THE Apostolic Faith

EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH—JUDE 3

APRIL — JUNE 2026

SAINTS IN EAST INDIA: STEADFAST UNMOVABLE ABOUNDING

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VIEWPOINT

BY SOLA ADESOPE
SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL

. . . to give unto them ***beauty for ashes****, the* ***oil of joy for mourning****,* ***the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness****,* ***that they might be called trees of righteousness****,* ***the planting of the LORD****,* ***that he might be glorified.*** *Isaiah 61:3*

God's promise to give beauty for ashes is still alive today.

The testimonies of Brother Dwane and Sister Teresa Gibson Ross (see page 18) remind us that God gives "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isaiah 61:3). Their lives—marked by early Christian training, profound loss, and remarkable restoration—reflect the fact that God's goodness shines even in difficult circumstances.

As a ten-year-old boy, Brother Dwane trembled under conviction and prayed a simple but life-changing prayer: "Lord, save me." The Lord answered, and from that moment on, God's grace became evident in his life. Early on, he learned that God speaks powerfully (see page 19 for more on that topic), and he listened. Though tempted in his youth by the things of the world, he kept his hand in God's hand—and God kept him. His testimony stands as a strong reminder that the Lord is able to keep us from falling. Through every stage, God not only protected him from sin, but drew deeper devotion from his heart and in time replaced his doubts with purpose.

A time of "ashes" in his life came years later. In March of 2007, the Lord called his beloved wife, Sister Rosa, home to Heaven, leaving Brother Dwane with his three teenage children. Such grief can reduce life to rubble. In that dark valley, they found comfort in the assurance that God was in control and that Sister Rosa had reached her goal. Though sorrow lingered, the Lord was there to heal broken hearts.

Sister Teresa's journey unfolded differently but was marked by the same faithful hand of God. Raised in a home where Scripture was honored and prayer was constant, she resisted salvation for years. When her marriage nearly collapsed because of her temper, she fell to her knees and prayed, "If You save me, I'll serve You." God answered that prayer, transforming her heart and saving her soul.

For Sister Teresa too, "ashes" fell on her family. Just weeks after her husband found salvation, he died suddenly. She was left with two small boys and a shattered heart, and could barely pray beyond whispering the name "Jesus." She found that Name to be a strong tower. In her deepest sorrow, God carried her.

For both Brother Dwane and Sister Teresa, God saw their pain and met their needs. Then, in His perfect timing, He brought two widowed hearts together. He blended families and multiplied blessings in a way that neither could have planned. What the enemy would have turned to despair, God turned into a testimony. Though the way was not always easy, they found joy by walking with Him.

If you are experiencing a time of "ashes," let this family's example encourage you that the God who has power to save also has power to give beauty for ashes. As you read the contents of this magazine, may you be reminded that our God is a good God, and even if you do not understand His ways, you can trust that He is quietly preparing a beautiful future for you.

BY DWIGHT BALTZELL

GOD SPEAKS . . . ARE YOU LISTENING?

Hearing from God is not processing audible sounds, but opening our hearts to His words.

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; While it is said, **To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."**
— Hebrews 3:14-15

Listening to God and then responding by obeying Him is of utmost importance, regardless of what day and age we live in. Hebrews 3:14-15 emphasizes the necessity of immediate response to God's voice and the danger of hardening our hearts against Him. Those verses read, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."

This passage refers to the failure of the Children of Israel to listen to God during their wilderness journey. In fact, they not only failed to listen and obey God, but they resisted and disobeyed Him! They had the Ten Commandments of God given to them on tablets of stone. They had the Law and many other messages from God that were delivered to them through Moses. However, they had hardened their hearts against God's instructions and rebelled against Him. The difficulty was not with God; it never is. God speaks to man, but man must willingly listen and obey.

The enemy of our souls may attempt to make us think that the concept of God speaking to man is strange, or merely a figment of the imagination. That is false; the voice of God has been speaking to people since the Creation. God spoke to the first man, Adam, and to the first woman, Eve, long before the written Word of God existed. And He has spoken to individual hearts ever since, even if not audibly. Today, we are blessed to have the written Word of God as the primary way God communicates with man. When God's Spirit speaks to our hearts individually as we read it, Scripture comes alive for us, and the message we hear will always align precisely with His written Word. The question is not whether God speaks; it is whether we will listen and obey.

Listen for God

Throughout God's Word we find examples of individuals who heard from God and responded to Him. For example, consider the child Samuel. In 1 Samuel 3:1 we read, "And the child Samuel ministered unto the

Knowing God's Voice

God speaks plainly through His Word. He never speaks in contradiction to Scripture.

The Bible comes alive when we read it and listen for the Spirit to speak to our hearts through it.

The Right Response

"To obey is better than sacrifice."
— 1 Samuel 15:22

Saul obeyed part of God's command, but partial obedience is still disobedience. God wants us to listen and obey.

THE VOICE OF GOD HAS BEEN SPEAKING TO PEOPLE SINCE THE CREATION.

He spoke before Scripture was written, before Israel existed, and before prophets were sent.

Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision." The Word of God was "precious" because it was scarce. That was not God's fault; His instructions were there all the time, but they went unheeded in those days. Israel had gone so far astray that few were listening to God. Even Eli the priest—the person charged with maintaining the pure worship of God—was guilty of disobeying God's instructions.

In the first chapter of 1 Samuel, we read that Hannah, the mother of Samuel, had been unable to bear children, so she promised God, "O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life" (1 Samuel 1:11). And that is exactly what she did; when God gave her a son and the child was weaned, she brought him to the Temple to minister to the Lord. God needed someone who would listen and obey because Eli had failed to do so, and that person was Samuel.

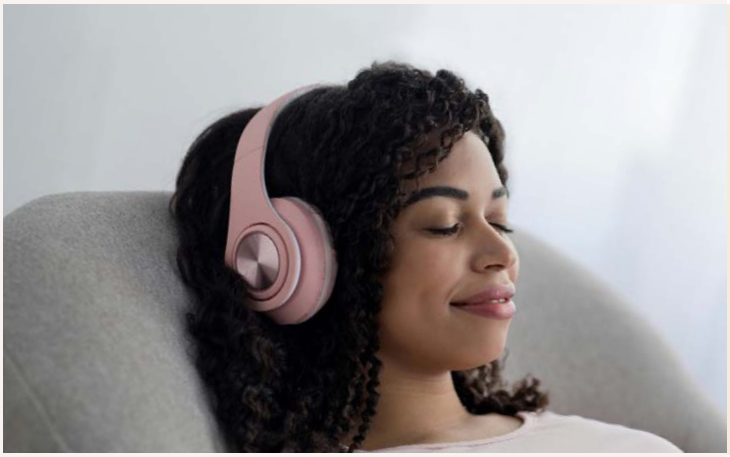
It was there in the Temple complex that God spoke to Samuel, calling his name as he was sleeping. The lad was accustomed to listening to instructions and obeying. When he heard his name, he arose and went to Eli the priest, saying, "Here am I." However, Eli had not called him, so he told Samuel to go back and lie down. God called Samuel's name again, and then the third time, Eli finally realized that it was God who had spoken to the young boy. He told Samuel, "Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place" (1 Samuel 3:9). When God called Samuel the next time, he listened, and then God gave him an important message of coming judgment.

Though the Children of Israel and their leaders had ignored God's message, in Samuel He found someone willing to listen. Today, God is looking for that quality in us as well.

Fully obey

Our responsibility when God speaks is to listen and obey. Samuel did so, and his nation was blessed for it. We do not want to be guilty of what is sometimes referred to as "selective hearing"—when a person focuses on certain words but filters out others. That may or may not matter much in our daily environments, but it matters a great deal when it comes to God. We want to hear and heed all of what God says to us!

We find an example of what might have been selective hearing in the account of Saul when he was given instructions from God to go and utterly destroy the Amalekites and all they had, not even sparing their livestock. When Samuel came to the place of sacrifice,



A LISTENING HEART

"IF ANY MAN HAVE EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR." *— Mark 4:23*

BE HUMBLE. BE LISTENING. BE READY TO SAY, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

Saul told him, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord" (1 Samuel 15:13). However, that was not the case, and Samuel asked, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the cattle which I hear?" Saul had ignored the part of God's command that instructed him to "utterly destroy." Because of his failure, Samuel told him, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (1 Samuel 15:23).

Everything God tells us is for our good. When we receive instructions from Him and do not obey, negative consequences will follow. When we obey, we can count on His blessing. How important it is to take seriously everything He says to us.

Keep listening to God

Another man who heard from God was the prophet Elijah—he learned and then relearned the importance of listening to God's voice. We read about the events of his life in the Book of 1 Kings. After announcing to King Ahab that the rain in Israel would cease, the word of the Lord came to Elijah, directing him to go hide himself by the brook Cherith. He obeyed and was miraculously fed by ravens there. When the brook dried up, Elijah listened when God instructed him to go to Zarephath, where a widow would sustain him. Sometime later, God told him to go show himself to Ahab again, and that He would send rain. Then we read of the showdown between 450 prophets of Baal against that one man of God, Elijah. What an incredible event that was! Though the false prophets called repeatedly upon their god to send fire, there was no response. But when Elijah prayed, God sent fire that consumed not only the sacrifice, but also the stones of the altar, the wood, the dust, and even the water in the trench around it!

In response, the wicked queen Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah. So, the prophet fled for his life and went into the wilderness, eventually arriving at Horeb, the mount of God. As he lodged there in a cave, God spoke to him, asking, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" Elijah listened when God told him, "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord" (1 Kings 19:9,11). A mighty wind came, and then an earthquake, and then a fire. However, the wind didn't give direction. The earthquake rumbling didn't help him. There was no message in the fire. But then came a "still, small voice"—the voice of God. That voice connected with Elijah's soul.

The weary prophet said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." But God responded, "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (1 Kings 19:14,18). God didn't call those seven thousand to rally around the prophet, but Elijah knew the voice of God. Once again, he listened to God's instructions and obeyed, going from Mount Horeb and anointing the three people identified by God for specific tasks.

No matter how long we have been walking with the Lord or how much He has brought us through, we are never finished listening for God's voice. If we do so, He will guide us through all the ups and downs of life, just as He did for Elijah.

God speaks to all hearts

A number of years ago when our family was living in Chehalis, Washington, a little boy named Robbie King got up

The Still, Small Voice

Elijah heard God speak in a "**still small voice**" *(1 Kings 19:12).*

God often whispers, and we may need to quiet the noise and distractions around us to hear Him. **His whisper carries more weight than the loudest thunder.**

A Call to One and All

"God talks to little boys while they're fishing."

