

THE SHEPHERD'S HEART

December, 2025

**MARTYRDOM of
Bishop Nicholas
Riley (1555)**

**Parents as
Spiritual
Guardians**

**Who is Lord
of Your Life?**

**Health
Benefits
of Sunlight**

**Interview with Old
Testament Figures -
Hannah**

CHRISTIANITY IN ERITREA



SHEPHERDHEART



THE SHEPHERD'S HEART MAGAZINE 55th Edition December, 2025 Issue.



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MARTYRDOM OF BISHOP NICHOLAS RILEY (1555)

Dr Ridley was born in Northumberland, England in 1550. He obtained his basic education at Newcastle before proceeding to Cambridge University. He was head of Pembroke College, from where he obtained the prestigious Doctor of Divinity. He spent some months in Paris, and upon his return to England, King Henry VIII appointed him his Chaplain. The King later promoted him to the bishopric of Rochester. From there, King Edward VI made him the Bishop of London.

People flocked to the church to listen to Ridley's sermons, swarming about him like bees to honey. He not only preached wholesome doctrine, he demonstrated it with his life. He was a bright light to the blind,



a heavenly trumpet to the deaf, and a holy voice to lost sinners. He lived and ministered in such purity that not even his enemies could reprove him in any jot or tittle. Ridley was intelligent, wise, and artful in dealing with others. He was such a good, godly, and spiritual man that England may rightly mourn the day that such a treasure was lost.

Each morning, Ridley devoted himself to private prayer until ten o'clock, and then took part in the daily prayers that were held in his house by members of his parish. After a midday dinner, he would talk to others or play chess for an hour, and then spend the rest of the afternoon studying or taking care of church business. About five o'clock, he would pray for about an hour again, refresh himself at chess for another hour, then return to his study until eleven o'clock, when he would retire after praying on his knees for a while.

About September 8, 1552, in his capacity as Bishop of London, Ridley went early in the morning to visit Lady Mary, who later became Queen Mary I, at Hunsdon where she was staying. There, he was entertained by Sir Thomas Wharton and other officials in Mary's court until almost eleven o'clock when Lady Mary received him with all courtesy. When they held a private discussion on the issue of faith, she made it clear to him that she was not interested in hearing about his Protestant faith and its reformation. She concluded their discussion by saying, "My lord, for your consideration in coming to see me, I thank you. But for your offering to preach before me, I don't thank you the least bit."

In the meantime, Bishop Ridley and several others were imprisoned in the Tower of London. These included Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury and Hugh Latimer, former Bishop of Worcester.

On March 10, 1554, these men were taken from the Tower to Oxford University to debate with the Queen's chosen doctors of divinity about the following articles of faith:

- i. Whether the natural body of Christ is really in the sacrament after the words spoken by Roman Catholic priests;
- ii. Whether after the words of consecration any other substance remains in the sacrament other than the body and blood of Christ; and
- iii. Whether in the Catholic mass there is a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead.

After hearing these read, Ridley said without delay that the Catholic doctrines on which these questions hung, were all false. He said he would defend the truth as long as God gave him life. He later submitted his report at the behest of the papal inquisitors, in which he condemned the false doctrines of Roman Catholic Church. After this, he was separated from Crammer and Latimer, and kept in custody of a man named Irish, where he remained until the day of his execution on October 16, 1555.

The night before his execution, Ridley said to Mrs Irish, the keeper's wife who served him breakfast, "Though my breakfast in the morning will be somewhat sharp and painful, yet I am sure my supper in the evening will be most pleasant and sweet." Before his execution, he knelt next to the stake and kissed it and prayed for strength. After one Dr Smith preached a short sermon, urging him to recant, Ridley said,

“ So long as there is breath in my body, I will never deny the Lord Christ and His known truth. God's will be done in me.” Then he held up his hands and said, “O heavenly Father, I give unto Thee most hearty thanks, for that Thou has called me to profess Thee, even unto death. I beseech Thee, Lord God, have mercy upon this land of England and deliver her from all her enemies.” When the faggots placed around him were lit with fire, he cried with a loud voice, “Lord, Lord, receive my spirit!

”

Hundreds of onlookers were moved to tears by what they had witnessed. Though the world did not give Ridley any reward for the work he did, and the many souls he touched with the love of God, he was warmly received by the One he served with his whole heart. The Roman Catholic Church may have silenced this godly servant of God, but his legacy lives on in the millions of people that have received the truth preserved by the testimony he affirmed with his blood.

****Culled from *The New Foxes Book of Martyrs 2001* by John Foxe, Bridge-Logos Publishers, Gainesville, Florida 32614, USA.

