.blogspot.com.au](http://christiangoodinsociety.blogspot.com.au)

## 'I will remain free'

### Tara says her life is "the tale of a broken woman renewed"

**A** lifetime of heartache followed Tara Leah Pluke after being ripped from her home and sent to a reform school at age nine.

At age 16 Tara was married and spent 18 years in an abusive relationship. She eventually found the strength to leave her ex-husband but her struggles continued with 12 years of working in the bar industry.

"It led to many broken relationships where I dated too many men and was even in a relationship with a woman," she admits.

"I became an alcoholic and abused drugs, I was finished, broken, and I knew I wanted to find healing. I knew I needed God but I was trapped in my addictions and party lifestyle that I didn't want to let go of because I was too afraid."

"I struggled daily with alcohol, pride, drugs and with hatred towards my father for destroying my family. My life was a party life and in that I numbed the pain I carried with me for years."

Tara moved towns seeking a new life and God but fell back into old patterns working in a bar and drinking.

One night Tara was very drunk and unaware that someone was taking naked photos of her 4-year-old daughter, who was being looked after by others. Consequently Tara was arrested.

"When I was arrested, I asked God in the jail cell to get me out and to help me, He didn't get me out but He did help me," Tara explains after her bail was denied.

"I knew Jesus was here I just didn't know how to connect with Him. Here in prison He lead me into a relationship with Him and from my year and a half on trial I learned His Word and became His child. Some days it gets hard but I stay in prayer and day by day, step by step He helps me."

From a woman who was living but dying in misery and



Tara Leah Pluke is healing from the wounds of addiction and abuse

hopelessness, Tara has completely turned her life around.

"I wanted a real life, to live an everlasting life as a real person. It was being arrested that brought me to decide I had to end the dead life I was in. I confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of my life and now I am smiling inside," she says joyfully.

"When friends and family turned their backs on me God never did - everyone thought I'd be in prison a long time and although my sentence is short, it's time to spend in Christ and grow as His child."

Tara has served two years in prison so far but says she is glad alcohol and drugs are out of her life.

"When I leave here in God's strength I'll remain free. I want to tell others that life without Christ isn't worth it, prison is not fun but it's worth it to spend this time building a relationship with our Father," she adds.

"Life isn't easy but through Christ Jesus we can live a fulfilling life. I believe I'll leave here and as God promised, I'll be restored to my family and I'll work in service for the Lord Jesus Christ." •

**"I knew I wanted to find healing"**

# LUST, ARE YOU WORTH IT?

As a child Olivia Ward truly believed she would one day meet her prince charming and live a beautiful life together, happily ever after.

Years later, she realised, “Life is not a fairy tale, but that did not stop me from seeking affirmation and significance from guys.”

By the end of high school, Olivia believed she was in love with a guy with whom she had a lot in common.

“It felt right,” she says, “because I didn’t want to be lonely for the rest of my life.”

Although they anticipated marriage, Olivia confesses that lust

soon became the focal point of their relationship.

“We were desperately pursuing the excitement of intimacy and pleasure at the expense of each other,” she recalls.

“Over time I equated physical intimacy to love. Greed and selfishness took over our relationship – it became a cycle that always has an empty ending.”

As that empty feeling increased Olivia reluctantly responded to a friend’s invitation to a “cool” Christian meeting, hosted by on-campus university ministry Student Life.

“I didn’t want to go because in my mind Christians are weird... [who] bash you with Bibles and holy water.

**“I found out the hard way”**

## Missing sheep?

WHEN people say they were once ‘lost’ before becoming Christians, to some it just sounds strange, right? The idea of being ‘spiritually’ lost stems from a parable Jesus told in the book of Luke chapter 15 verses 1 to 7, which He used to illustrate the value of one soul in God’s sight.

Jesus told this story while dining with those considered at the time to be the worst of sinners. The teachers of the religious law judged Him from a distance for associating with such people.

To them Jesus said: “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

Jesus used this lost sheep as a metaphor for His love for each individual person. He does not want anyone to die without knowing and entering into a personal relationship with Him. Heaven rejoices over each person who turns to Him.



“To my surprise this wasn’t the case. Everyone there was normal and even some were actually cool.”

More surprises followed. Her impression that you need to “do something to get something” was shattered.

“It was about a personal relationship with a personal God. I’m hearing about this Jesus who gave up His life – all because He wanted to know me and relate to me – even when I didn’t deserve it?”

“Instead of a ‘distant good-for-nothing god’ who ignored you”, Olivia recalls, “Now I’m faced with a God who was motivated by love so that I didn’t have to bear the burden of all the rubbish in my life.