God speaks **at any age, in any place, to any willing heart.**

LISTENING VS. HEARING

HEARING:
Processing words

LISTENING:
Responding in obedience

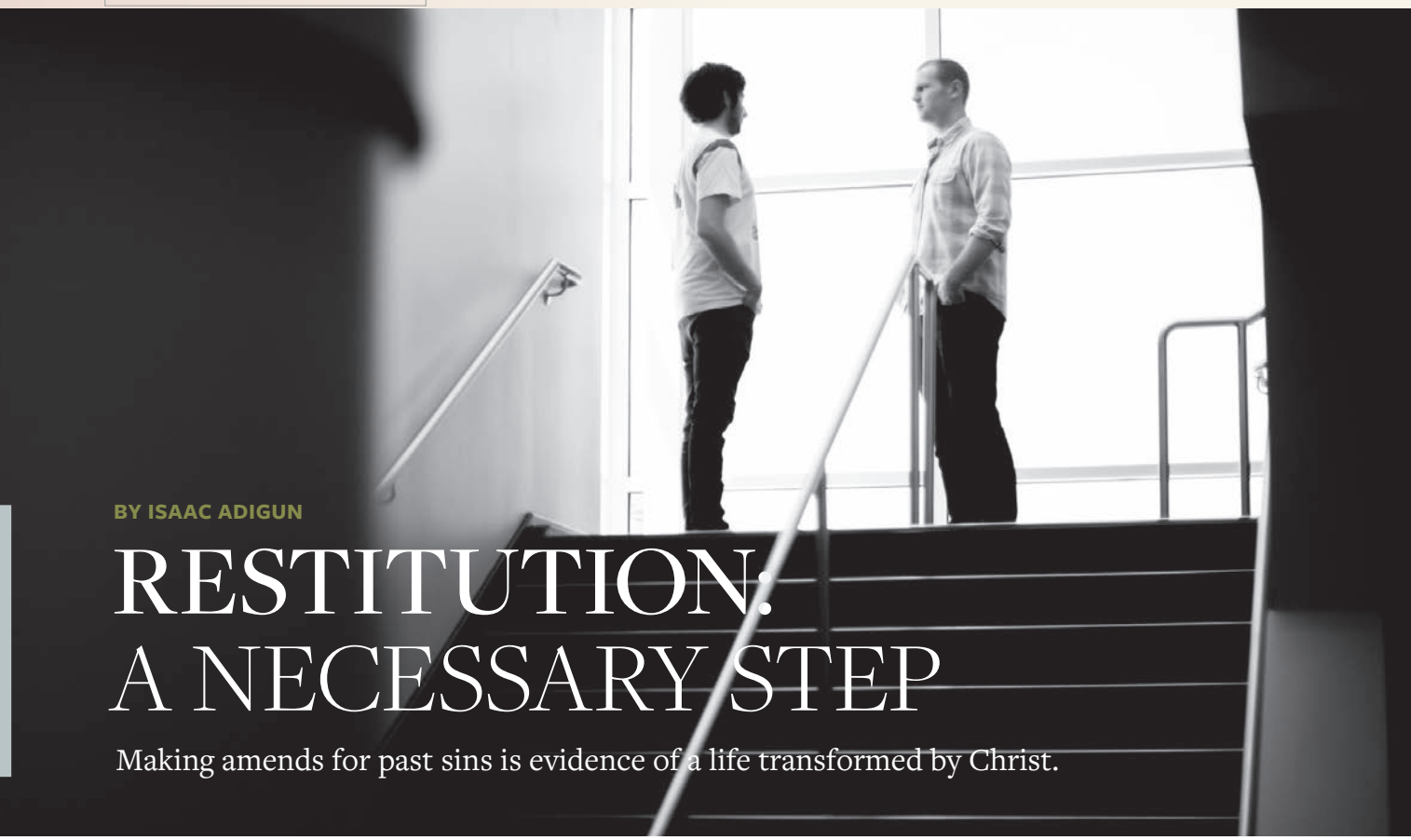
to sing during Sunday school. He was wearing a straw hat and carrying a fishing pole, and he sang, "God talks to little boys while they're fishing." I thought, *That's exactly right.* He speaks to all of us! He called the disciples from fishing and from tax collecting. He spoke to Moses on the mountain, to young Samuel in the Temple, and to Elijah in front of a cave. God talks to little boys and girls, to young people, to parents, to those who are getting up in years. The voice of God can come to us whatever our occupation or location, and regardless of what is going on in the world. Circumstances do not change the fact that God speaks. That's never changed!

When Jesus walked this earth, in the middle of His preaching He often said, "If any man has ears to hear, let him hear." He made it clear that His message was for *anyone* willing to listen, and He meant more than just processing audible sounds—He wanted them to open their hearts to His words. In Revelation 3:20-22 we read these words from Christ: "Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Thank God that He still speaks to hearts. We do not want to miss out on hearing from Him. Just as God repeatedly called Samuel, faithfully instructed Saul through Samuel, and patiently guided Elijah, He will speak to our hearts and lead us if we will simply listen and obey. We want to benefit from His instructions in every area of our lives, and we certainly want to hear the Trumpet sound that announces the Rapture, when He comes to take away those who are ready to meet Him in the air.

God will speak! The question is: Will we listen and obey His voice?

Rev. Dwight Baltzell was the Superintendent General of the Apostolic Faith Church from 1993 to 2000. He currently serves as a minister at the headquarters church in Portland, Oregon.



BY ISAAC ADIGUN

RESTITUTION: A NECESSARY STEP

Making amends for past sins is evidence of a life transformed by Christ.

God is always ready to bless. However, if we wish to receive His blessing and answers to our prayers, we must obey His commands to us, including making restitution for the wrongs we have done.

Restitution is a Bible doctrine. It is God's law and as much a part of the Gospel as conversion. God's standard of righteousness has always been high, and it has always included restitution. One cannot say that restitution went out with the Old Testament. No! From the giving of the Law of Moses, through the dispensation of the prophets, to the New Testament era, restitution was taught. It is still what God expects today of those who follow Him.

In our study of this topic, we will consider what restitution is, why we need to make it, when to make it, how to make it, and the blessings that result from obeying what the Lord has said regarding this necessary step.

What restitution is

Restitution is defined as, "Restoration of anything that has been taken from someone to its rightful owner; an act of giving an equivalent for loss or damage caused." We find a Biblical explanation in Ezekiel 33:14-16, which reads, "When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live."

Another way to explain restitution would be that it is the act of making amends for something that slandered, harmed, or defrauded another individual, or put simply: righting wrongs done against others. It is required for *all* wrongs, not just what we might consider *big* misdeeds.

Restitution is not a requirement for salvation; it is a result of salvation. There are very few individuals who do not have restitutions to make when they get saved, and the Spirit of God is faithful to point out to us anything wrong we have done. One brother testified recently about God putting His finger on something in his life and impressing upon him, "I won't let you off on this. You need to make it right. You have confessed it to Me and I have forgiven you, but you need to go back and make it right with that individual."

Why we need to make restitution

The reason we need to make restitution is simple: because God requires it. Some people reason that since they have confessed their sins to God and those sins have been forgiven, they do not need to revisit their past wrongs. However, that idea is totally refuted in Ezekiel 33, where God stated that those who do that which is lawful and right by "restoring the pledge [returning what was obtained

"If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live."

— *Ezekiel 33:15-16*

What Is Restitution?

Restitution is the act of restoring to a rightful owner something that has been wrongfully taken away.

It is a Bible doctrine.

It is required by God.

It is a result of salvation.

It is as much a part of the Gospel as conversion.

Restitution is NOT . . .

It is not required to be completed before God will forgive sins.

It is not limited only to "big" misdeeds.

It is not a vague apology without explanation.

It is not a replacement for any other consequences of the wrongdoing.

It is not optional.

wrongfully] . . . shall surely live." God will hold us accountable for our actions. Grace will not cover any wrong that we refuse to make right. When the Spirit of God points out to us an offense toward another, we must obey and rectify the matter.

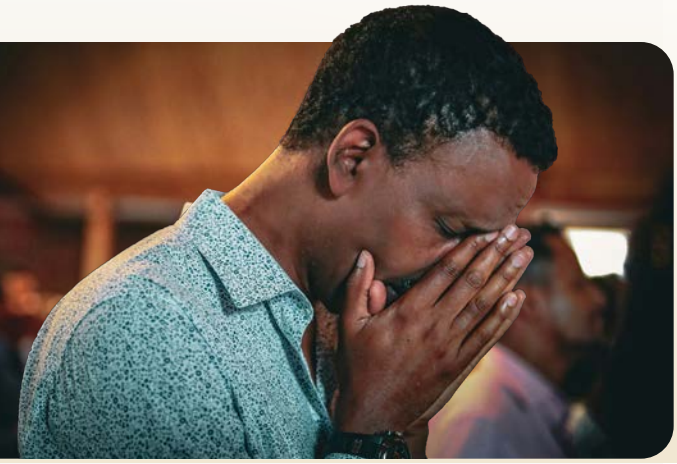
Failure to make restitution may be why some people are stuck when it comes to receiving their Christian experiences. God is telling them to make something right, but they are rationalizing, side-stepping, or procrastinating. One cannot make spiritual progress while resisting God when He is saying, "You need to take this step."

Making restitution also supports our testimony. Let me present a scenario. Suppose I stole a pair of glasses from a man but then prayed and received God's forgiveness. Afterward, I go to the owner of the glasses and tell him how God saved my soul and forgave my sins. However, I am still wearing the glasses that I stole from him! What will he think? Compare that with an opposite scenario. After I am saved, I go to the man and tell him, "The Lord has saved me and forgiven my sins. I stole these glasses from you, and I am very sorry. I want to return them. Please forgive me." Which scenario will incline him to believe my testimony?

A old-timer in the Gospel named Bruce Archer comes to mind. He testified that before he became a Christian, he lived a wicked life. He said, "I wore a mask and carried two big guns and had a string of crimes that reached clear across the United States. I stole automobiles and held up gambling houses." But when he came to Portland, Oregon, and heard people giving their testimonies on a street corner, he wanted what those people had. He prayed, and God saved his soul and made a complete transformation in his life. He began going back over his old life and making restitution, although the money he had taken wrongfully ran into thousands of dollars. That was a lot of money back then! One man that he had robbed wrote back saying he didn't want to be repaid. All he wanted was for Bruce to pray for him that he might have this same old-time religion. What a testimony to the work God had done!

It is true that at times there are consequences when restitutions are made. In fact, we know people who have gone to prison as a result of making restitution. Some years ago when I was pastoring in London, a young person of my acquaintance faced that type of situation. When he came to me, he had already met with lawyers who had fabricated what he needed to say in the courtroom. I advised the young man, "Tell the truth," and he took that advice. On the day of the court proceedings, he surprised his lawyer when he simply confessed, "I did it." The judge told him, "Because you have told the truth, I will reduce your sentence." That young man spent some time in prison, but he was a free man in terms of his conscience, and he even became an evangelist in the prison.

Wrongs will either be made right in this world, or they will be



Restitution requires prayer on our part. It may be difficult, but as Paul said, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"* (Philippians 4:13). **God will go before us and help us.**

KEY SCRIPTURES ON **RESTITUTION**

Ezekiel 33:14-16
"Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed . . . None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live."

Leviticus 6:4-5
"Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away . . . Or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto . . . in the day of his trespass offering."

Numbers 5:7-8
"Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof . . . But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the LORD."

Luke 19:8-9
"And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house."

Exodus 22:1
"If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep."

Acts 24:16
"And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."

faced in the world to come. We find that principle in 1 Timothy 5:24, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after." We do not want our sins to follow us into eternity; we want to confess them now and make them right. If we do our part by following God's instructions regarding restitution, we can leave the consequences to God. He will help us, and we will have a clear conscience before God and man.

When to make restitution

It is important to make restitution immediately after the wrong deed comes to mind. The longer we delay in taking care of a matter, the more difficult it becomes.

At God's direction, Moses taught the Children of Israel the necessity for immediate restitution. In Leviticus chapter 6, Moses listed several situations that were to be made right: lying, violence, deceit, keeping another person's belongings, and swearing falsely. In each case, the instruction was to restore or make right "in the day of his trespass offering" (verse 5). That phrase is significant. The penitent individual was to make matters right the same day that he brought his trespass offering to obtain forgiveness from God. For us, the phrase, "In the day of the trespass offering" suggests that when we become aware of or recall a misdeed against another person, we should immediately take steps to rectify the matter.

There may be situations where it is impossible to make restitution immediately. Perhaps the Spirit of God points out a misdeed we had forgotten about, but we are not in the same city as the person, or for some other reason are unable to take care of it that day. In those cases, we need to tell God, "I have the desire to make this right; I will do so as soon as I can." God will trust us to keep our word.

How to make restitution

We make restitution by going to the individual we have wronged, confessing our wrongdoing, and asking for forgiveness—the same steps we took when we went to God and received His forgiveness. It is not enough to just say, "I have done something against you and I'm sorry." That is not restitution. That would simply leave the person wondering, *What did you do?* No, we must explain exactly what we did and then do our best to make it right.

In Exodus 22, Moses gave instructions regarding how

restitution was to be made with regard to theft. In verse 1 he stated, "If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep." Verse 3 notes the necessity of "full restitution" or repayment of the full value. Verse 4 states that one who takes the animal of another should restore double. Verse 5 indicates that if a person's animal feeds in another man's field, he should make restitution. Verses 6-15 give several more examples.

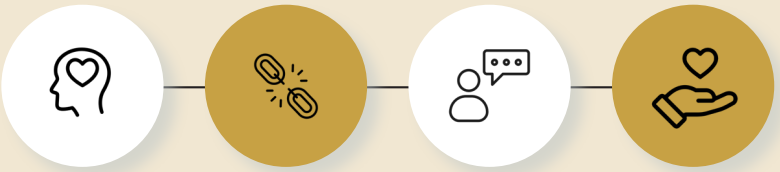
In the New Testament, we find an example of making restitution in the account of Zacchaeus. We read in Luke 19 that Jesus called out, "Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down: for to day I must abide at thy house," and Zacchaeus quickly came and "received him joyfully" (verses 5-6). We have no Scriptural record of what was said between Jesus and Zacchaeus as they went to his house. However, something must have happened because after they arrived at the house, Zacchaeus told Jesus, "If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (verse 8). When Zacchaeus said those words, Jesus said to him, "This day is salvation come to this house" (Luke 19:9). Zacchaeus made a commitment to right his past wrongs, and Jesus accepted that commitment.