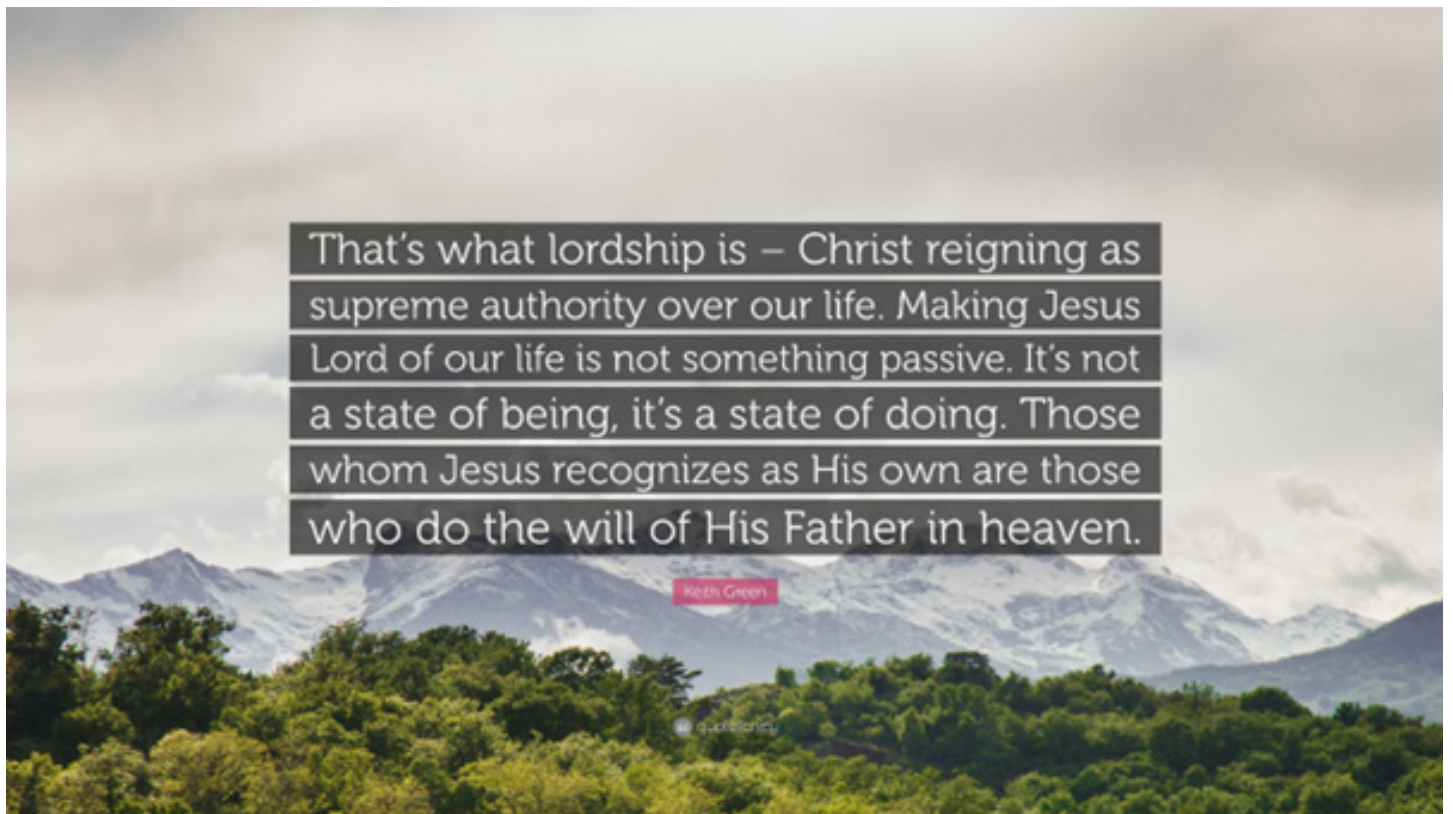
WHO IS LORD OF YOUR LIFE?



Many people have different ideas about Christianity. To some, it is the pathway to wealth and happiness. To others, is it a social network allowing them to mingle with people of like minds. Another group sees the faith as an escape from hell; while others view it as an opportunity to assuage their conscience and find favour with God.

There is a central theme that cuts across the Old and New Covenants – God’s redemption plan, articulated in the Old Testament but fulfilled under the New Covenant. What was the relationship between Adam and God in the Garden of Eden before the fall engineered by satan? God created humanity to be dependent on Him. Just as a fish is dead when it stays out of water, humans cannot survive outside their Creator. That was why eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (independence from God) meant certain death. Revelation 4:11 says that the Father created all things to give Him pleasure. This includes all humans.