“And it didn’t matter what I’ve done or where I’ve been. All I had to do was believe.”

That day, Olivia says “was the beginning of my relationship with Jesus.”

As she responded by surrendering her life to Jesus, Olivia also committed to some changes.

“I had to learn to trust that Jesus was the only one who can truly satisfy my need. This meant putting boundaries in place that would stop me from short-changing myself from having healthy relationships.



**“We were desperately pursuing pleasure at the expense of each other”**  
- Olivia Ward

“I had to make some tough decisions in my life about who I hung out with and even who I was going to marry.”

Secondly, Olivia says that Jesus taught her to disassociate love from physical intimacy.

“He didn’t promise to remove my desire for that intimacy, but to learn in the midst of yearning for it that He is trustworthy. That He is the one to run to, not into the arms of another man.”

Now happily married to another Christian believer, Olivia sees marriage as an expression of God’s love.

“God has blessed me with a marriage not so that my needs will be fully satisfied but so that God Himself can express selfless intimacy through my husband.”

Olivia rhetorically asks, “Are you relying on or desiring something or someone to fulfil a need in your life, that you know deep down will not be sufficient?”

“If you are, maybe you should think twice. I found out the hard way, that lust is a twisted second hand substitute of love that ends up hurting everyone.

“It’s not worth it.”

## Lost and found

A feeling of abandonment and emptiness often overwhelmed Tash Head as a teenager when she reflected on the suicide of her father when she was just a baby.

“In high school I struggled a lot with self-worth, and I made a lot of bad decisions which left me very bitter,” recalls the 21-year-old.

“Due to these decisions, I was angry at myself, which made me angry and hateful towards a lot of people in my life and that included God, even though I did not believe in Him.”

Tash says despite having a loving family, she pursued things that would distract her from her emptiness: smoking marijuana, binge drinking and sexual relationships.

“I had my first relationship at the age of 14, and it was a bad experience which left me with a lot of issues,” she admits.

A few years later the news that her Grandma had six months to live brought further grief to her life.

Despite her devastation, Tash looks back on this event as the beginning of the turning point in her life.

“While visiting my Grandma at Royal Perth Hospital, I met a nurse named Brittany who was working on her ward, and she prayed for my Grandma,” Tash explains.

“When we were arranging the funeral after my Grandma passed away, my mum wanted Brittany to sing, so I went to her church to hear



Tash Head (right) with friend Hayley

her sing and heard about God.”

The church service prompted Tash to ask more questions about who God is and she decided to go home and watch Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of Christ*, a film that led to a life changing decision.

“I realised the seriousness of my sin and what Jesus had done on the cross. I knew that I was lost and needed Jesus’ forgiveness, so I decided to follow Him.”

As she surrendered control of her life to Jesus, Tash shares that her attitude to life changed.

“God took away all my hate and bitterness. My whole mindset and

view of the world changed.”

Since then she says that God has sustained her through rough times.

“God has helped me through trials. He has humbled me when I needed it, and helped me rely on Him and not myself.”

“I once was lost but now I’m found”, were words from one of her favourite well-known songs – *Amazing Grace* – that took on a whole new meaning in her life.

“For years I thought that Christianity was only for people with Christian families, but that is far from the truth,” Tash adds.

“God saves anyone.”



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# FLY EAST IN PEACE

**A**m I ready to die? Richard Snowdon asked himself this question as he sat in a Cyprus airbase waiting for his orders to “fly east” into the 1990-91 Gulf War.

It was the RAF pilot’s first contact with war and the threat of death. Although he loved flying, his courage was melting as he felt unprepared to die.

Richard caught his love for flying from his fighter pilot father.

“My father had been flying Meteors and then Hunters,” Richard shares.

“As a youngster, I couldn’t wait to join the Air Cadets and get my feet off

the ground for the first time.

“I then gained my gliding wings, going on to win a Flying Scholarship that enabled me to qualify for a Private Pilot’s License at the age of 17. It was quite novel being licensed to fly a light aircraft before being qualified to drive a car!”

Richard’s first experience of real war came during the First Gulf War between the Western Coalition and Saddam Hussein’s Iraqi forces.

Until his life was on the line Richard admits he lived a pleasure-seeking lifestyle.

“I lived as if there was no God and I was master of my own destiny. The

world was essentially a playground, whose chief purpose was to please me, or so I thought.”

Then from age 24 he recalls a strong unease came over him.

“I knew there was something very wrong in my life. I struggled on for nine years trying to get satisfaction from my pleasure-seeking lifestyle.