At times, making restitution is not possible. Perhaps we cannot find the person we wronged or that individual has passed away, but we know the Spirit of God wants us to do something about the matter. God instructed Moses to tell the Children of Israel to confess their sins and recompense the one trespassed against. Then he added, "But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the Lord, even to the priest; beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him" (Numbers 5:8). This indicates that in such a case, restitution should be made to God.

When a wrongdoing that we committed involved other people, we make restitution for ourselves only. If possible, we should not implicate or place blame on someone else. If we are ever unsure about how to handle a particular situation, we can seek godly counsel. As we request guidance and follow through, the Lord will help us and our conscience will be clear.

Making a restitution may require a lot of prayer on our part. Some people are so ashamed of their past that they do not see how they can do what God requires. We cannot let the enemy deceive us by suggesting that if we make restitution, we will lose our credibility, the respect of others, and our integrity. In fact, the opposite is true. It may be difficult, but as Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). God will go before us and help us.

Results of Restitution



A conscience void of offense — **Freedom instead of bondage** — **A testimony that is believable** — **The fullness of God's blessing**

Restitution may cause personal loss or difficulty, but God will be there to help us.

The blessings that result from obeying

Over the years, we have heard many testimonies about how God blessed when people followed His command and made restitution. I recall one case of a marriage that was dissolved for twenty-nine years. When the man was saved and came to make things right with his wife, it was difficult for her to accept him back. But by the special grace of God, that broken home was mended and they lived together for many years thereafter.

Another blessing that results from restitution is a clear conscience. In Acts 24:16 Paul said, "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." That is a wonderful feeling! When we have done what is lawful and right, we will have peace of mind.

When we read about the Welsh Revival of the early 1900s, we find that it was making restitution that sparked that outpouring. Evan Roberts, a Welsh preacher and leading figure in the revival, told the people to confess any known sins, put away any doubtful habits, and restore any broken relationships. The people did so, and when they came together to pray, the fire fell!

Today, that fire is still available for you and me. When God brings a wrongdoing to our minds, we must confess it and make restitution, saying, "Lord, I will do it." When we have harmed or defrauded someone else, we must be ready to restore. God will give us the courage and help we need to make right all the wrongs that He points to in our lives. We will enjoy the fullness of His blessing when we do so!

Rev. Isaac Adigun is the District Superintendent of West and Central Africa for the Apostolic Faith Church.

BY ED HABRE

JOY FULL LIVING

Paul's letter to the Philippians reveals four ways our joy can be full regardless of life's circumstances.

The Book of Philippians is a letter written by the Apostle Paul to the church at Philippi, located in the Macedonian Province of the Roman Empire. Paul was called by the Lord to go to this city by the Holy Spirit, and he took three men with him: Silas, Timothy, and Luke the beloved physician. This quartet of missionaries traveled into this region, which is now the northern part of Greece. The city of Philippi was strategically located on a trade route that went east to west, and it was noted for its very rich gold mines. It was also a military port. So, this was a city of some importance.

Paul wrote to this congregation to thank them for gifts of support that he had received from them in times past. However, in writing to them, he accomplished much more than simply expressing his gratitude. He addressed pressing issues in the church, and made personal statements about his own walk with God. In addition, the congregation was encouraged to keep the faith, develop humility, remain unified in Christ, and when making requests to God, to do so with joy. This last admonition to have joy is particularly intriguing considering Paul's circumstances; at the time of writing, he was imprisoned in Rome awaiting execution. However, the opening lines of Paul's letter reveal that he had inner joy despite his situation.

When my wife and I were first married, she acquired a little plaque that has hung in various locations in our home over the years. The plaque reads, "Joy is not in things; it is in us." In other words, joy is an internal state; it is not based on external factors such as material possessions, status, or advantageous circumstances. This is the type of joy Paul had, and it is available to us as well.

In Psalm 16:11, we read that the source of this sustained joy is the Lord. David declared, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." The "fulness of joy" David spoke of is an abiding feeling of peace and calm, of contentment and satisfaction, that flows out of us from deep within. This is only possible when the presence of God has been imprinted on our souls and our consciences are void of offense toward Him.

We must have the joy of the Lord in our hearts in order to be instruments that He can use as reflections of Him. When joy is missing in a person's life, it is noticeable—the signs are often a dark mood, a discouraged attitude toward life, or a cheerless countenance. That should not be said of us; a Christian's life should be marked by joy. People are naturally drawn to others who are joyful. We want those around us to see our lives and be drawn to us, so we can proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to them.

In the first six verses of Philippians, Paul laid a foundation of four ways in which our joy can be full. He demonstrated joy in remembrance, intercession, fellowship, and confidence. Since we want our lives to be marked by joy, as we follow Paul's examples we will find that we too can have an inner joy that sustains us regardless of life's circumstances.

Psalm 16:11

"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

Joy in remembrance

Paul's letter began with a brief introduction, in which he addressed "all the saints in Christ which are at Philippi." This tells us that his audience was the redeemed—those who had the love of the Lord in their hearts. In verse 3, we have the first way in which joy came to Paul. He said, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." This is an amazing statement! Paul had joy in *every* remembrance of this congregation.

To gain insight into what he might have been remembering, we can read Luke's account of Paul's mission trip to Philippi, which is given in Acts chapter 16. A short time after the four missionaries arrived in the city, Luke recorded, "On the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made" (verse 13). Meeting at a river to pray was the Jewish tradition in places where there was not a synagogue. We read in Psalm 137 that the captive Israelites did this very thing. The fact that Philippi did not have a synagogue suggests to us there were not even ten Jewish men in this large city, since ten is the number required to form a quorum for community worship, or to form a synagogue. When the missionaries went to the river, they encountered several Jewish women who had gathered there to pray. Paul preached the Gospel

Joy is an inside work.

"Joy is not in things; it is in us."

True joy isn't tied to possessions, success, or easy days. It is something God places within the heart.

Joy is a choice of focus.

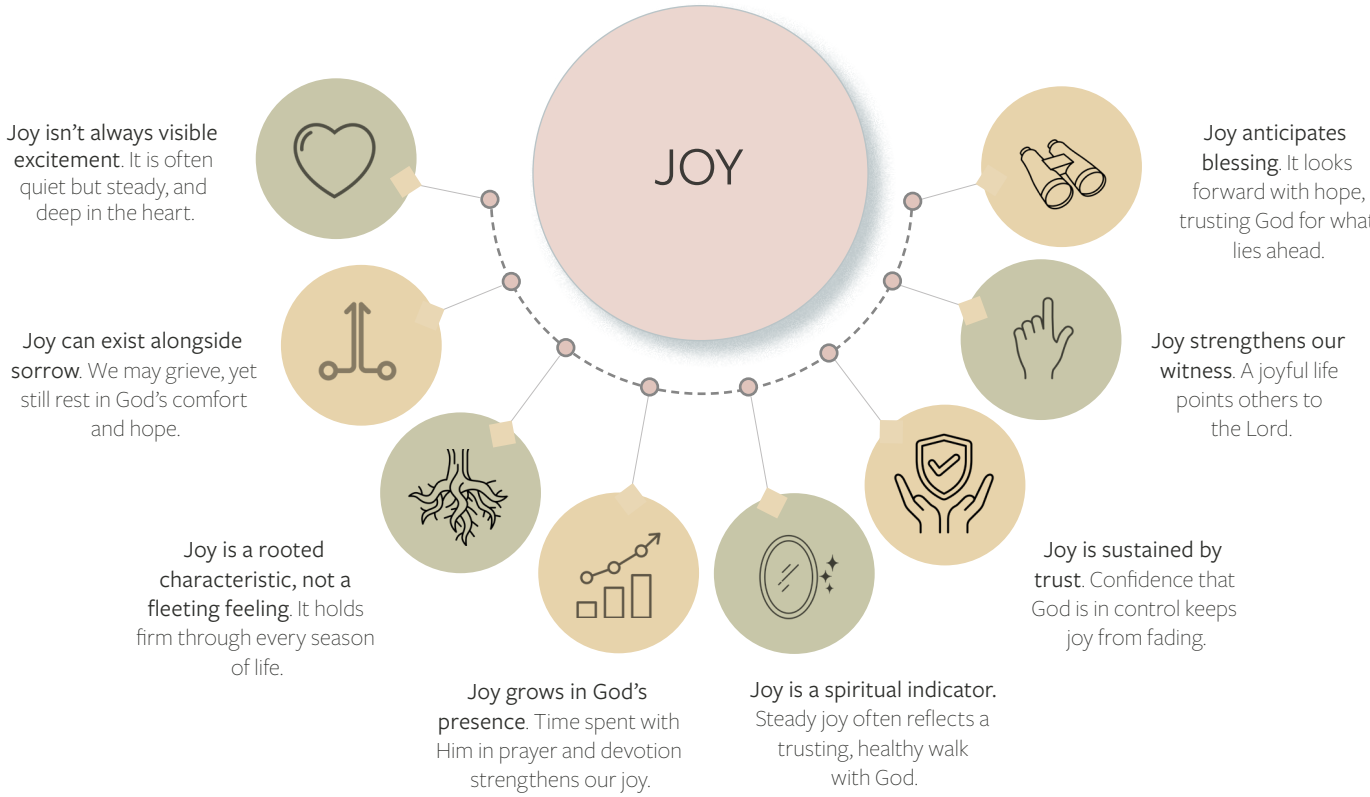
When we dwell only on problems, joy fades. When we remember what God has done and trust what He will do, joy grows.

Joy grows through gratitude.

Thankfulness feeds joy. When we regularly thank God for His goodness, even in small things, our hearts stay lighter and more at peace.

Joy comes from belonging to God.

One of the deepest sources of joy is knowing we belong to the Lord and are walking in His will.



to them, as this was his purpose in coming to Philippi, and one of the women by the name of Lydia opened her heart to the message. She and her household were baptized right there in the river. No doubt, this was a joyful memory for Paul concerning them.

Later in the narrative, however, we read about circumstances that could not have brought joy to Paul. As the missionaries went about the city evangelizing, they were followed by a woman possessed by a demon who cried out, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation" (verse 17). Though she spoke the truth, Paul's spirit was grieved. She was a fortune teller who worked for several men who owned her services. Paul called the demon out from her, and the woman was set free.

This caused a problem with her owners, who suddenly lost their lucrative income. They incited a mob to bring Paul and Silas before the magistrate—apparently these two were recognized as the leaders among the four missionaries. This resulted in Paul and Silas being severely beaten with stripes, thrown into prison, and placed securely in stocks. Nonetheless, the record of this account ends with a tremendous miracle. The Lord freed them from prison by an earthquake, and their jailer along with his household turned to Christ for salvation. While that brought joy, Paul had endured a lot, and his sufferings could not have been among the joyful memories he was referring to. Yet, he wrote that he thanked God upon *every* remembrance. He understood that God uses adverse circumstances for His good purposes, and external trials do not detract from our joy in the Lord.

We will all face situations in our lives that cause us to be troubled. There will be losses in life. We will mourn people we care about when they are gone. However, the circumstances of this life are temporary and should not take away our joy in the Lord, which is everlasting.

Joy in intercession

Continuing to verse 4 of Paul's letter to the Philippians, he said that he was "always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy." This statement tells us there is joy in intercession. In the Apostolic Faith Church, we have a tradition of meeting before services to pray. This is something we do as a body of believers because we want to invite the Lord's presence into our midst as we gather in His name. During these short prayer meetings, prayer requests are read to us. After hearing them, we have an opportunity to once again drop down on our knees and pray concerning these needs. In our private devotional times, we often ask the Lord to bless our friends and loved ones, and we intercede for those we know who are facing challenging times in their lives. We call out their names to the Lord, reminding Him of the promises in His Word that He hears our earnest petitions. It is such a privilege to pray one for another! It may even be said that it is one of our highest privileges. The benefit to others is that God hears and answers prayer. The benefit to ourselves is that our joy becomes full as we intercede on behalf of others.