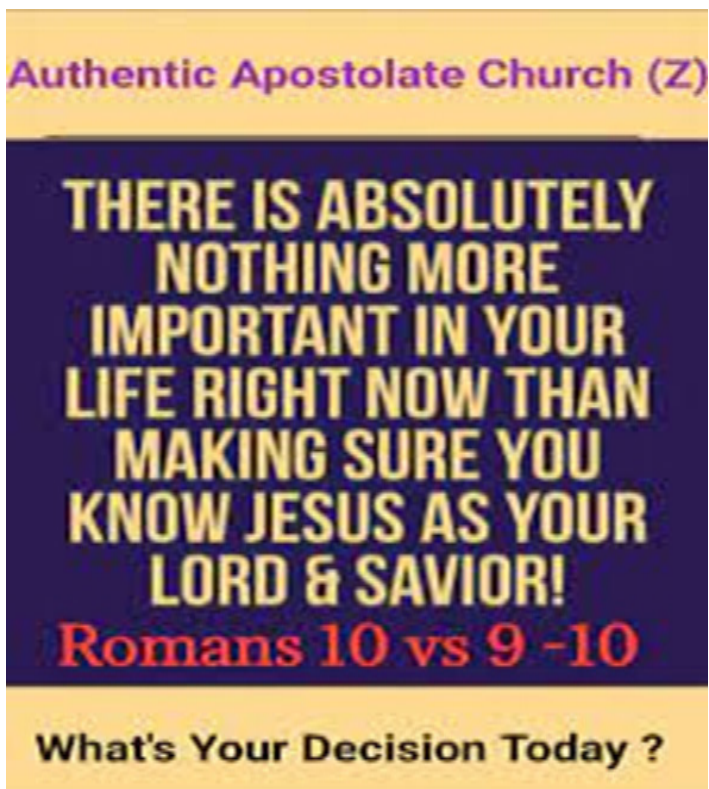
Jesus Christ said in John 8:29, “And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.” In essence, only obedience brings God pleasure. Before He brought ancient Israelites into the promised land, He said to them, “Now if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, you will be My treasured possession out of all the nations – for the whole earth is Mine” (Exodus 19:5).



That's what lordship is – Christ reigning as supreme authority over our life. Making Jesus Lord of our life is not something passive. It's not a state of being, it's a state of doing. Those whom Jesus recognizes as His own are those who do the will of His Father in heaven.

Keith Green

Unfortunately, charlatans posing as “men of God” have deceived many Christians into believing that they do not need to obey God because Christ has atoned for their sins. Which Scripture affirms this patent lie from the pit of hell? There are two kingdoms in the universe – God’s Kingdom and that of darkness ruled by the devil. A kingdom operates on rules and the word of the king is law. God has placed many demands on humans and one of them is the pursuit of holiness. Hebrews 12:14 is clear that an unholy person cannot see the LORD. God did more than send His Son to atone for our sins. After Jesus ascended to heaven, God sent His Spirit to indwell believers and make them holy. This the entire essence of Christianity.



Authentic Apostolate Church (Z)

**THERE IS ABSOLUTELY
NOTHING MORE
IMPORTANT IN YOUR
LIFE RIGHT NOW THAN
MAKING SURE YOU
KNOW JESUS AS YOUR
LORD & SAVIOR!**

Romans 10 vs 9 -10

What's Your Decision Today ?

The Holy Spirit does not operate outside the word of God. 1 John 5:7 states: “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” How can anyone walk with the Holy Spirit and reject the Word of God? That is exactly what many “Christians” are doing when they use human philosophies, ideas and opinions to filter Scripture. We are told in 2 Timothy 3:16 that “all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

Many of us choose to feed on junks on social media instead of God’s word. That is why our spiritual growth is stunted because God is not Lord of our lives. We only run to Him when the world has failed us, especially on issues affecting our health. We are afraid of death, but not of the One who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell (Matthew 10:28). Addressing ancient Israelites, Isaiah the prophet

said, “The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, He is the one you are to fear, He is the one you are to dread” (Isaiah 8:13).



So, I ask you my friend, who is Lord of your life? Jesus Christ posed a pertinent question in Luke 6:46, “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord’, and do not what I say? He affirmed that no one would be judged outside the word of God. “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”

If you are reading this article, it means that you are still alive and have an opportunity to repent of your irreverent attitude toward God’s word. The Christian social media influencers and the fake men of God whose words you exalt above God’s word will not help you on judgement day. Every man will account for what he did here on earth. It is not too late for you to ask God to purge you of every pollution you have received from these charlatans. Ask Him to cleanse your heart with holy fire and fill you with His Spirit. Make Scripture your daily food. Remember that the Lord Jesus Christ said that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from God’s mouth (Matthew 4:4). This covers the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The safety of every child of God in these days of deception is the Word of God. When you make Jesus your Lord and Saviour, God will keep you under the shadow of His wings. He will make your way prosperous and give you unending victory over the devil and his agents.

CHRISTIANITY IN ERITREA



The State of Eritrea is located in the Horn of Africa region of East Africa. It shares border with Ethiopia to the South, Sudan to the West, and Djibouti to the Southeast. The Northeastern and Eastern parts of the country have extensive coastline along the Red Sea. Eritrea's capital and largest city is Asmara. There is no official language, as the country's 1997 Constitution guarantees equality of all Eritrean languages. However, Tigrinya and Arabic are the main working languages, while English is used for secondary and university education and in various technical fields. The country has a human population of about 6,400,000, spread across several ethnic groupings. These are, Tigrinya, 50%; Tigre, 30%; Saho, 4%; Afar, 4%; Kunama, 4%; Bilen, 3%; Beja, 2%; Nara, 2%; and Rashaida, 1%. The two main religions in Eritrea are Christianity (63%) and Islam (37%).