“After witnessing an Air Traffic Controller friend becoming a (Christian) believer and speaking to a Christian Hercules pilot, I was uncomfortably challenged by their personal testimonies – that they had a peace with God that I did not.”

These friends gave him small booklets about the Christian message, which had a profound impact.

“This literature,” he continues, “stripped away my false, evolutionary-based worldview and replaced it with the alarming truth that I was a sinner (in violation of God’s commands) and was deserving of punishment by the perfect God who made me.”

The build-up to the Gulf War concentrated his thoughts on God, Richard says.

“In Cyprus, whilst awaiting orders to ‘fly east’, God’s grace and mercy led me to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, kneel in prayer and ask forgiveness for my sins.

“I will never forget the peace and joy that soon flooded my soul as the burden of sin was lifted away, guilt was removed and a new life imparted.”

This new life from God, Richard says, brought about an eagerness to help others know the peace with God that he had.

“An aircrew instructor’s course involved giving a talk on any subject of one’s choosing. I felt it was a God-given opportunity to speak on the evidence for the Genesis account of creation as opposed to evolution.

“I shared a lift home for the weekend with a fellow pilot and new friend



Gulf War pilot Richard Snowdon recalls other pilots had a peace that he wanted

named Mike, who asked me what subject I had spoken on in my course.

We then spoke on the topic for all of our four-hour car journey. At that very time he was completing an evolution module for his biology university degree.

“He willingly took videos and books on the topic but said that he was also going to search his university notes to find at least one fact about evolution to prove my ‘theory’ wrong.

“On the journey back to the base, he said that he did not find a single thing that could be described as a fact about evolution (as opposed to speculation).

“By mid-week he had received Jesus Christ as His Lord and Saviour. He is now a Boeing 787 Captain with

a civilian airline.”

As a pilot Richard says that being prayerfully dependent on God has protected him many times.

“God has overruled in my circumstances many times. He has held off a severe snowstorm until seconds after we landed and mysteriously cancelled flights when I was unwell.

“On another occasion we lost the autopilot, which meant flying manually for many hours. This would greatly increase fatigue levels on subsequent sectors. Our flight engineer tried everything to fix it, but couldn’t. I quietly prayed, then had an inexplicable sense that we should try it again. I told the flight engineer this, at which he looked bemused. We tried to re-engage it and found that it was working perfectly. I told the mystified flight engineer that I had just prayed over the matter!”

## Family Finance

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE MONEY RUNS OUT?

BY GENEVIEVE WILSON

**\$60,000,000,000,000.00!** Can you believe that the national public debt of 49 countries (with publicly accessible data) is 60 trillion dollars? All you have to do is check out NationalDebtClocks.org and see that every minute 4.5 million dollars of interest is added to the amount owed by these nations.

The federal, state and local governments of Australia owe over \$700 billion, according to www.AustralianDebtClock.com.au. However, overspending in Australia is not just a government issue, it is a personal issue as well.

ABS 2013 states reveal household debt was \$1.84 trillion; around \$79,000 per person. Over the past 25 years, household debt has increased nearly twice as fast as the value of household assets. Australians are amongst the world’s greatest borrowers. Debt is crippling our nation but we do not seem to care.

#### WHY ARE WE IN DEBT?

We are living outside of our means. For many, the temptation is to try to live the life of the bigger house, the newer car, the newer TV, more clothes, books, videos and holidays.

Basically, we end up having to borrow to live the lifestyle we think we deserve, which gets us into all sorts of trouble.

Our nation is doing the same. Politicians try to buy our votes and/or stimulate our economy with building projects, pensions, education, social programs, better health care, etc. The truth is that we cannot afford them and we are borrowing money and accumulating a huge debt that is going to be passed on to our children.

Then for our country to pay back the interest and loans it needs to borrow more money to keep up the same standard of living. It is a vicious circle that can lead to crippling debt.

#### WHY IS DEBT BAD

The Bible is very clear about debt and what it can do to us. Debt makes “the borrower [become] the slave of the lender” (Proverbs chapter 22, verse 7). Borrowing money gets you into a cycle of owing people and then having to pay interest back so you have to borrow more to make those payments or buy the stuff you need. There is also risk associated with staggering levels of debt. If we are unable able to pay the lender back, they may force renegotiated terms or foreclose the loan. We need to take a good look at what is happening in Greece and realise that they are an example of what is going to come to many nations when our lenders say enough is enough.

Greece is now being forced to put higher taxes on its people, has an unemployment rate of 25% and the people are only allowed to take out \$60 a day from the banks.

Can you imagine having your life savings being frozen by banks so they can repay the nation’s debt?