Joy in fellowship

In verse 5, we find the next reason for having joy. It says, "For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now." Here,

Paul spoke of joy in fellowship. This word, "fellowship," means far more than simply spending time with people we enjoy being with. Since most of us have a tendency to gravitate towards people with whom we have common interests, fellowship can be about being with friends in the faith to some degree. However, in the body of believers, we share a singular commonality, and that is that we are all redeemed. Fellowship among Christians is an opportunity to spend time with people who have also found salvation in Christ. These are people who share our appreciation for the Gospel and have similar core beliefs based on Scripture. In addition, they likely have experienced some of the same spiritual challenges and blessings that we have, and that makes them uniquely suited to encourage us, and us to encourage them.

Christian fellowship is also an opportunity to serve God's people. There is a feeling of completeness and rightness that comes with being able to minister one to another. When we have occasion to work together, in whatever our hands find to do, it is such a high privilege. We have fellowship as we serve one another. Personally, there is nothing that gives me more satisfaction and I know others feel the same. When there is a need to be met, the body of Christ comes together, and the result is joy in fellowship.

Everlasting Joy

The circumstances of this life are temporary. The joy of the Lord is everlasting!

Joy in confidence

We have considered joy in remembrance, joy in intercession, and joy in fellowship, and these lead to joy in confidence. From a practical standpoint, one thief that can rob us of our joy in the Lord is uncertainty. In verse 6, Paul said, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Getting saved is not something we accomplished on our own. While we believed unto salvation, it was the Lord who did the work. God sent His Son into the world to shed His Blood on the Cross for our sins and then to rise again. He made it possible for us, by faith, to reach out to Him so that our lives could be fully transformed through the work of salvation. What a marvelous, transformational experience that was for me. It made such a difference in my life! After praying through to victory on a hot summer night, as I looked in the mirror the next morning, I hardly recognized the person staring back at me. It was God who began that good work in me, and He is going to perform it until Jesus returns.

In a recent Sunday school class session, we had a lesson about the coming of the Lord and the signs of the times. One of the men in the class made the comment that when he was younger, he had some fear about missing the Lord's return. At times, this apprehension still creeps in, causing him to want to be more diligent about making sure he doesn't miss that crucial event. For anyone else in this position, Paul's words in verse 6 are helpful. He tells us that God, who began the good work in us at salvation, will carry it through to completion. If maintaining our salvation were up to us, we would all fail, but it is not up to us; the Lord will do it. We must do our part by staying close to Him, but as we do so, He will keep us until that day when Jesus returns.

Is it even conceivable that God, who cared enough to send His Son to die for us, would not see us through to the end? He is the merciful God of Heaven whose desire is to bring people to Himself. Knowing this, we can have confidence as we walk with Him that He will give us victory until we hear the sound of the Trumpet. That was Paul's hope and joy in his day, and it is our hope and joy as well.

> *When we repent of our sins, for Christ's sake God forgives us and transforms our lives, giving us a deep and abiding contentment. That is the joy of the Lord that Paul talked about.*

Marked by joy

We don't know when Jesus will return, but we do know that until that day, our joy can be full. It begins with surrendering our hearts to God and receiving His salvation. When we repent of our sins, for Christ's sake He forgives us and transforms our lives, giving us a deep and abiding contentment. That is the joy of the Lord that Paul talked about. As Christians, our lives should be marked by this joy! The Gospel message is one of hope for us and for the world. May our desire be for others to see Christ in us and want for themselves what He has done in our lives as well.

Rev. Ed R Habre is Director of Jamaica Work for the Apostolic Faith Church and a minister at the headquarters in Portland, Oregon.

BY DWANE AND TERESA GIBSON ROSS

SEPARATE PATHS TO FULL COMMITMENT

Though they took separate paths in life, neither Dwane nor Teresa could forget the Biblical teachings they grew up with.

DWANE

My dad was a preacher in the Apostolic Faith Church in Chehalis and Puyallup, Washington, and after I left home he ministered in Woodlake, California. Growing up, I absolutely understood what salvation was and why I needed it. One year at the camp meeting in Portland, Oregon, when I was about ten years old, I was sitting up front during one of the meetings. It seemed like the preacher was pointing his finger right at me and saying, "You're going to Hell." I hadn't committed a lot of sins, but I knew I had done things that would keep me out of Heaven. As soon as the service ended, I dropped to my knees and prayed, "Lord, save me," and He did.

Because of my upbringing in church, I knew I needed to be sanctified to experience real holiness. So the next Sunday, I prayed through to sanctification.

When I got home from camp meeting, there was a noticeable change in my life even at that young age. I'd had a tendency

to fight before—I enjoyed getting in fights when I had the opportunity—and that desire was gone after I was saved. I'd also had a fear of missing the Rapture, particularly during thunderstorms, but I didn't need to worry about that anymore.

Before the next camp meeting came, I went to revival services at our church in Chehalis, Washington. People had told me that the baptism of the Holy Ghost was even better than salvation and sanctification, and I was seeking that experience. After one of the meetings, the Lord came down and blessed around the altars, and He filled me with the Holy Ghost. I didn't speak in tongues for very long, but long enough to know it was God speaking through me.

Another eventful camp meeting happened in my early teen years. I was sharing a cabin with one of my brothers who had recently been injured in the military. He had a brain scar causing epilepsy, with recurring seizures. I was told that he could never be left alone during one of those episodes. One night in the cabin, he started having a seizure. I needed to go get help, but I couldn't leave him alone, so I just prayed, "Lord, I need You to do something." Immediately, the seizure stopped. These attacks always lasted a long time, so I knew God had done a miracle. Though I had seen many people healed before, it was always when my parents or ministers had prayed. That time, I was the only one praying, and God had answered. To this day, I still look back on that incident to remind myself that God hears even when you pray all by yourself.

I enjoyed my years growing up in church, but my theology was not very deep. My motivation for being a Christian was mainly to avoid Hell. At some point during my teenage years, I started to wonder if I was missing out on something by being a Christian. I made up my mind to join the Navy once I was old enough, so I could see what else was going on in the world.

At age seventeen, I did join the Navy. My boot camp was in San Diego, California. No one there knew who I was, so it felt like it was my chance to try out a different lifestyle than the way I was raised. However, I soon realized that the other guys there didn't have any peace. The pressures of boot camp were breaking down some of them. I thought, *I better stay saved during boot camp.*

After boot camp I went to a military school. My roommates there found out that I was a Christian and they made it their goal to get me drunk before our training ended. That frightened me and I thought, *I better stay saved during school.* I started asking the Lord to help me stay saved, and He did. He showed me that He could keep me if I wanted to be kept.

After school I was assigned to a station in Norfolk, Virginia. I thought I was finally in a place where I could find out what a worldly lifestyle was like. One night, I drove to a bar, but as I sat in the parking lot the Spirit of God spoke clearly to my heart: "You can try this, but remember that preaching on Hell—the reason you got saved? That's where you'll be."

I went back to my barracks and saw one of my roommates so drunk that he could hardly talk. All I could think was, *I don't want that.* The next time I had to stand guard on a weekend, I was there on Friday night to see the aftermath of that lifestyle. In the bathroom, dozens of stalls were filled with guys who were sick or passed out on the floor. Again I thought, *I do not want to live my life like that.*

I was beginning to see that my plan to find out what the world had to offer was not a good one. I was curious what else was out there, but I definitely wanted to make Heaven, and I knew that if I turned away from God for even a short period of time, there was a chance I would not make it back to Him.

One day, I drove to a state park and sat in my car wrestling with these thoughts. There, the Lord let me know that I needed to make up my mind about serving Him, because He had something for me to do. That was a surprise to me—it had not occurred to me before that God had a plan for my life. Finally, I surrendered everything to God

Saved at a young age
At ten years old, Duane asked God to forgive him during a camp meeting and felt the peace of salvation.

A milestone miracle
When his brother had a seizure at camp meeting, he prayed, and God stopped it.

Faith tested in the Navy
Joining the Navy at seventeen exposed him to intense pressure and temptation. Surrounded by drinking and ungodly influences, he repeatedly chose to remain faithful, discovering that God could keep him if he truly wanted to be kept.

Full surrender
Alone in a car, wrestling with his future, he sensed God had a purpose for his life. His prayer of complete surrender marked a turning point—from serving God out of fear to serving Him with joy and purpose.

"I soon realized that the other guys there didn't have any peace. The pressures of boot camp were breaking down some of them. **I thought, *I better stay saved during boot camp*.**"

(Left) Dwane when he was serving in the Navy.

(Right) Dwane and his first wife, Rosa, with their three children.

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and told Him, "If You can use me, I'll do whatever You've got for me to do." When I got out of my car, I felt so good! I went for a walk in the woods and it felt like my spirit was running down the trail ahead of me. I was so excited to be fully, one-hundred-percent on God's side.

From that point on, I really started enjoying the Gospel. I already knew a lot about the Bible, but now I had a personal interest in understanding it and applying it to my life. Not long after that, a lady I worked with came up and told me, "I just want you to know, if I ever become a Christian, it will be because of what I see in you." Then she walked away. I told God, "Thank You, Lord. I guess maybe You *can* use me." That was just one of several times that God let me know He was using me to reach others, and it meant a lot to me.

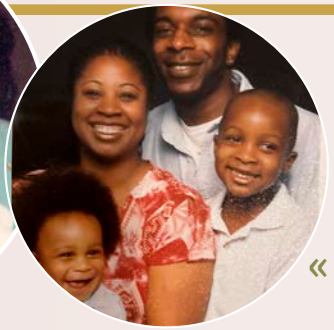
During that time, I met a girl named Rosa from one of our churches in New York. The Lord led us to get married, and later gave us twin daughters and a son. Rosa was a wonderful wife and mother, and everyone who knew her knows that she was a prayer warrior.

We were blessed to serve God in some of our branch churches on the East Coast and West Coast over the years. Then in March of 2007, with our kids in their mid- to late-teens, the Lord saw fit to take Rosa to Heaven. Our children and I were devastated by that loss, but it was a comfort to know that God was in control, that Rosa had made her goal, and that the Lord would always be with us.

Over a year later, at the camp meeting in Century, Florida, I met Teresa. She had lost her spouse around the same time I had lost mine. We married in 2009, and the Lord has blessed our family.

Without a doubt, the best choice I ever made was to get saved and stay saved. Though I once wondered if there was something better than the Gospel, the Lord in His mercy allowed me to see that the world has nothing to offer. There is nothing better than living your life in God's will. I thank Him for all the goodness He has shown to me.

TERESA



(Left) Teresa's parents, Nick, Sr., and Lillie Segres, with their daughter Ardienna in the early 1980s.

(Right) Teresa and her first husband, Larry, with their children.

The Bible was a very open Book in the home where I grew up. My mom, Lillie Segres, was a prayer warrior. It wasn't strange to wake up in the middle of the night and hear her praying. My dad, Nick Segres, Sr., was a pastor and he took the Word of God very seriously. He was kind and liked to laugh, but when it came to the Word, he didn't waver.

Despite that upbringing, I never had a desire to be a Christian. I didn't get saved and backslide—I stayed a sinner my entire childhood. I was stubborn and quick to say how I felt. If something in Scripture didn't make sense to me, I questioned it openly. My dad used to tell me, "Teresa, you have a different way of thinking, but God can use that thinking." He did not invalidate my questions but pointed me back to the Bible and made sure I knew that it could answer every question in life. The way my parents lived and breathed the Gospel, I knew that if I ever got into trouble, God was the answer.

My upbringing followed me even when I tried to get away from it. In college, I wanted to have fun at clubs and parties, but I could never escape thoughts like, *This is not what you were taught,* and, *If the Lord came now, where would you be?*

Once, when I asked my dad to pray about something for me, he told me, "You've got to pray for yourself, because I'm not going to always be around to pray for you." I didn't take him seriously, but it was true. My dad passed away when I was twenty-three years old. That shook me, but not enough to get saved.

At age twenty-seven, I married a man named Larry. I don't advise anyone to marry before getting saved, but through the prayers of my mom and grandparents, God blessed me with a loving, loyal husband.

A few weeks after we married, we got into a fight that caused me to see how much I needed God in my life. We had some laundry to do at the laundromat, and I thought we would have dinner together afterward. But once we loaded the clean clothes into the car he said, "I'll see you later. I'm going to play basketball." That didn't sit well with me. I thought, *Why should I be folding laundry while he plays basketball?* I had a very quick temper. I used some words that should not have been used and started throwing the clothes. He stayed calm and drove us back to the apartment, and then left to play basketball. I was furious!