Brief History

Eritrea was a province of Ethiopia for several decades. Militant opposition to the incorporation of Eritrea into Ethiopia started in 1958 with the founding of Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM). The group, under the leadership of Hamid Idris Awate, engaged in clandestine

political activities intended to cultivate resistance to the centralizing policies of the imperial Ethiopian state. By 1962, however, the ELM was dismantled the Ethiopian authorities. Same year, Emperor Haile Selassie unilaterally dissolved the Eritrean parliament and illegally annexed

the enclave. This triggered armed conflict, which continued until the Emperor was ousted in a military coup in 1974. The Derg, the new Ethiopian government, was a Marxist military junta led by Mengistu Haile Mariam.

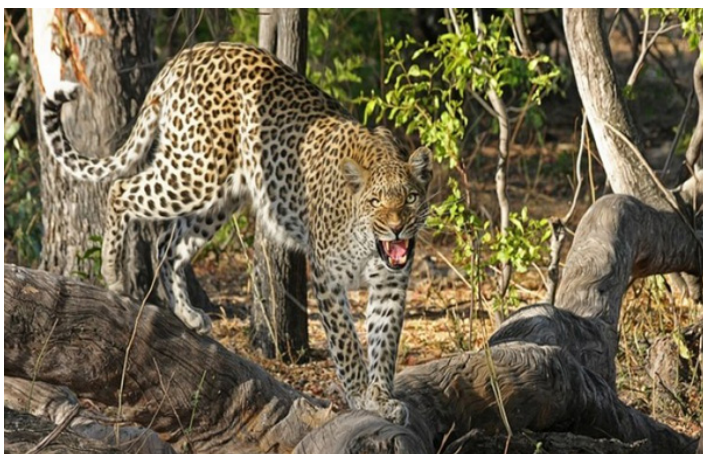
In 1960, Eritrean exiles in Cairo founded the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), which led the Eritrean independence struggle, with the support of Syria and Iraq. It is noteworthy that this was led by Muslims. The group initiated military operations in 1961 against the Ethiopian government, and this escalated into civil unrest that saw the massacre of many Eritreans by the Ethiopian government in Ethiopia. Respite came in 1974 when Mengistu-led Marxists ousted the Emperor.

In 1972, a more inclusive group, Eritrean People's Liberation Front (ELPF) emerged under the leadership of Isaias Afewerki, current President of Eritrea. It succeeded in galvanising support for its cause from many fronts, including Ethiopian rebels. Though Eritrea declared its independence in 1991, the United Nations officially endorsed this in 1993. Tensions between the two countries dominated the first decades after independence, sometimes in the form of armed conflict.

God's Canvass

Eritrea has three ecoregions: a hot arid coastal plain in the West that widens toward the East, the cooler, more fertile highlands reaching up to 3,000 metres, and the Sahelian Acacia Savannah in the Western part of the country, which extends across Africa south of the Sahara from Eritrea to Senegal. These ecoregions determine the nature of flora and fauna found in the country.

Fauna





Flora

A variety of trees like acacia, baobabs, and doum palms are native to Eritrea, along with shrubs, grasses and aloe camperi. Other notable plants include the national flower, the Gerbera daisy, and economically valuable plants like Sisal and Salicornia. The following pictures capture the essence of the country's flora.



Beaches



made of cotton and featuring intricate embroidery, sometimes accompanied by a shawl called 'netela.'



Culture

Eritrean culture is a diverse mix of nine ethnic groups, unified by a shared history and strong national identity. Key elements include a deep sense of patriotism, a dual religious landscape of Christianity and Islam that coexists peacefully, and traditions like the communal coffee ceremony. Food like 'Injera' with stews is central to social gatherings, and extended family is a cornerstone of community life.

Traditional Attire

Both male and female clothing can be very colourful and elaborate for special events. The traditional wear for men consists of the 'Ethiopian suit,' a long-sleeved shirt and matching pants, or a draped cloth wrap called an 'izar.' For women, the traditional attire includes the ankle-length 'Habesha kemis (or zuria), a dress often





Cuisine

Eritrean cuisine is a blend of stews (tsebhi/wat) served with injera (a sour, spongy flatbread) often-featuring spiced meats like beef, chicken or lamb. It shares similarities with Ethiopian food but has unique Italian influences, such as pasta dishes, due to Eritrean colonial history. Some of them are shown in the pictures below.





Status of Christianity

While the majority of the country's Christian population belong to the orthodox faith, roughly 10% of these identify with Roman Catholicism, which was favoured by Italian overlords. In 2002, the President, Isaias Afewerki declared all independent Protestant churches enemies of the state. In subsequent years, Eritrea became notorious for jailing thousands of persecuted Christians in metal containers parked in the jungle, where they would boil by day, and freeze by night. Currently, there are between 400 and 1000 prisoners of faith in the country. The government also makes it impossible for independent churches to establish their presence by denying them registration. It only recognises the Eritrean Orthodox Church (EOC), Roman Catholic, Lutheran Church and Islam.

Obviously, believers in the country are not enjoying the freedom for which Christ has set us free (Galatians 5:1). Wherever the government exercises authority to dictate the faith of its subject, the spirit at work is from satan's kingdom. God created humans with a free will and does not infringe on it even though He has the power to do so. Therefore, let us intercede not just for the persecuted believers in Eritrea, but also for unsaved souls using the prayer points below or as the Holy Spirit leads us.