#### HOW DO WE FIX IT?

We need to remember that debt does not create jobs, it causes us to pay millions and billions of dollars to financial institutions in interest repayments. If that money was not spent on interest but went back into paying for our goods and services we would be actually able to afford more and would be better off financially.

Well there are two ways we are going to fix our problem of debt :

First, we need to simplify our lifestyles and make hard decisions to tighten our budget but realise that it is for a season (yes, with the amount of personal debt and federal debt that season could be many years). It is our debt and our problem, not something to pass off to the next generation.

And the second option is that we are told “sorry no more money for you” which is happening around the world right now. Look at Greece, Puerto Rico and Argentina. Financial agencies will tell us what to cut and what to tax and we will not have the option. Not only will the economy dive and unemployment increase, there will be less money to pay our interest back. This means even more cuts, higher taxes (because borrowing causes a vicious cycle). Rioting in the streets and food shortages may ensue. Those we borrowed money from will want it back, and they will do what they can to get it.

We need to exhibit some self-control and cut our spending and budget and bring it back into the black.

**“I knew there was something very wrong in my life”**

## Walk a mile in their shoes

BY CHRIS BRENNAN

WITH all the news of politicians pushing the boundaries of their ultimately self-prescribed entitlements, it is easy to become disillusioned with those who lead us. It is equally disturbing that the accusers appear equally guilty.

The media went into overdrive as politician after politician squirmed uncomfortably under the scrutiny. But, as I was watching this unfold, I began to wonder how many of the journalists so seriously reporting these events would also struggle if each decision they made, each action they took, was held up to public scrutiny?

Could they easily say that they have not been guilty of using their very responsible positions to further their own agendas or goals?

But we can’t stop there either can we? How many of us could say that we wouldn’t do the same thing if we had the same resources and opportunities?

How many of us work every minute of every hour that we owe our employers, have never kept a “borrowed” pen, or declared every last bit of our income to the tax office?

You see, it is always easy for us to observe and react to the moral failures of others while ignoring or down playing our own. In the Bible, there is an account of a woman caught out morally and those who caught her, dragged her, (and notably not her partner in the act), before Jesus. They were seeking to trap Jesus by using the law, knowing that



His compassion for people would have Him seeking to care even for the morally broken. His answer was telling them, “let any one of you who is without sin, be the first to throw a stone at her”.

And away they all went, one by one, until Jesus spoke again asking the woman, ‘where are they?’

“Has no one condemned you?”

“No one sir”, she said.

For me, here is the bite, because actually there was one there able to claim no sin and to strike her down.

Jesus said, “Then neither do I condemn you.

“Go now and leave your life of sin”.

Even in our disappointment with others, we have to admit our own failings, and we have to recognise there is one who sees all, and can hold all of us to account for them.

And yet that one is full of compassion and mercy rather than condemnation, not compromise you will note, as He bids all of us to leave our lives of sin too. He works to save us from the relational and deathly consequences of sin.

# CRAVING FATHERLY LOVE

Military man found the acceptance he longed for

A desire for the love and acceptance he lacked as a child sent Ross Hall into gangs and the military before he found his everlasting worth.

The son of an ex-serviceman turned violent alcoholic, Ross attributes his childhood rebellion to an unfriendly family environment.

“Mum used to say that it wasn’t dad’s fault,” Ross recalls, “that he was different after he came back from the war – struggling to cope with family life, even though he had a wife and children who loved him.”

Lacking love from a father unable to give it and from a mother too busy providing for the family, Ross looked to the streets for a sense of family and belonging.

“I got caught up in gangs, selling and using drugs, from the age of

nine,” he says, and explains how his life started getting out of control.

“The gangs owned me and firearms and violence were a part of everyday life.”

At age 18, after he had been involved in a violent incident and was facing serious jail time.

With this in mind Ross took advice from his father to join the military commencing 14 years of service at 21 years old.

There, he found the sense of belonging he had sought his entire childhood.

“The military became my new family. It provided necessary discipline, friends, a sense of belonging and I began to feel valued,” Ross says.

Then, in 2009, Ross thought he was going crazy during a nine-day patrol when he heard the words ‘John, three, 16’ continuously run-

ning through his mind.

He sought out the medic for a diagnosis and was referred to the psych doctor, who in turn referred him to the chaplain.

“The chaplain listened and shared that John chapter 3 verse 16 was a verse in the Bible that says, ‘For God so loved the world that He gave His only son, so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life,’” Ross says.

Ross pondered on this message from God and, a week later, the chaplain explained the significance of Jesus’ sacrifice – how He had died on the cross so Ross could be forgiven from his life of crime and all the things he had done wrong.