Convinced that I was right, I called my mom and told her what had happened. She told me, "Teresa, take a seat. Let me tell you what the Word of God says." My mom went back to the solid foundation that I had been raised on as she reminded me that marriage is "till death do us part." She said I needed to keep my duties as a wife regardless of what Larry did. She said, "The next time I talk to Larry, those clothes had better

be clean and folded, whatever you had planned for dinner better be cooked, and you better have a polite look on your face."

After that conversation, I knew that for my marriage to survive, I needed to change. My current attitude was not going to work in a marriage. In my heart, I wanted a marriage like the one my parents had, and I knew salvation was the key.

Right there, I got on my knees and told God, "If You save me, I'll serve You." It took me a while to pray through and I had to ask God to give me faith, but He saved me that day and made a big change in my life.

My new relationship with God changed my relationship with my husband and saved our marriage. I had always been quick to fight with unkind words, but God worked on me and helped me learn to express myself with more love and kindness.

Our sons were born in 1998 and 2002. When they were young, one night their dad was very late coming home. More than an hour passed, and I became irritated. I started plotting what I would say when he got home, but then I felt God ask me, "How do you plan on drawing him to the Gospel if you still want to be the old Teresa you used to be?" That struck my heart. I went to our guest room and prayed for a long time, asking God to help me be the person He wanted me to be. That night, the Lord sanctified me. From then on, my emotions did not influence me like they had before. It was as if God changed my DNA. My attitude changed from "I *can't* do that as a Christian" to "I don't *want* to do that as a Christian."

A while later, in one of the sermons during Century camp meeting the preacher spoke about how wives are not less than their husbands, but they are also not the head of the household. Because I was saved and my husband was not, I had felt that I was in a better position to lead our home. But God was showing me that I still needed to respect Larry as the leader of our family. He helped me to see my husband in a different light and gave me a new appreciation for him.

That year, on the day after Thanksgiving, I was praying at my mom's house and told God from the bottom of my heart, "Thank You for the husband You gave me." It was not a long prayer meeting, but the Holy Spirit came down and filled me, and gave me the witness of speaking in another language.

Larry and I were married for ten years. All that time, he never hindered me from going to church or camp meetings. He even gave money for youth programs. A couple months before our tenth wedding anniversary, Larry was in the hospital for a minor problem, and during that time he asked my brother to pray with him for salvation. About a month later, on Easter Sunday of 2007, he came to the morning service and gave his first testimony in church. Just two weeks after that, he had a massive heart attack and passed away.

The way the events unfolded, God let me know that He is on His Throne. He has a plan in everything He allows and at just the right time, He had led Larry to receive salvation. Yet, losing him was incredibly difficult. Our sons were ages three and seven, and I felt like I got knocked down and didn't know how to get back up. Many times, all I knew to pray was, "Jesus," and that prayer carried me along. Through everything, God was faithful to me.

In my mind, I didn't think I would ever marry again, but Dwane came into my life the following year. He became a friend that I could talk to about the challenges of losing a spouse and becoming a single parent. In an amazing way, God blended our families together, and now we share five kids and eight grandkids.

In all the years that I have been saved, God has never failed me. As a matter of fact, this walk with Him has only gotten sweeter, stronger, and better. God has been so good to me and I know that if I keep my hand in His, He will see me through whatever comes my way.

"Right there, I got on my knees and told God, '**If You save me, I'll serve You**.' It took me a while to pray through and I had to ask God to give me faith, but He saved me that day and made a big change in my life."

Rev. Dwane and Teresa Gibson Ross worship at the Apostolic Faith Church in Kingstree, South Carolina, where he serves as a minister.

Evidence

PERSONAL TESTIMONIES OF THE POWER OF GOD

RUTH MILLS MOJICA
San Pedro de Macoris,
Dominican Republic

"When my son was little, he had a condition that required five surgeries, and doctors said he would never be able to have children. However, we prayed, and today he has three beautiful daughters, to the glory of God."

I AM THE SECOND OF THREE CHILDREN, AND OUR FATHER WAS THE PASTOR OF OUR CHURCH. In our home, we woke up at 6:00 a.m. every day for family devotions. It didn't matter if it was cold or hot, or how sleepy we felt—every morning we had to sing, share the Word of God, and pray together. We also went to church every day, and my grandfather would sit behind us and make sure we were paying attention. This all made a big impact on our lives, sowing a love of the Gospel in our hearts.

We also saw God answer prayers. When my brother was little, he had a hernia. One morning, he woke up crying in pain. My father got him ready to go see the doctor, but before he left, we decided to pray first. The Lord worked in a wonderful way and healed him, and the hernia never came back.

At the age of twelve, I felt conviction that I needed Jesus to be my Savior. I had prayed many times before, but one day in particular, the Lord came into my heart and changed my life. After that, I had a fervent desire to do the Lord's work. I sang in the choir, was part of the drama team, and was on the cleaning crew. I went on evangelistic trips to share the Gospel in towns that were far away, sometimes walking many kilometers in the hot sun to get there. Despite the challenges, it was a great joy for me to do the Lord's work. In time, God also sanctified me and filled me with His Spirit.

After I married, God blessed our home with a daughter and a son. Over the years we saw God work in many ways. When my son was little, he had a condition that required five surgeries, and doctors said he would never be able to have children. However, we prayed, and today he has three beautiful daughters, to the glory of God. I also have one grandson, and when he was born, he started having seizures at just seven days old. He was admitted to the hospital and diagnosed with epilepsy. That was a very difficult time, but God was there. We prayed, and his seizures stopped and never returned. God is faithful!

At one point, I was asked to serve for a year as the women's leader for all our work in the Dominican Republic. My mother had served in that role, but I did not think I could do it. The task seemed too great for me. Then the Lord reminded me of Mary's words after she was told she would be the Lord's mother: "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord. Be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). I understood that I needed to surrender to God's will, and I did. Thank God, He helped me serve as the women's leader not only one year, but two.

Whatever our situation, God is the solution. He is always there, willing to help us. I want to be faithful to Him, and my greatest desire is to see Him in Heaven one day.

—*Ruth Mills Mojica*

RISTO PITKANEN
Stavanger, Norway

"In my childhood I also experienced God's protective hand. When I was six years old, I had a bad fall on my bike and hurt myself. When I was nine years old, a car ran over me, but I came out of this unscathed although the bike was destroyed."

MY HOME AS A CHILD WAS NOT A CHRISTIAN HOME. However, I happily attended a local Sunday school and went to a Christian scout group near where I lived. I loved hearing Bible stories from the Old Testament and about the life of Jesus. In particular, I remember a picture that I was given of Jesus carrying a lamb on His shoulders. Every time we went to Sunday school, we were given a sticker of a lamb. I attached them all to the large picture, which soon became full of little lambs. I hung it above the bunk bed that I shared with my brother.

In my childhood I also experienced God's protective hand. When I was six years old, I had a bad fall on my bike and hurt myself. When I was nine years old, a car ran over me, but I came out of this unscathed although the bike was destroyed.

At the age of eight I prayed for Jesus to come into my life. After the prayer meeting in the morning, I remember how I was filled with joy and felt that something unusual had happened in my heart. I also wanted to read God's Word. I didn't have my own Bible, but took out my parents' Bible that they got when they married. I took it with me to school and when we had religion classes, I always checked that the textbook agreed with God's Word.

Sadly, later in my adolescence I stopped reading the Bible and left my relationship with God behind. I became involved in sports, especially cycling. However, my childhood experiences left their mark on me. I never doubted God as our Creator, that Jesus Christ the Son died on the Cross for our sins, and that He rose from the dead.

After graduation, I started studying at the University of Turku in Finland. I made new friends there, but most of them were interested in worldly pleasures like drinking and partying on weekends. There was a Christian family that I had known since my childhood and used to visit often, but I started to avoid them because some of what they said bothered my conscience. I did not want to admit that what I was doing was wrong.

My heart became very distressed, and one evening my condemnation was so great that I kneeled at my bedside and asked Jesus to forgive my sins. Peace and joy filled my heart again! I bought a Bible and started reading it every day, and began visiting the Christian family every day to join them for devotions.

Over the years, I have seen God's faithfulness and care in my life. It has been more than forty years since God saved me, and my desire is still to serve Jesus faithfully until He calls me home.

— *Risto Pitkanen*

BY LORDICK MOTSHIDISI

A WORKER FOR GOD

Lordick prayed for a job he could do for God, and his prayer was answered!

Though I was not brought up in a Christian family, the love of God followed me from the time I was young. As a youth, someone from our small village in Botswana let me know, "If you should die unsaved, you'll go to Hell." That bothered me, and I thank God that it did because that is what motivated me to seek God.

Our family was very poor, and I knew my parents would not be able to afford an education for all of their children. So, after finishing secondary school, I decided to quit school and start working. My best option was to move to the capital city of Gaborone and join the police force, and I moved there at age nineteen.

There were a number of different churches in the city, but their teachings were not clear to me. Eventually I joined a religious organization that was at least reading the Bible, but even there, some of the doctrines did not make sense to me. My soul was not satisfied, and I still felt in my heart, "If you should die unsaved, you'll go to Hell." That was the Spirit of God speaking to me through my conscience.

The job that God gave me at the mine supported our family for thirty-two years, until my retirement.

The love of God followed him

Though Lordick wasn't raised in a Christian family, he could feel God's love drawing him from childhood and showing him that he needed to be saved.

Led to the right place

A job transfer took him far from home for training, where a friend invited him to an Apostolic Faith Church service. There, he finally heard a clear message about salvation.

Saved in 1983

After nearly a year of seeking, he gave his life to God during Easter services in 1983. He found peace in his heart, left sinful habits behind, and chose to live fully for God.

A church is born

Outreach meetings were started in his mining town, and he was asked to help lead. Over time, the group grew into an established church that is still there today.

God the provider

Though he had little formal education, God blessed his career at a diamond mine for thirty-two years. He was promoted many times without asking and was able to provide well for his family.

Called to full-time ministry

In 2000, he was asked to serve as the district superintendent of the Apostolic Faith work in Botswana. Then he retired early, at age fifty-two, to serve God full time.

In the years since God saved me, He has been my Protector, my Counselor, my Provider—whatever I have needed, it has been there for me.

In my heart, there was always a desire to work for God. One day, I prayed and asked God to give me a job that I would be able to work for him. About a year later, my answer came. I saw an advertisement for plant operators in a mine located in a small town called Jwaneng, which is almost 200 km (125 miles) from Gaborone. That sounded like a job that would be good for me, so I applied and was soon hired. Within three months of arriving in Jwaneng, I was sent 750 km (466 miles) away for a training course. It was there that a friend invited me to attend an Apostolic Faith Church service. Finally, I heard the message of salvation and how to make it to Heaven.

Though I did not get saved that day, the message touched my heart. The church members told me how to find the Apostolic Faith branch closest to Jwaneng—I would have to travel by bus almost two hours to get there. It was far, but my desire for the truth urged me to make the effort and I began making the trip on weekends.

The Lord continued to work on my heart for almost a year. Then, during the Easter services of 1983, I surrendered my life to Him and experienced salvation. At last, I had peace in my heart and knew I was ready for Heaven. That day, God changed my life completely. Instead of the fear of Hell, I had a holy fear of God and wanted to do my best to live in His will. Sinful habits were gone and I became selective about the friends I spent time with. I even wrote letters to some, explaining that I had become a Christian and from that time onward, I would not live the way I had before. Truly, I did my best not to do anything condemned by the Word of God.

At church I learned about the experience of sanctification and began to seek for it. I still had an earnest desire to work for God and felt that to do that, I would need all God had for me. I consecrated my life to God in prayer, and in 1984 He sanctified me, removing all trace of the

I thank God for His love that found me in a small village and led me far away, to a place where I would find salvation.

Even though I had very little education, God advanced my position to the point that I was earning a salary that I was not academically qualified for.

sin nature from my heart. That gave me additional strength to separate from the world and be dedicated unto God.

When I learned about the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, I knew I needed that experience as well. I knew of no other Christians in the mining town where I was working, and pastors were only able to visit occasionally. I needed God's guidance and power in my life. After seeking for about a year, God filled me with the Holy Spirit, giving me new courage and zeal to be a witness for Him.

The church leaders arranged to hold outreach services in Jwaneng, and afterward we started holding Sunday school there regularly. After a time, I was asked to lead the group, and eventually it grew to become a church, which is still there today.

In the years since God saved me, He has been my Protector, my Counselor, my Provider—whatever I have needed, it has been there for me. God brought me a wife and then gave us four lovely children: three girls and one boy.