Intercession Checklist

From the political map of the country presented in the text, choose a town, city or region for focused prayer. Present the selected geographical space to God and tell Him that you are claiming its people for Christ as His ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:20). Remind the Father that He had instructed the Messiah to ask for the nations as His inheritance (Psalm 2:8).

***** Some materials sourced from Christian Persecution in Eritrea, <https://www.globalchristianrelief.org>; Eritrea: Serving Persecuted Christians Worldwide, <https://www.opendoors.org>; Eritrea, <https://en.wikipedia.org>; Artificial Intelligence (AI) Overview on Google.com.

PRAYER POINTS

1. Pray that the Father would judge the demonic principalities and powers using the government to undermine the propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. Ask Him to destroy their influence in government and uproot whatever seed they have planted in the country through obnoxious policies and laws.
3. Pray that God would destroy every platform and infrastructure serving the purposes of the kingdom of darkness in the country, especially those in the religious spheres.
4. Pray that He would remove the covering cast of darkness from the heart, eyes and minds of the President, his cabinet and other unsaved souls in the country, to enable them receive and embrace the true Gospel.
5. Ask the Father to destroy all faulty foundations laid in the lives of Christians through errors and demonic doctrines.
6. Pray that He would lay new foundation in them that is in Christ Jesus His Son.
7. Ask the Father to reveal Himself to Eritreans who doubt His existence.
8. Pray that He would expose the pollutions in Christendom and sanctify all believers with His word, which is the only TRUTH.
9. Ask God to open doors in Muslim and animist dominated areas for the Gospel of the Kingdom to be preached without hindrance.
10. Pray that He would protect missionaries operating in such areas from attacks by Islamic militants.

PARENTS AS SPIRITUAL GUARDIANS



After God created Adam and Eve, He charged them to multiply and fill the earth (Genesis 1:28). In essence, the primary function of humans is to reproduce their kind. God initiated marriage for this purpose. While Scripture is silent on what transpired between Him and the first couple on the best way to raise their offspring, we see His desire expressed in Genesis 18:19 in His relationship with Abraham. In this Scripture, the LORD said of Abraham,

“

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him.

”

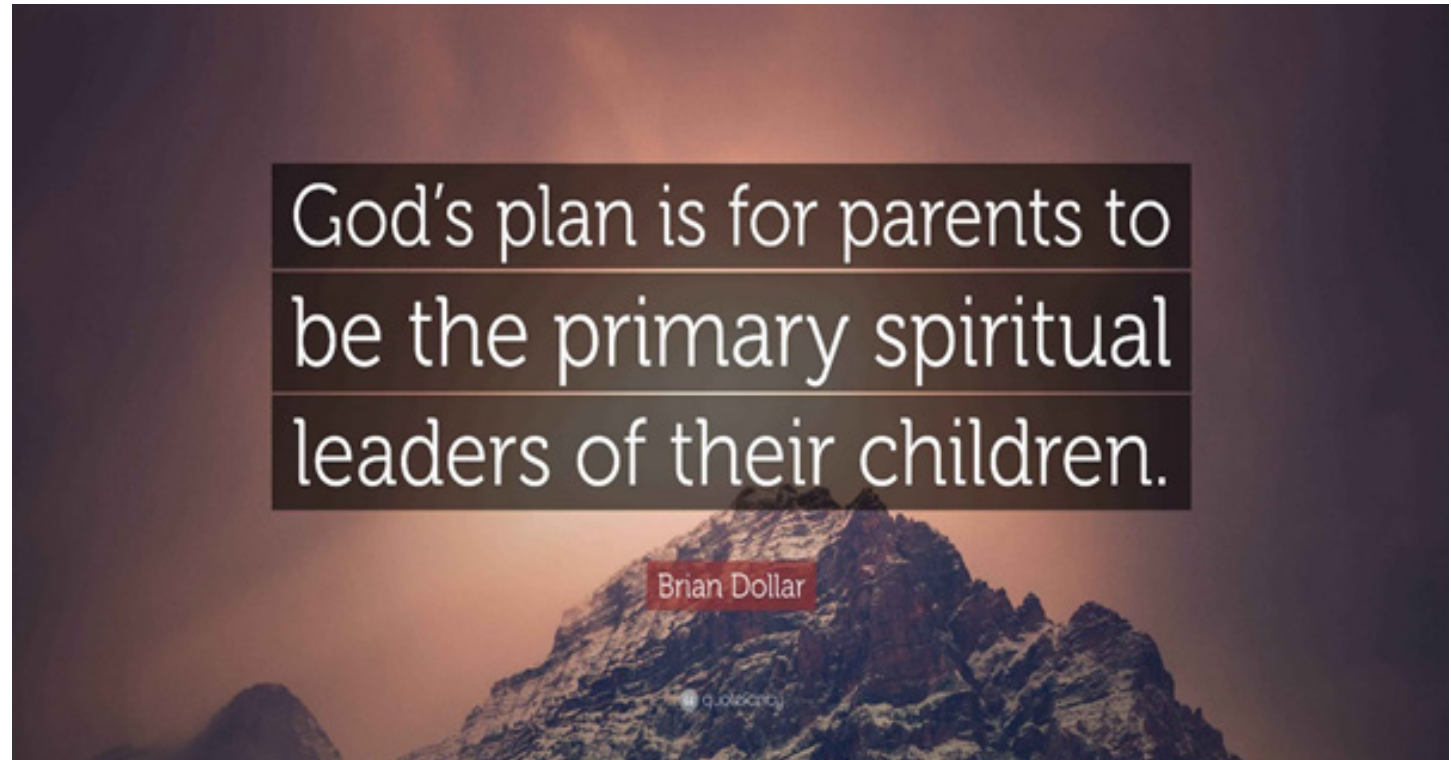
“The greatest gift you can give your children is to keep growing yourself. A parent who is still learning, still trusting, still walking with God, inspires their children far more than rules ever will.”