Ross was also told how much God loved him, with an abundant, unconditional fatherly love he had always craved.

“My life was changed as I received forgiveness and new life. There were many tears of joy that day.”

But it turned out a life with Jesus did not mean everything would be smooth sailing.

After returning home, still affected by the trauma of the war, Ross felt everything was falling apart when his marriage of 10 years suddenly ended.

One day he randomly got on a train, recalling: “I didn’t care where I ended up because I was planning to end my life.”

The train took him to Warrnambool and he began living on the



“My life was changed as I received forgiveness and new life,” says Ross Hall

beach there.

Veteran Affairs soon discovered this and put him in contact with someone to try organize emergency housing.

“I was in a dark place and felt disconnected from God, thinking that God had left and given up on me,” he says.

But God was not finished, as Ross realised through a 10-week ‘Positive Lifestyle Program’, which helped him regain some stability in life and reminded him he was a person of worth.

“Partway through the program, I felt the love of God in a powerful way

and recommitted my life to God,” he says.

Ross began attending a Christian church in Warrnambool regularly, volunteering in different areas.

He realized people there loved and accepted him for who he was, as did the Lord Jesus. Completely forgiven, he could live his life free from the guilt and loneliness he associated with his past.

“I still struggle at times,” he says. “But I know that these people love and support me and that God is always there for me and will never leave me.”

Courtesy Salvation Army Wacry magazine

## Believe it or not

BY CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL, CREATION.COM

### The “missing links” are even more “missing”!

When the greatly fragmented skull designated KNM-ER 1470 (‘1470 man’) was first discovered, it was paraded as a transitional ‘ape-man’, as *Homo habilis*.

But even many evolutionists now say the very notion of ‘*Homo habilis*’ should be abandoned. Even those who argue for its retention (as a convenient ‘wastebin’ for ‘hominid’ fossils they don’t know what to do with?) concede its questionable status.

*Homo habilis* is now in even more trouble. Researchers led by Meave Leakey, reported in 2012 on newly discovered fossils from northern Kenya. A nearly complete lower jaw (KNM-ER 60000) and the well preserved face of a late juvenile (KNM-ER 62000) are said to match that of 1470.

These new fossils also closely match features of the juvenile male fossil (MH1) *Australopithecus sediba*. So if, as suggested by Leakey and the other researchers, ‘1470 man’ belongs to whatever species these new finds belong to, then that makes 1470 also an Australopithecine. This means ‘southern ape’—and no missing link, because it was less similar to both apes and humans than they are from each other. Therefore 1470 was not ‘*Homo habilis*’ or any other *Homo* (man). Without *Homo habilis*, there’s no ape-to-man link.

This work confirms a trend that, as fossils are researched, the human-like ones become more human-like and the more ape-like ones become more ape-like, resulting in the ‘missing links’ becoming even more missing. The gap between apes and humans increases with more research, not decreases.

More details at [creation.com/non-transitions](http://creation.com/non-transitions) and [creation.com/early-homo](http://creation.com/early-homo).

- New fossils from Koobi Fora in northern Kenya confirm taxonomic diversity in early *Homo*, *Nature* 488:201-204, 9 August 2012.
- These new fossils are intriguing as hell, *Lawn Chair Anthropology*, 9 August 2012.

Photo: Conty, CC BY 3.0 license, Wikipedia Commons



‘1470 man’ (L) closely matches ‘southern ape’. Some scientists say ‘KNM-ER 1813’ (R) is *Homo erectus* (upright, smallish brain... thus human?)

## ‘Time is money’ is a rip-off!

BY SOPHIA SINCLAIR

### There is the frequently touted maxim underpinning our western understanding: ‘time is money’.

In an article for the Business Insider author Richard Lewis unpacks this view of time: “...time is truly money. In a profit-oriented society, time is a precious, even scarce, commodity. It flows fast, like a mountain river in the spring, and if you want to benefit from its passing, you have to move fast with it”.

There is great truth in the Biblical proverb, “All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty”. It is good to use our time well. It is good to be productive and work hard. However, our cultural obsession with time as a commodity distorts and twists this truth until it is no longer good.

We apply ‘time is money’ to all areas of our lives. We are over-committed, always-say-yes, never-satisfied individuals in a busy world. If we believe all time is money, any portion of time we spend on a task without a measurable, profitable outcome must be wasting money.

Therefore, we are prone to prioritise tasks over people: numbers of customers through the doors of a business over customer loyalty and satisfaction, or a clean house over one-on-one playtime with a child. We make the mistake of valuing perceived productivity over relationship.