The job that God gave me at the mine supported our family for thirty-two years, until my retirement. Even though I had very little education, God advanced my position to the point that I was earning a salary that I was not academically qualified for. During my career, I never applied for a promotion—not once. I was always told, "You are being promoted." By God's grace, I stayed in a middle-management position. Our home was well taken care of, and all our children received a good education. That is what God did for me.

Though that job was from God and I did it as unto Him, in my heart I wanted to serve God in ministry full time. What I did not expect was that in 2000, when I was in my early forties, I was asked to serve as the district superintendent of the Apostolic Faith work in Botswana. That was difficult for me because I did not feel qualified for the position. In fact, I gave excuses why I should not be chosen, but the church leadership assured me that God would be there for me. For sure, God has stood up for us in Botswana, and we are grateful to see how He is working here.

Most people in Botswana work until age sixty, but my hope was to be able to retire at age fifty and give ten of my working years to God. I owe God a lot, and I felt this was something I could do to give back to Him. Though I did not make it at age fifty, when I was fifty-two years old God opened a way for me to retire from the mine and serve Him full time.

Recently, God showed mercy to my family again. In November and December of 2024, my wife was admitted to the hospital and had three major surgeries within thirty days. During that time, we saw the power of God healing her and today she is almost fully recovered.

I thank God for His love that found me in a small village and led me far away, to a place where I would find salvation. My desire to work for Him has not changed, and I am looking forward to seeing Him in Heaven one day.

Rev. Lordick Motshidisi is the Apostolic Faith District Superintendent of Botswana and pastor of the headquarters church in Gabarone.

Evidence

PERSONAL TESTIMONIES OF THE POWER OF GOD

SAMUEL ORETUGA
London, England,
United Kingdom

"Jesus has been helping me with all the challenges of life."

I THANK GOD THAT I CAME ACROSS THE APOSTOLIC FAITH in 1986 and was saved during an annual revival meeting at the Peckham branch in London, England. The following Wednesday, my wife was also saved.

In time, God blessed us with the other Christian experiences. After a few years, we returned to Nigeria and served the Lord at the Anthony Village church in Lagos.

In 2004, my wife and our three children and I relocated to the United Kingdom permanently. Then in 2011, my wife and her siblings travelled to Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria, for their mother's funeral. However, on their way back, they were involved in a ghastly motor accident. My wife laid on the road unconscious, but God sent a lady who was a good Samaritan. She found my wife and rushed her to the hospital, and even paid the hospital bill. Jesus healed her completely from her injuries. On many other occasions too my wife has been seriously sick, but miraculously healed by Jesus each time.

Jesus has been helping me with all the challenges of life. I have determined never to look back in this Christian race to Heaven, and my hope is to meet Him at the pearly gates. Glory and honor be to my Lord Jesus. — *Samuel Oretuga*

What Must I Do to Be Saved?

ACKNOWLEDGE

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." ***Romans 3:23*** "God be merciful to me a sinner." ***Luke 18:13***

CONFESS

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." ***1 John 1:9***

REPENT

"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." ***Luke 13:3***

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." ***Acts 3:19***

FORSAKE

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him . . . for he will abundantly pardon." ***Isaiah 55:7***

BELIEVE

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." ***John 3:16***

If you are a new Christian, contact us and request the tract entitled "Starting Out."

BY CATEY HINKLE

WHAT BRINGS DELIGHT?

The goodness of God is reflected in the things that delight Him.

What do you think of when you hear the word "delight"? The word simply means "to take great pleasure in." Recently, I had what I consider a delightful experience when I visited one of my good friends and her six-week-old son. She lives about three hours from me, so my mom and I made the drive together on a beautiful fall day. We spent the afternoon catching up with my friend, hearing about her adventures in motherhood, and snuggling her sweet baby. He was precious—perfectly content being held by us, and we were more than content to hold him! He slept through most of the visit, but we got to see his wide eyes for at least a little bit, and even caught a couple smiles. He was a true delight.

There are many possible sources of delight: a special occasion or time spent with loved ones; a favorite season or a scenic area that we love; a hobby, a song, or even something as simple as fresh bread. God has given us many good things to enjoy in life. He loads us with blessings.

Have you ever stopped to consider what God delights in? What brings a smile to His face? Jeremiah 9:23-24 says, "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,

"I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart."
Psalm 40:8

"Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

Psalm 37:3-4

neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." In other words, a few of the things that God considers a delight are: showing love and kindness, carrying out justice and fairness, and upholding what is right and true.

Knowing what brings God pleasure tells us a lot about who He is. From this one verse in Jeremiah, we can conclude that God is not selfish—His delight is from things that benefit others. He is interested in our wellbeing. He wants to see good prevail over evil in the world. He is a good God.

According to the first half of Jeremiah 9:24, knowing God is the most important thing to know in life. It is one of the few things we can rightly "glory in," or boast about. Of course, God was not advocating for us to be prideful about how well we know Him. Rather, He was warning us *not* to boast or trust in false sources of security, such as our own intelligence, strength, or wealth. Those can be lost in a moment. Knowing God and understanding who He is reveals to us something worth boasting about—something truly glorious—which is Him.

Considering other Scriptures that mention things that delight God will help us know Him even better. Here are a few:

Justice. "A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight" (Proverbs 11:1).

Uprightness. "They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord: but such as are upright in their way are his delight" (Proverbs 11:20).

Truth. "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight" (Proverbs 12:22).

Mercy. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy" (Micah 7:18).

I love this list. It is a great comfort to know that these are the types of things that delight God. Considering how much we need mercy, the fact that He enjoys extending it is a big relief. In fact, *everything* God enjoys is a big relief. The One who is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, and sovereign over all, delights in justice, lovingkindness, truth, and mercy. We are in very good hands.

Some Scriptures mention things *we* can do to delight God.

DELIGHTING THE HEART OF GOD

The way we live each day can bring joy to God's heart.

Humble obedience honors Him.

Sincere prayer moves His heart.

Compassion toward others reflects His character.

What a thought—ordinary people like us can bring God delight. So, in addition to gaining insight into God's character from these verses, we can also learn practical ways that *we* can bless *God*, or ways to show Him our appreciation for all He has done for us. Most of these come naturally to those who love God, but it is helpful to remember and rehearse them. Here are a few:

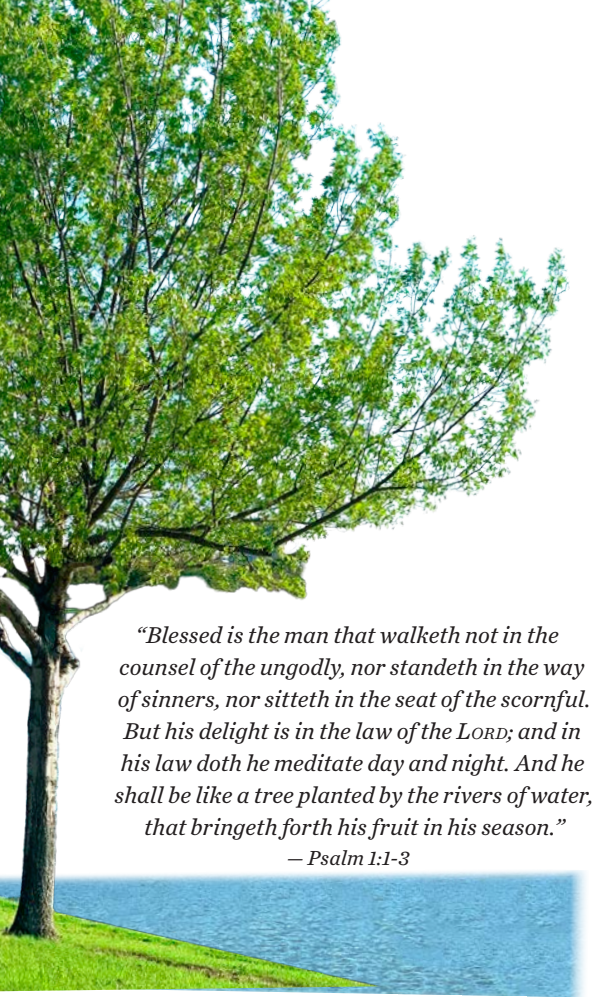
Repent of sin. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:7).

Hold God in reverence and hope in Him. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy" (Psalm 147:11).

Obey God. "And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22).

Pray. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight" (Proverbs 15:8).

Do good deeds and share with others. "But to do good and to communicate [share] forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13:16).



"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season."
— Psalm 1:1-3

A BLESSING THAT FLOWS BOTH WAYS

The things that please God are the very things that bless our own lives.

- **Obedience** to God protects us from suffering the consequences of sin.
- **Prayer** brings us closer to God, who satisfies the longings of the heart.
- Showing **compassion** to others brings joy and gratitude.

God's delight is always connected to our good.

Seek and receive the kingdom of God. "But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:31-32).

These verses offer a wealth of information about who God is, and meditating on them is very encouraging. Some think that God despises sinners, but the opposite is true—sinners are a source of great joy in Heaven, when they repent. Those who are seeking a promise from God can take courage in the fact that it is His *pleasure* to give His children the kingdom. That means one way we can bring God joy is by pressing in until we receive. Our prayers alone are a delight to Him, which reminds us that He also wants to, and will, answer our prayers. When we are generous to others and help those in need, whether or not anyone else notices or appreciates our efforts, we have made our Father in Heaven "well pleased."

These lists are by no means exhaustive, and much more could be said about each one. Something we can easily notice from them is that everything that pleases God also brings blessing to our own lives. It is impossible to out-give God because the only things He wants from us also benefit us. He is so good. The Psalmist understood this when he prayed, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8). When we understand who God is, it is easy to find our delight in Him.

Some things that delight us probably seem trivial compared to what delights God. Of course, we also appreciate lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness; these are core values that form the foundation for being able to enjoy life's simple pleasures. For that matter, I believe God also appreciates scenic views, changing seasons, good food, and family—after all, He is the one who created these things, and He said they were "very good" (Genesis 1:31). No doubt, at least part of His pleasure in them comes from seeing us enjoy what He created, because He delights in lovingkindness.

We serve a wonderful God. The more we know and understand Him, the more we realize that He is Someone to glory in. And while our circumstances in this sinful and fallen world are not always delightful, God still gives us blessings to enjoy every day, and we have the opportunity to bring Him joy too. Wouldn't it be wonderful to hear God say about us, "This is my beloved Son [or daughter], in whom I am well pleased"? That was what God said about Jesus (see Matthew 3:17).

GOD'S HEART REVEALED

- Because God delights in mercy, we know **He is compassionate**.
- Because He delights in justice, we know **He is fair**.
- Because He delights in truth, we know **He is trustworthy**.
- Because He delights in uprightness, we know **He values integrity**.

God's pleasures are not random — **they reflect His perfectly good nature**.

Enoch had that testimony too (see Hebrews 11:5), and it can be ours as well. Each day, as we appreciate and enjoy all the good things God has given, may we also take opportunities to be His delight.

Catey Hinkle is the Managing Editor at the Apostolic Faith world headquarters office in Portland, Oregon.

EILEEN QUINLAN
Birchy Bay, NL, Canada

Evidence

PERSONAL TESTIMONIES OF THE POWER OF GOD

"When our second son was a little over a year old, I went to church with my mind made up that I was going to give my life in full surrender to the Lord. I did, and what joy and peace flooded my soul! The Lord changed my life completely."

I THANK GOD FOR THE GOSPEL.
I was raised in a good Christian home. At the tender age of nine years old, I gave my heart to the Lord in a youth meeting. However, in my teenage years, I turned my back on God because I wanted to see what the world had to offer.

Thankfully, God had a way to bring me back into the fold. During my high school years, He brought a young man into my life whose parents were Christians. We married after dating for three years, and at times, his sister would invite me to church. I went only to oblige her, and during those meetings, the Lord really started to deal with my heart. He showed me things in my life that didn't measure up to His Word.

When our second son was a little over a year old, I went to church with my mind made up that I was going to give my life in full surrender to the Lord. I did, and what joy and peace flooded my soul! The Lord changed my life completely.

Soon, a hunger came into my heart to seek more from God, including the deeper experiences taught in the Bible. I sought the Lord for sanctification, and He showed me a restitution that needed to be made. I made it, and He came down and sanctified me. Later, He filled me with His precious Holy Spirit.