Howard Hendricks

A Seed of Hope
Whispering in the Heart

The cited Scripture is clear that God expects us to do something to pave way for the fulfilment of His promises to us. That singular thing is obedience. There is no way a righteous God will reward our disobedience by stepping out of character to bless our rebellion. Therefore, parents who fail to raise their children in the fear and nurture of the LORD (Ephesians 6:4), have failed in their most important assignment. In the New Testament, such people are disqualified from holding important offices in the church (1 Timothy 3:5).

Parents act as spiritual guardians by guiding their children's moral and faith development through modelling, teaching, and nurturing spiritual growth from a young age. The role involves instilling values, leading in prayer, discussing spiritual truths, and creating supportive atmosphere for faith to flourish. This responsibility is a cornerstone of many religious traditions, which view parents as stewards for the spiritual well-being of their children.



God's plan is for parents to
be the primary spiritual
leaders of their children.


Brian Dollar

quotezany

Key Aspects of Parental Spiritual Guardianship

- i. **Modelling faith:** Living out one's own values and beliefs is one of the most powerful ways to influence a child's spiritual life.
- ii. **Teaching and discipleship:** This involves teaching Scripture, explaining beliefs, and guiding children in prayer and wise decision-making in all areas of life.
- iii. **Nurturing spiritual growth:** This means planting seeds of spiritual growth by actively engaging with a child's faith journey, rather than just providing religious instruction.
- iv. **Leading the home:** Parents are called to be the primary spiritual leaders within the home, establishing a moral atmosphere and helping their children to navigate life's challenges from a spiritual perspective.

- v. **Encouraging a relationship with God:** This can involve praying together, attending Christian fellowship, and encouraging a personal, heartfelt connection to the LORD.
- vi. **Building a foundation:** By modelling and teaching, parents build a solid foundation for their children's faith that will serve them long after they leave home.



Parents are teachers, guides,
leaders, protectors and
providers for their children.

Iyanla Vanzant

quotezany

***** Some materials sourced from Artificial Intelligence Overview on Google.com.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF SLEEP



Growing up, I understood sleep to be something humans have to do in the night. There was no Internet or social media all through our teenage years, so we had no access to information that was not imparted to us at home or school. In fact, we used to laugh at people who slept excessively, labelling them “hare,” from the tortoise stories that were popular then. Now, thanks to the Internet, I appreciate the importance of sleep and encourage others to embrace this God-given bodily function. However, I try not to be put in a straightjacket, how many hours of sleep are desirable. I believe that the quality of sleep is better than counting the hours. The figures below explain the health benefits of sleep succinctly, in addition to stating conditions to enjoy quality sleep.

BENEFITS OF PROPER SLEEP

- Maintaining a healthful weight
- Lower risk of developing diabetes and heart disease
- Stress reduction and mood improvement
- Enhancing thinking capacity
- Improve productivity
- Injury prevention through mental health balance
- Ability to make sound decisions
- Improved interpersonal relationship



Women Support Initiative Forum-WSIF

Top 10 Health Benefits of a Good Night's Sleep

1. Sleep keeps your heart healthy
2. Sleep may prevent cancer
3. Sleep reduces stress
4. Sleep reduces inflammation
5. Sleep makes you more alert
6. Sleep bolsters your memory
7. Sleep may help you loose weight
8. Sleep may reduce your risk for depression
9. Sleep helps the body make repairs
10. Sleeps keep you young



www.canceriscurablenow.tv

DANGERS OF SLEEP DEPRIVATION



HOW TO GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP



TIPS TO **SLEEP** BETTER



Go to bed and **get up at the same time** every day.



Maintain an **appropriate sleeping environment**: dark, relaxing, not too hot nor cold.



Avoid caffeine (tea, coffee, etc.) and nicotine (cigarettes, etc.) for **at least 4 hours before going to bed**. These are stimulants.



Avoid using smartphones or watching TV just before bedtime. **The bright light from screens inhibits the secretion of melatonin** which is needed to fall asleep.



Avoid alcohol for at least 4 hours before going to bed. **It affects sleep quality.**



A hot bath an hour or two before bedtime helps.



Do not use your bed for watching TV, eating, reading or working on the laptop or phone.