We’ve been ripped-off by our ‘time is money’ attitude. Our desire to quantify everything does not match with less tangible things. There is no yardstick to measure the depth of a friendship. Even the best scales cannot tell you the weight of true wisdom.

### CHOOSING BETTER

The Gospel of Luke tells the story of Jesus visiting the home of two sisters, Mary and Martha. Mary sat at Jesus’ feet, listening to Him speak and soaking up His words. Martha raced around, overcome by the list of tasks

needing completion.

Maybe she was busy calculating how much bread she needed to feed everyone. Maybe the messy house wanted a good clean.

My culture often encourages me to think like Martha – busy and overwhelmed as I look for measurable outcomes to justify how I spend my time. Do you identify? Do you see your life as an endless to-do list? Do you ever feel guilty for resting when you know there is something to be done?

Out of frustration Martha came to Jesus, asking, ‘Lord, don’t you care Mary has left me to do all the work?’

Tell her to come help me!’

“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed – or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Jesus does not give Martha a free pass to be lazy. He addresses her heart: her worry over timing and details, and her frustration over her sister’s inaction. In her short-sightedness Martha was thinking about the immediate, the here-and-now. Jesus gently reminds her to sit and consider the privilege of having the Lord of the universe in her living room. Being present with Jesus is better by far! Like Martha, it is easy to worry more about doing, and forget about being.

Western culture’s view of time may help us to work hard, but if we are not careful we can get caught up in work for work’s sake. Let’s drop the desire to quantify our lives according to output. Let’s ditch our obsession with the clock and add a measure of grace.

As Jesus says, we need to remember what is better. We need to remember what is truly needed. Relationship is at the heart of His invitation to Martha, a call to sit at the feet of our Creator and worship; a call to follow Him. This is the one thing we truly need, and this call to relationship extends to each one of us.

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# GARDENING

BY JUNE KNOP

## GARDENS FOR THE SENSES

Gardens can be wonderful places to stimulate all the senses.

When planning for children they need to be safe from water hazards and poisonous plants and those with disabilities may need wider, firmer pathways for wheelchair access.

All aspects of the garden need to be accessible and interactive, and don't forget to provide places to sit, play and enjoy – include hidey spots, tunnels to crawl through and safe trees to climb. Consider including animal ornaments or pictures, a clamshell sandpit and a playground.

**SMELL:** Try a narrow pathway so that people brush past fragrant species or plant in the walk way so that as people tread on the plants (e.g. thyme) they release scent. Placing the small plant between pavers will partly protect it from foot traffic. Consider having 'smelly stations', rather than a single patch.



**SOUND:** Consider wind chimes, running water or frog ponds, as well as having a birdbath, feeder and planting nectar producing shrubs and trees that attract different types of birds. Prepare 'noisy paths' like crunchy gravel or sea shells.

**SIGHT:** Why not have a messy patch (or worm farm or enclosed compost bin), with lots of leaf litter, to attract worms and creepy-crawlies. Children can watch the critters scurry about? Explore butterfly-attracting vegetation and remember to watch for cocoons and caterpillars.

Choose plants of varying shapes, colours and sizes, remembering that as seasons change, so do blossoms and foliage. Add some fun with animal-shaped topiary, and display plants and flowers in unusual containers such as shoes, teapots and cups etc. Lighting effects such as ultraviolet light/black light can be very effective on white flowers in shady parts of the garden and make them glow.

**TOUCH:** Insert different textures, from soft springy mosses to course lichens, and furry-covered leaves to bristly cactuses. Trunks of trees can also offer a variety of tactile experiences, from cork to paper bark, smooth to rough and bumpy, as can selected rocks – smooth river pebbles to volcanic rock.

**TASTE:** Plant some herbs, vegetables and fruit trees and bushes. Finally, be sure to check out safe and dangerous plants at:

1. raisingchildren.net.au/articles/dangerous\_plants\_checklist.html
2. kidsafewa.com.au/literature\_28786/Poisonous\_Plants

Courtesy Warcry magazine of The Salvation Army

# Building Better Marriages

## SATISFYING INTIMACY REQUIRES VULNERABILITY AND RISK

BY ROB FURLONG

A COMMON QUESTION that will be asked around thousands of meal tables tonight will be, "How was your day?" If I was a gambling man I can almost guarantee that the answer will be something like, "Fine, how was yours?"

In this age of instant global connection via social media it seems to me that we have never been more distant in our understanding of each other.

We regularly hear stories of people who have thousands of online 'friends' and 'followers' but in the deepest part of their soul they long for just one person with whom they can connect with at an emotional and personal level.