After four or five years of marriage, my husband gave his heart to the Lord. Oh, what rejoicing that was! We then started a family altar in our home and read the Word of God and prayed together.

In February of 1995, tragedy struck our home. Our oldest son, who was twenty-five years old, was taken from us. This brought much grief and pain to our family, and our faith was tested. After serving the Lord for all those years, we wondered how this could have happened. The devil was telling me that God didn't care about us anymore, and my heart was breaking. One day I couldn't bear the grief any longer. I went to my bedroom, fell on my knees with my Bible, and began to pray. I pleaded with God to give me a promise from His Word affirming that He was still with us. Then I opened my Bible and it fell to Isaiah 43. These words came alive: "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour" (verses 1-3). I stopped reading and said, "Thank You, Lord. That is proof enough that You are still with us." I rose from my knees and went in the strength of the Lord. God took us through that dark valley in our lives.

God promised He would never leave us or forsake us, and He is my refuge. I want to be faithful until He calls me home.

— *Eileen Quinlan*

SAINTS IN EAST INDIA: Steadfast, Unmovable, Abounding

Visitors from outside India traveled to our churches in the Andhra Pradesh region and were encouraged to see the Gospel moving forward despite adversity.

IN JANUARY OF THIS YEAR, a group of saints from the United States and the United Kingdom took a trip to India and were able to attend church services at several of our branch locations in the Andhra Pradesh State.

On Wednesday evening, January 21, they traveled by autorickshaw alongside a canal before arriving at an outdoor thanksgiving service in **Durganagar**. Tents, chairs, and lighting had been set up outside the church in anticipation of a large crowd, and nearly one hundred did attend. A public address system had been set up in the street, and it drew many curious neighbors.

The service began with an opening prayer and congregational singing followed by music specials. Then, the family who had requested the theme of "thanksgiving" testified to many recent answers to prayer. The young man thanked God for helping him obtain a good job, his mother praised God for healing her, and his father told how God saved and sanctified a relative. Then, his grandparents thanked God for their recent conversions.

The service continued with a Scripture reading from Psalm 103 and more testimonies and music specials, before the pastor brought a message from Joshua 20:2 on "A City of Refuge." After the closing prayer, there was a time of fellowship, during which the US visitors distributed candy to the children.

The next morning, they visited a small church in **Kapavaram** where ten to fifteen people meet regularly, though persecution is a real threat. The building is set on property spotted with fruit trees and sugar cane plants, which help feed the pastor and his wife. The visitors brought a large bag of rice as a gift and were invited to stay for lunch. While there, they noted that though the building is plumbed, water for cooking and cleaning was drawn from an outdoor pump. Upon inquiring, they learned that a rooftop storage tank is needed at this location.

After lunch the visitors drove through scenic rice fields and coconut groves to arrive at the next church, located in **Masakapalli**. At one time, the building, which serves thirty adults and forty children, was a thatched hut. Now, it is a beautiful structure, standing among coconut trees and overlooking the Godavari River. This beauty can quickly become marred during the monsoon season, and the pastor expressed his gratitude for the prayer and flood support received after the last monsoon. He also appreciated our prayers following his motorcycle accident, which left him with large scars on his legs. Currently, he needs prayer for his hearing, which the Lord has already partially restored.

On Friday, the visitors crossed paths with a widow from **Gurajanapalli** who has been leading a flock of eighty adults and children since her husband, the former pastor, died in 2019. The widespread need in her village is for salvation, relief from persecution, and a way for young adults to connect with other Christians and find godly spouses.

On Saturday, January 24, the group visited a pastor in **Kathipudi** who needs prayer for healing. He contracted typhoid

(Opposite) The visiting team with a brother from the India headquarters church. (Left) Members of the headquarters church in Kaikavolu enjoying services and fellowship.

fever while ministering to tribal people in a nearby jungle-like setting. His wife has been caring for him for ten days and it is not yet clear if he will live. The visitors offered encouragement by praying for him and giving assurance that the saints in the US would pray also.

The visit here was brief as this village is hostile toward Christian foreigners. However, before leaving, the visitors offered some provisions for the church. The congregation there was established eighteen years ago and consists of sixty adults and seventy children. They meet in a portion of the pastor's home, which accommodates about thirty comfortably. They are praying God will provide a larger place of worship.

The next stop was **Thammavaram**, where a congregation of thirty adults and forty children meet in a thatched hut. Again, the visit was short as this village is also hostile toward Christians. They thanked the pastor and his wife for the constant hardships they endure to spread the Gospel in India and left them with some rice and sweets.

On Monday, January 26, a ministers' meeting was held at our headquarters location in **Kaikavolu**. It included written greetings from the Portland headquarters, offering encouragement and assuring the saints in India of our prayers. As the meeting continued, several pastors reported on recent victories at their locations while highlighting prayer requests.

- In **Nadimpalem**, God healed a believer who was at the point of death and saved three people who were idol worshipers. Several need prayer to receive sanctification.
- In **Yanam**, four people were recently water baptized, and one believer was miraculously spared when run over by a large vehicle. Also, three young people are praising God for their acceptance into education programs and pray He will help them in their studies.
- The **Thammavaram** pastor thanked God for His protection in 2025, saying two converts were water baptized, and asked for prayer for continued protection in 2026. He also thanked God for healing one believer who fell off a roof and another who was suffering from heart disease.
- The **Kapavaram** pastor requested prayer for four who are afraid to be water baptized. He also praised God for a sister's deliverance from a disease.
- Three people have joined the **Masakapalli** congregation and another was water baptized. Also, a man who was paralyzed can now walk after being prayed for.
- In **Gurajanapalli**, a young man was electrocuted and thought to be dead, but God revived him

Youth services at the Kaikavolu church.

when everyone prayed. Also, the congregation has gained a deeper understanding of doctrine. They need prayer for more growth.

- At **Kaikavolu**, four people were water baptized, and a woman who was unable to bare children gave birth to a son. She had been ridiculed in the village, but God saved and healed her. There is a need among the congregants to receive their deeper experiences.
- In **Durganagar**, a couple who were unable to have children are expecting, and this has been a powerful testimony in the village. They request prayer for a safe delivery. Also, a young girl whose elbow was struck by an iron rod needs healing, and a farmer is looking to God for a full recovery from illness so that his daughter can leave off farming and return to school.
- In **Pedapudi**, a sister was suffering from uterine fibroids and needed surgery but couldn't afford it. She was prayed over and God healed her.

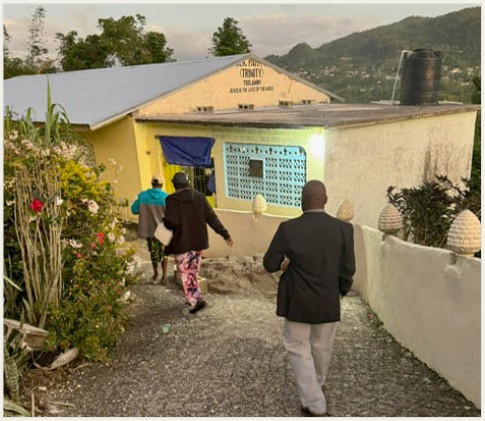
The meeting closed with a message from 1 Corinthians 15:58, which exhorts, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." This was followed by a time of prayer, and then the pastors and their wives were presented with gifts of appreciation from the Portland headquarters.

On Tuesday, January 27, the visitors were invited to a service in **Nadimpalem** where the church is located on the second floor of a pastor's home. As they arrived, the saints were already singing, with the children seated on the floor in the front and the adults in chairs behind them. One highlight of the evening was when the children sang, "I don't fear, because the Lord is with me." The sermon was taken from Matthew 5:16 and focused on "Keep Your Light Shining." At the close, following a time of prayer, the visitors distributed candy and toys before leaving.

By the close of the trip, the visitors had noted that persecution against Christians seems to be widespread in the Andhra Pradesh State. Despite this, the saints in India remain steadfast, unmovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord.

SHORT TAKES

Brief reports from our churches worldwide.



JAMAICA RECOVERS FROM HURRICANE MELISSA

On October 28, 2025, Hurricane Melissa made landfall on the island of Jamaica, causing major damage throughout the small country as it remained at a category 5 level for about thirty-six hours. With sustained winds of 185 miles per hour, it was the strongest hurricane ever recorded to make landfall on this island nation.[1]

Since the storm, much of the nation's infrastructure has now been restored, and great progress has been made toward repairing the many damaged buildings and personal residences. However, travel is still challenging on rural roadways and the fallout still visible in lowland regions.

Ed Habre, Director of Jamaica Work, visited our churches in Jamaica in February of 2026, led by Jamaica District Superintendent Rohan Clough. They reported that of our churches in Jamaica, the Troy branch suffered the most damage, losing nearly all of its roof. Thankfully, the roof has now been rebuilt using donated funds for materials and volunteer labor from among our churches in the surrounding area. Rev. Habre commented that the repairs look great and the workers showed beautiful craftsmanship. The Pastor of the Troy church, Andrea Miller, said the congregation is grateful for the generosity of the saints in the United States in helping them to rebuild.

[1]Rob Shackelford and Jonathan Erdman, "Hurricane Melissa Recap: Catastrophic Jamaica Category 5 Landfall; Damage from Hispaniola to Cuba, Bahamas," The Weather Channel, November 1, 2025, www.weather.com, accessed Feb 24, 2026.

PROTECTION DURING TWO TYPHOONS IN THE **PHILIPPINES**

Typhoon Kalmaegi struck the Philippine islands on November 2, 2025, and just days later, Super Typhoon Fung-wong struck it again with forces equivalent to a category 4 hurricane.[2] Together, the storms affected sixteen of the eighteen regions in the country, causing widespread destruction to houses, infrastructure, and crops through high winds, flooding, and landslides. However, God protected our people and buildings on the islands. There was only minor damage to the headquarters church in Bagong Sikat, and in Sinimbaan, the old sanctuary lost its roof. God's hand of protection was over all.

In February of this year, Director of East Asia Work Bill McKibben travelled to the Philippines for the first time since the storms. Along with Philippines District Superintendent Fernan Fiegalan and others, they attended multiple services at the headquarters church and enjoyed an afternoon meal and fellowship with the saints at the Sinimbaan branch. Rev. McKibben reported, "God miraculously spared our churches during the hurricane."

[2] Jesse Ferrell and Jason Nicholls, "Typhoon Uwan strikes flood-weary Philippines equivalent to a Category 4 hurricane," AccuWeather, November 4, 2025, accuweather.com, accessed Feb 24, 2026.

NEW LEADER IN **ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

The District Superintendent of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Christopher King, retired on February 28, 2026, after overseeing the work in that region for forty-one years. His retirement was announced at the Portland headquarters on March 8. Though Rev. King, who is eighty-eight years old and in poor health, could not be present, Superintendent General Sola Adesope honored him with a heartfelt expression of appreciation. He stated, "Brother King provided faithful service, wisdom, and steady leadership. His dedication, humility, and love for God's people will continue to benefit our global work."

Rev. Adesope also introduced the new district superintendent for the island, Martin Laborde, who has been the pastor at Lowmans Hill for many years. He had testified earlier in the week, telling how He came to know the Lord. He said that when he was ten years old, his mother prayed and was saved. She began attending our church at Paul Over, and he followed in her footsteps. Then, on July 25, 1973, when he was fifteen years old, he came under conviction while attending a church service. He said, "I went to the altar, and God saved me. I knew it was real, because I felt the burden of sin lifted off my shoulders."

Following the announcement, Rev. Adesope requested prayer for both Rev. King and Rev. Laborde, that God would bless in retirement and leadership as they continue in the same old path of faith.

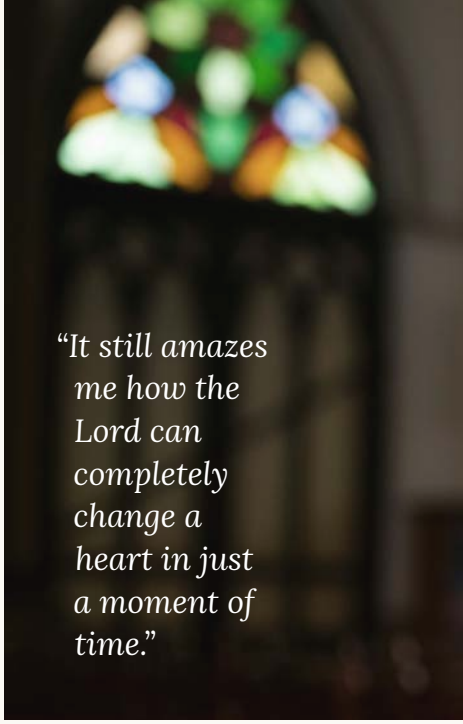
THE MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP PASSES IN THE **IVORY COAST**

On January 18, 2026, an installation service was held for Konan Konan Joseph as Country Leader of Ivory Coast. The role had been filled since 2010 by Kintin Georges, who had served God faithfully in the Ivory Coast until his passing on December 15, 2025.