Sleep rituals like relaxing **stretches or breathing exercises** before going to bed could help some people.



Eating right is important. Going to bed on a very empty stomach or immediately after a heavy meal can backfire.



Regular exercise is helpful for a good sleep but strenuous exercise before bedtime can disrupt sleep.

Source: Dr Trideep Kumar Choudhury,
consultant psychiatrist at Fortis
Healthcare, New Delhi



moneycontrol





INTERVIEW WITH OLD TESTAMENT FIGURES – HANNAH



Our guest for this edition of the interview series epitomises resilience in adversity. She also models for us, the art of prevailing prayer. She is none other than Hannah, the wife of Elkanah and mother of Samuel the prophet.

Shepherd Heart:

We are glad to have you with us dear Hannah.

Hannah:

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to share my story with your readers.

Shepherd Heart:

Kindly give us a pen portrait of yourself.

Hannah:

I was one of the two wives of Elkanah, an Ephramite from Ramathaim Zuphim, in the hill country of Ephraim. My husband's father was Jehoram, the son of Zuph of the lineage of Tolu.

Shepherd Heart:

What was your daily life like as a wife?

Hannah:

It was not stressful because my husband showed me much love. Of course, I was engaged in farming like most ancient Israelites. It was not a challenging occupation though. I also kept some domestic animals, mostly for food.

Shepherd Heart:

At what point did you realise that you were barren?

Hannah:

It was not something that stole up on you. When you are married for three to four years and have no child, you start to worry. I did that for a long time.

Shepherd Heart:

Scripture says that your rival, Peninnah provoked you unceasingly over your plight, causing you to fret. Would you have

prayed so earnestly to the LORD for a child if she had been sympathetic to your plight?

Hannah:

(Laughs) Of course not! I believe that the devil used her to push me into my destiny. What the wicked satan meant for evil, God turned it into good as always. When she started mocking me, I was actually very angry. I had to restrain myself several times from getting physical with her. It was God's grace that kept me from crossing the line into violence or saying something nasty to her.

Shepherd Heart:

What was the turning point? Why did you decide to take the matter to God?

Hannah:

The prayer at Shiloh was just a culmination of my daily supplications. I prayed and cried myself to sleep many nights before that day at Shiloh.

Shepherd Heart:

What was it Eli the priest said that made you believe that God has answered your prayer?

Hannah:

It was not merely, what the priest said. I knew right within my heart that my petition had received a favourable response from God. The burden of bareness was lifted from my shoulders.

Shepherd Heart:

Bareness is also a very serious issue in our time. Many Christian women have ship-wrecked their faith by turning to native doctors and the occult in search of children. In Africa, many tribes treat barren women as sub-humans. What advice would you give to those experiencing delayed pregnancy or bareness?

Hannah:

Psalms 127:3 says that "Children are an heritage from the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is His reward." I do not want to argue with the LORD and His word by asking how this would have applied to Peninnah and not to me. We must accept God's word and trust Him to work out His purposes in our lives. When He gave me Samuel and blessed me with five more children, I came to realise that even Peninnah was not an enemy. She was God's instrument to bring forth a Samuel. He was no ordinary child as everyone came to find out.

So, my advice to anyone having difficulty conceiving a child is to seek God's face in earnest. No child is from the devil as God is the only source of life. The problem with most women is that they just resign themselves to fate, believing satan's lies that God meant them to be barren. In Exodus 23:6, God gave a sure promise to ancient Israel that "No woman in your land will miscarry or be barren." Has He changed His mind? Certainly not! Anyone who has this kind of challenge should remind God of His promise and trust Him to fulfil it in due course.

Shepherd Heart:

Thank you for your wise counsel. We pray that our readers, especially the women folks will take it to heart. God remains faithful to His word always, through to eternity.

Hannah:

Thanks once again for having me.

Their Latter Day Jesus by Pearl Adams

Chapter 10 – Spice up the Journey to Heaven!

“I understand you do not agree with my decision to invite Gable to minister at the Church this Sunday.”

“Who is Gable Sir?”

“Khan, I should think by now you have an appreciation of your role in this ministry. Pastor Alexander Oscan said you criticized the invitation extended to Gable Lander, the comedian to minister at the thanksgiving service on Sunday.”

“Oh that. Sorry Sir, whatever I said to Oscan was on a very different subject. He raised the issue of some ministers colouring their sermons with jests and I said it was inappropriate. At no time was the subject of the upcoming service broached during our discussion Sir.”

“Okay. I give you the benefit of the doubt. By the way, have you arranged for press coverage of the distribution of food items to orphanages?”

“No Sir. I had no idea you wanted the gesture publicized. I thought....”

“You are not to think for me Khan. If you cannot handle such a simple assignment, I wonder what you would do when the mantle of leadership of this church is handed over to you.” It is about 10 am. I want a feedback by 5p.m. or I will get one of the junior pastors to handle it. You may go Khan.”