This hidden loneliness is often found in many marriages where the couple may have lived under the same roof for decades but have never made the soul connection that is so essential to healthy intimacy

in marriage.

The intimacy I am referring to is not sexual or physical. I mean an intimacy that frees two people to be open and honest with each and which produces a deep level of trust that lasts for a lifetime.

It is generally held by the communication experts that there are five levels of communication that progressively build upon each other: it begins with cliché conversation and then moves on to reporting the facts about others. From that point you start to move into areas that require a greater level of disclosure about yourself. You begin to share your ideas, then your feelings (an extremely vulnerable place to be) until you arrive at what is described as *peak communication* – the place where you are totally open and honest with the other person.

I think many people want to be at that place with another person – peak communication – but they simply don't know how to get there. This was highlighted for me in an article I read recently about a married couple who were struggling with this, and in telling their story shared how they learned to ask each other questions that required answers that went beyond the surface. In other words,



they stopped asking each other "how was your day?"!

Kate McCombs blogs that there are six questions that couples can experiment with that can open up conversation between people and avoid the tired old "how was your day?" routine. She suggests the following:

- "Did you have any victories that you want to share?"
- "Were there any challenges that you want empathy about?"
- "Were there any surprisingly fun moments in your day?"
- "Did you have any nice connections with your colleagues?"
- "What was frustrating about your day?"

## Computers & Technology

### Take control over new Windows 10 features

BY DARRYL BUDGE

#### Wi-Fi Sense security and privacy explained

When you first join a Wi-Fi network on Windows 10, a check box appears asking you if you want to "Share access with your contacts" (that is, everyone on your Outlook.com or Hotmail, Facebook and Skype contacts).

If you tick yes, your Wi-Fi passkey is stored on an encrypted Microsoft server so that your friends can automatically join your Wi-Fi network when they are nearby. Your friends will never see the actual passkey, and they cannot share your Wi-Fi network with their friends (unless you give them your passkey). You can also exclude Wi-Fi Sense from any particular network inside Wi-Fi settings (only on a PC or device that has Wi-Fi).

If you have serious concerns about your network security, particularly in your business, I would recommend turning off Wi-Fi Sense sharing by adding `_optout` to your network's name (i.e. SSID in your Wi-Fi router settings). Microsoft states that joining the optout list may be delayed by several days.

Get more info here: [windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-10/wi-fi-sense-faq](http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-10/wi-fi-sense-faq)

#### Three tips on controlling timing of Windows 10 auto updates

**Select a restart time to finish installing an update:** Tap the 'Start' button, choose the 'Settings' app, select 'Update & security', then tap on 'Windows Update', where you can schedule when Windows Update does its work.

**Be notified every time your PC requires a reboot:** Click on 'Advanced' towards the end of the 'Windows Update' screen. On the next screen, under the drop down menu 'Choose how updates are installed', select 'Notify to schedule restart'.

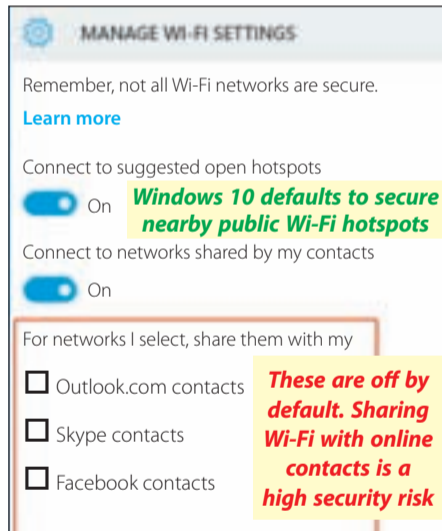
**Restrict background updates (if you use a Wi-Fi or cellular connection):** If you do not want Windows 10 downloading anything automatically in the background (including updates, live tiles and most apps) you can do that by setting your Wi-Fi or cellular connection as 'metered' (this setting is not available on wired ethernet).

#### Had a Windows 10 update or new driver go haywire?

First uninstall the bad update, then before you restart your PC download and run the "Show or hide updates troubleshooter package" from support.microsoft.com.

For more information about Windows 10, see our review at [bit.ly/1EVxZMb](http://bit.ly/1EVxZMb)

Tech website *Ars Technica* has written a comprehensive guide for beefing up your privacy and advertising settings in Windows 10. See [arstechnica.com/?p=718307](http://arstechnica.com/?p=718307)



## 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.

"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 for loving 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: "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](mailto:info@challengenews.org)

All overseas enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country



# VICTORY AFTER DARK TIMES

**Challenge  
SPORT**

**Uni Games 800m champion Angie Petty shares her new motivation and plans for Rio Olympics**

**B**reaking the two minute barrier to win the World University Games 800m sprint has Kiwi athlete Angie Petty justifiably excited about her Rio Olympics prospects.