Prior to the installation, the Ivory Coast Board met and unanimously recommended Rev. Joseph for the leadership position. This was the same man whose name God had laid on the hearts of the WECA board members and Missions leaders. In addition, he had the approval of the Portland headquarters board members, and when his name was announced to Ivory Coast ministers and workers at a meeting on January 17, they also showed their support in unison.

Isaac Adigun, District Superintendent for West and Central Africa (WECA), officiated the installation, which was held at the first branch church where Rev. Georges had pastored: Port Bouet, Abidjan. Rev. Adigun presented Rev. Joseph to the congregation, stating that he met the Biblical criteria for leadership and had served the church in various capacities. His wife and their six children were also introduced, and the congregation was invited to show their support by standing. All of the nearly five hundred people in attendance stood in support.

Rev. Joseph was then prayed over with the laying on of hands by the ministers on the platform, including the Ivory Coast Board Members and Okpo Johnson of the WECA Missions Department. They petitioned God for blessings on his life, family, and ministry. When given an opportunity to address the congregation, Rev. Joseph thanked God for the privilege to serve in this capacity and asked for prayer that he would fulfill his assignment. He also expressed the importance of upholding the standard of the Gospel and continuing the Great Commission.



BY CHARLOTTE BEAN

MORE THAN WILLPOWER

Lottie tried to live right but found it was impossible in her own strength.

"It still amazes me how the Lord can completely change a heart in just a moment of time."

When I was young, I had a dear grandmother who took all of us children to church and Sunday school when we went to visit her. She was a real Christian, and everyone in town loved her, but she passed away when I was nine years old. Though she brought my mother up the right way, my mother did not tell me how to be saved. It seemed she just did not know how to explain it, although she had been saved when she was very young. However, she lived a good life before us and brought us up carefully, teaching us what was right and wrong.

As I grew older, I realized I needed God. There was a longing in my heart to make Heaven my home, but I never knew I could pray through and really get the witness that the Lord had forgiven my sins, so I just took on a form of religion. I thought if I had my name on the church roll, that was all I needed, so at fourteen years of age, I joined a church.

I had strong willpower and was sure that I could do what was right and keep away from things I knew were wrong. However, it was not long before the realization came that I was a failure; I could never live a Christian life in my own strength. I thought, *What is the use of trying?* I decided to throw it all overboard and go out into the world, thinking maybe there I would find satisfaction. But I could not find happiness. I went on in that condition until after I was married and had a family. I tried to bring up my little children in the way they should go, but I could not teach them what they needed. While I knew right from wrong, I did not understand real salvation.

Finding what I'd always longed for

How grateful I am that the Lord did not leave me in that hopeless situation! In His mercy, He sent a woman our way from Portland, Oregon, who preached the old-time religion. Her church was having cottage prayer meetings in different parts of town and I went one night just to see what it was all about. As I went in, I could feel the presence of God. Though I was a sinner, I knew that the Lord was in that place. I sat there and wept like a child as people began to testify. Some who spoke were men and women I had known almost all of my life. They told how the Lord had taken sin out of their hearts, and now they were living for Him. I knew they had something real and that God could do the same for me. I raised my hand for prayer that night but I did not kneel with the others. As I went home, though, I realized they were praying for me. I could hardly eat or sleep because the Lord was talking to me. I began to count the cost.

My sister's husband was a Christian, and one night they held a meeting at their house. I decided to go, although I did not know why. As I went in, they were singing "Sinner, Be in Time." I thought, *Oh, I do want to be in time!* After the meeting was over, they did what they ordinarily did in a cottage prayer meeting—they prayed for those who were sick and in need of a healing touch. My daughter Alberta, only five years of age at the time, was with me. She had an infection in a gland in her neck. The doctor had operated on her, but it was coming back much worse than before. They asked me about her, and I told them of her condition. They asked, "Do you want us to pray for her?" and I said, "Yes." As we knelt, however, I began to pray for myself. I knew I needed

I did not pray very long, but I prayed earnestly and meant every word I said. I asked the Lord to save my soul and forgive me of every sin I had ever committed. I told Him, "If You will save me, I will witness for You as long as there is breath in my body.

God worse than my daughter needed healing for her body. My children were in need of a Christian mother!

I did not pray very long, but I prayed earnestly and meant every word I said. I asked the Lord to save my soul and forgive me of every sin I had ever committed. I told Him, "If You will save me, I will witness for You as long as there is breath in my body." Well, it wasn't but a few minutes until the Lord came down and saved my soul. I had wanted to know all my life that I was right with God. I used to say that if the Lord ever saved me, I wanted the old-time shouting religion like my grandmother had. I really got it that night, and I knew it!

It still amazes me how the Lord can completely change a heart in just a moment of time. During the meeting that night, I had noticed another woman. I had no reason to have anything against her, yet I thought, *I just don't like her.* However, after the Lord saved me, I went to her and hugged her so tight, it was only the mercy of the Lord that I didn't break the bones in her body! I loved her so. What a difference God made!

Hunger for more of God

When the Apostolic Faith people opened a church in our town, I began to attend. I had been saved and thought that was all I needed, but soon I began to want something more. I was not satisfied in my soul. I did not know about the deeper spiritual experiences, but I got real desperate. One day I said to the pastor, "Sister Cline, I'm not satisfied. I have such a hunger in my heart. What's wrong?" She quietly said to me, "Sister, the Lord wants to sanctify you." She never told me any more, but I began to pray, and one night I went to church and the Lord sanctified me. It was more precious than words could ever tell. I went home with such a joy in my heart, and I thought, *Well, I have what the Lord wants me to have.*

However, it was not long until I again had such a hunger in my soul for more of God. About that time, our pastor came to my home. It seems the Lord would always send her just when I had a need, and I told her about my hunger. I asked, "What's wrong with me anyway?" She said, "Sister, the Lord wants to baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire." I prayed at home, and then at church that night I received my baptism. I was so ignorant; I did not really understand about the infilling of the Holy Spirit, but God was faithful to my soul.

Before I was saved, I had wondered what my husband would say if I became a Christian, but as God worked in my life I thought, *I don't care, I want to make Heaven my home.* My husband never put a straw in my way, and after I

Faith in times of crisis

Through sickness, accidents, and deadly storms, prayer was her first response — and God proved faithful again and again.

was saved, I began to pray for him. At times the enemy of my soul would come around and tempt me to give up. Every time I would get to the end of my rope, the Lord would show me that if I held on in prayer, my husband would be saved, and he was. One Sunday morning in our home, I'll never forget how the Lord came down in our kitchen—just the two of us alone there with God!

Those experiences were many years ago, and many things have come into my life since then. I have had trials and tests—things that I never thought would ever come my way—but the Lord was always there to help me.

Help in desperate times

When our daughter Helen was just three years old, she had typhoid fever. For two months, she lay wasting away. The doctors did not seem to know from one day to the next what would happen. My husband and I would take turns sitting up with her, and those hours of the night were long. It was cold in the house, but I would sit there and pray the best I knew how, and one day the Lord raised her up. Another time our daughter Marie was sick with scarlet fever. The doctor gave up on her, but we sent a telegram requesting prayer to the church in Portland, and we prayed. God healed her!

I remember an accident we had. Our son Ray was driving in snow, and when we started up a steep hill, the car began to spin around. We ended up going backwards down an embankment very fast. I just put my hands up and cried out, "Oh God, help us!" In a miraculous way, that car stopped just like someone grabbed it.

In March of 1925, we went through a tornado—the worst in recorded history at that time. Several of our relatives were killed in that storm, including my in-laws. Our children were in town and my husband was working away from the home. He normally did not come home on Wednesdays, but when I saw the clouds were looking bad, I prayed that he would come home, and he did. The winds hit with fury into our house.

In the middle of the storm we had a fire. There was a pipe going from the stove to the wall in the house, and the tornado was so strong that it was knocking down the pipe and fire was coming out of the stove. I prayed while my husband literally held up that pipe to keep the fire from spreading to the house.

Our seven-year old son, Emmett, was at school when he saw the storm coming. He ran into the cloakroom and all the children piled in on top of him. The wind took off the top floor of the two-story building and collapsed the brick walls. Several children died in the collapse, but Emmett was safe. I've heard him testify so many times that he was only seven years old but he knew how to pray. He knew God could do something for him.

Jesus is my all in all

I thank God for all He has done for me through the years. He has saved so many of our family. My dad had never been born again. He was an honest man and thought that was all he needed, but I lived to see the day when both of my parents came to the Lord. I have a picture of my dad when he was eighty-six years old being baptized in the Meramec River near St. Louis, Missouri. He had real salvation. I know both of my parents are in Heaven today. God saved my children, my sons-in-law, my grandchildren, my brothers and sisters, and my mother and father. My grandmother's prayers were answered.

I am old now, but the Lord gives me strength each day. There's no one like Jesus! I thank Him because He is my Savior and my all in all. I've proved Him through these years, and there is something in my soul that wants to press on. It pays to serve the Lord!

Charlotte (Lottie) Bean, a veteran of the Apostolic Faith work in the Midwest, lived most of her life in the Murphysboro, Illinois, area. She went Home to be with the Lord in 1976.

A STATEMENT OF BIBLE DOCTRINE

We believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible, and endorse all the teachings contained in it. Following is a summary of our basic doctrines.

THE DIVINE TRINITY consists of three Persons: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Ghost, perfectly united as one. ***Matthew 3:16-17; 1 John 5:7.***

REPENTANCE is a godly sorrow for and a renouncing of all sin. ***Isaiah 55:7; Matthew 4:17.***

JUSTIFICATION (or salvation) is the act of God's grace through which we receive forgiveness for sins and stand before God as though we had never sinned. ***Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17.***

ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION, the act of God's grace whereby we are made holy, is the second definite work and is subsequent to justification. ***John 17:15-21; Hebrews 13:12.***

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST is the enduement of power upon the sanctified life, and is evidenced by speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. ***John 14:16-17, 26; Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4.***

DIVINE HEALING of sickness is provided through the atonement. ***James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:24.***

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS will be as literal and visible as His going away (***Acts 1:9-11***) and will consist of two appearances. First, He comes to catch away His waiting Bride. ***Matthew 24:40-44; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.*** Second, He comes to execute judgment upon the ungodly. ***2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Jude 14-15.***

THE TRIBULATION will occur between Christ's coming for His Bride and His return in judgment. ***Isaiah 26:20-21; Revelation 9 and 16.***

CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN is the 1000 years of peaceful reign by Jesus on earth. ***Isaiah 11 and 35; Revelation 20:1-6.***

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT is the final judgment when all the wicked dead will stand before God. ***Revelation 20:11-15.***

THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH will replace the present heaven and earth, which will be destroyed after the Great White Throne Judgment. ***2 Peter 3:12-13; Revelation 21:1-3.***

ETERNAL HEAVEN AND ETERNAL HELL are literal places of final and eternal destiny. ***Matthew 25:41-46; Luke 16:22-28.***

MARRIAGE is a covenant between one man and one woman that is binding before God for life. Neither person has a right to marry again while the first companion lives. ***Mark 10:6-12; Romans 7:1-3.***

RESTITUTION is necessary, wherein wrongs against others are righted. ***Ezekiel 33:15; Matthew 5:23-24.***

WATER BAPTISM is by one immersion "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." ***Matthew 3:16; 28:19.***

THE LORD'S SUPPER is an institution ordained by Jesus so that we might remember His death until He returns. ***Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23,26.***

FOOT WASHING is practiced according to the example and commandment Jesus gave. ***John 13:14-15.***

You may obtain additional information about these doctrines and learn about our other publications in both English and foreign languages by writing to the Apostolic Faith Church at 5414 SE Duke Street, Portland, Oregon 97206, U.S.A. or visiting our website at www.apostolicfaith.org. Before these magazines are sent out, they are always prayed over for the healing of the sick and the salvation of souls.

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Jesus
THE LIGHT of THE WORLD