"I am over the moon to have won my first world level title," Angie Petty says, "and in a new personal best time of 1:59.06!"

"I have been dreaming of breaking two minutes for a while, a big thing for 800m runners, and I have dedicated this race to my grandmother Nanny who died in June, as well as to God – I run for Him in every race."

Just before her grandmother's passing, Angie recalls that her final advice was: "Do not fear, keep on trying and look to God."

"It is such special advice – she said

it with such grace and enthusiasm, despite being so sick with cancer at the time," Angie says.

"It was really hard losing her, but she was so positive and wasn't worried right to the end. She knew she was in Jesus' hands. I know she will be so happy in heaven. She would have been so proud of me for this race!"

Following the Uni Games Angie broke a 36-year Kiwi 1000m record at a Tokyo meet.

She then fell a second short of qualifying for the 800m final at the Beijing World Champi-

onships in August. The semi-final result was an improvement over her 2013 quarter-final time in Moscow.

Angie's career has been on a steady rise since she rededicated her life to God following a depressive

period in 2011.

"I grew up in a Christian family and had a strong faith as a child, but walked away from God a bit when I went flatting in 2011," Angie admits.

"I got quite into partying and drinking and did things I regretted. I also had minor depression and was quite unhappy."

After a while she drew on her childhood knowledge of God and says she realised "there is much more to life than this".

"When I was younger I had said sorry to Jesus for the sins I had committed and asked Him to come live in me.

"I knew God is a God of love and He would help me out, but I took a while to fully come back to Him, because I was looking for happiness in the wrong places and was a bit stuck."

She remembers a friend named Laura gave her an encouraging Christian music album, as well as some great advice.

"My family and friends helped me heaps. I started to read the Bible again, to be more passionate about church and stopped living a double life of partying on Saturday and going to church the next day."

Gradually, as she thought about the future, talked to God, read the Bible and listened to sermons at church, Angie says "I realised God's love for me despite my past."

One of Angie's favourite Bible passages is from Psalm 103 and verse 12 which says: "As far as the east is from the west, so far He has removed our transgressions (wrong-doing) from us."

"I slowly came back to God," Angie continues. "Meeting my husband Sam really helped me come closer to God than before."

"Sam is a triathlete and former middle distance runner. He became a Christian soon after our first meeting in October 2012, and he was so passionate about God. I know that God brought Sam and I together!"

"We were baptised in the sea on Easter Monday 2014 and it was very special to publicly declare as an engaged couple that we live for God!"

"I am so grateful to God that He brought me through that time and



**HOPE RESTORED:** Angie Petty quit Saturday night partying and dedicated her life to a higher purpose.

**"I was looking for happiness in the wrong places"**

**"I can help others in dark times because I know what it is like"**



**BEIJING, CHINA - AUGUST 26, 2015:** Angie Petty of New Zealand leads in the Women's 800 metres heats at the 15th IAAF World Athletics Championships. (Photo Christian Petersen/Getty Images for IAAF)

made me new and has given me His joy."

This joy led to a resolution to not drink alcohol for a year from October 2012, a commitment that continues today.

"In that year so much changed that I knew I did not need to drink to have fun," Angie shares. "Life is so much better without drinking alcohol!"

As her life turned around, so did her career.

She narrowly missed qualifying for the London Olympics in 2012, but has since progressed to the quarter-finals at the 2013

World Championships and fifth place at the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games.

In 2015, she has already achieved five Olympic A-level qualifying times for the 800m sprint.

"I am really happy with the way I have progressed. I was disappointed to miss out on London when I ran 2:00.67, but I think God allowed it to

happen, as I was not ready when my previous PB was only 2.03."

Angie and Sam are now dreaming of competing at the Rio Olympics together, and she believes "anything is possible with God."

She quotes from the Bible "I can do anything through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

"I have gone through tough times – six weeks off training due to glandular fever in January 2013 and small health problems like dizziness – but I know that I can still rejoice in the storms like the apostle Paul.

"Because of Jesus' love and mercy I know He is always there for me. Knowing God's Word, the Bible, has given me wisdom and strength in difficult situations."

As for the dark times and the health issues, Angie firmly believes God allowed them so she could help others.

"I can help others in those challenges because I know what it is like and can be more compassionate. God is so good. I want to spread His Word and love others." ●

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