As he walked out of Bishop's Hegel's office, Pastor Paul Khan hummed a tune to himself. He knew he had to keep his emotion in check. This time, he resolved not to share his encounter with any of the pastors. He walked briskly to his office and picked up his car key. Thankfully, none of his associates was around as he drove out of the premises. He was not surprised about the conduct of Oscan. Almost everyone in the ministry knew he was Hegel's lackey. What angered him was the fact that he could stoop so low to lie against a fellow pastor apparently to curry favour with Hegel.

On getting to Waiblingen by-pass, he turned into a side road and parked the car. He brought out his address book and thumbed through the pages until he found particulars of the editor of the Stars and Stripes newspaper, Heinz Chapman. He first met the journalist at a parents/teachers

association meeting. They chatted briefly before exchanging telephone numbers. He dialled Chapman's number and was surprised by the warmth with which he was received by the journalist. They agreed to meet at his office located on Nurnberg Road by 3:30p.m.

That done, he drove to the regional office of Deutsche Welle TV on Schmaltz Avenue to solicit the assistance of his friend, Ortiz Zimmermann, its Director. Both of them graduated from Laude High School before they gained admission into separate universities. While waiting in the plush visitor's room of his friend, Khan pondered on the vicissitudes of life. He couldn't understand why everything Bishop Hegel touched turned to gold despite his obvious shortcomings as a Christian leader.

Here was a man that had flouted virtually all instructions Jesus gave to his Disciples and yet God allowed him to preside over the largest congregation of Pentecostals in Stuttgart! He smiled when he remembered a remark made by a young man sitting in the same coach with him in an express train during his students' days at Humboldt University, Berlin

That morning, he left the campus with a heavy heart because his close friend, Peter Osuaze, an African student had been withdrawn by the university authorities for his inability to pay his school fees. He, of course was not in a position to help his friend as his father's stipends from the church barely sustained his family of five. Still trying to escape from the pain in his heart over his friend's fate, he buried his head in a

novel he picked for the two hours ride. He was not in the mood to listen to the chatter of other passengers. The rancorous laughter of the young man brought him out of his world. Then he heard the man say something quite profound, "Is there justice in the world? Sometimes, I wonder if there is any unbiased umpire watching over us. I want to believe there is a being in control of our destinies but some occurrences in life make me wonder if such a faith is misplaced."

Khan looked at the young man and a pair of blue eyes smiled at him. He grinned and returned to his novel. All through the journey, he could not dismiss the comment from his mind. It haunted him even after he graduated from the university and proceeded to the Bible School run by Hegel and his team of pastors. He constantly barraged God with questions along this line but got no satisfying answer. One day, he was led to read Romans chapter nine. What he gleaned from that Scripture was the fact that Paul the Apostle also wrestled with the imponderables of life and resolved to let God be GOD! "..... Who are you a mere human being to criticize God? Should the thing that was created say to the one who made it, "Why have you made me like this?" (Romans 9:20).

A tap on his shoulder by Zimmermann's secretary brought him out of his reverie. She beckoned on him to follow her as she ushered him into her boss' office. His host, a thick set man in his early forties rose to his feet from his ornate table and stretched out his hand in a warm welcome. He smiled broadly and said, "Today must be

my day to enjoy special blessing, Pastor. It is not everyday people in our profession rub shoulders with holy men of God.” Both men roared with laughter and embraced before they moved to Zimmermann’s lounge.

After their refreshment, Khan brought out a piece of paper from his pocket and spread it on the table for his host to see. He said,

“*Ortiz, this is the map of Stuttgart. The circles in red represent areas hosting orphanages that have benefited from our ministry’s hospitality program. Areas circled with yellow are next on the line. My Bishop intends to extend the largesse to them on Friday as part of the end of year thanksgiving ceremony billed for Sunday. We want your station to cover the distribution of gift items procured for this purpose.*

Zimmermann looked at his guest and cleared his throat. He had been waiting for the

opportunity to bare his mind on certain happenings in the church. He felt Khan’s visit was the right moment. He cleared his throat again and said, “Khan, you and I have weathered many storms in our respective professions. I admire you for choosing to give God your all. It could not have been easy for you to chuck up everything for the sake of the gospel. I know you used to have this thing for architecture when we were

in college. Nevertheless, I want you to know that I am always here for you.

Pardon me if I am a little brash this morning old boy. I do not seem to understand the thrust of the message coming from your church. My concern has nothing to do with the fact that I’m a Baptist. Let me tell you a story related to me by

a Catholic friend. Last Christmas, his church mobilized interested members to visit leprosy

colonies in Sierra Leone and Gambia, both in Africa. The participants spent their Christmas and New Year holidays with these wretched of the earth. The beauty of it all was that no media house was informed of the enterprise. Think about it Paul. What would Jesus have done if he had the kind of resources at the disposal of your ministry and he felt like blessing orphanages in Stuttgart? Would he have invited Etos and Deutsche Welle television stations to cover the event?”

Khan caught and held his friend’s gaze for more than two minutes before he said quietly, “My sentiments really. You have not hurt me at all Ortiz. You cannot even begin to understand the private hell I am going through in my church. I could walk away but that will cost me the pleasure of One I hold dear, Jesus Christ.

It may interest you to note that your concerns are shared by many people in my church. The snag is, where do you run to for succour? Where in Christendom has the gospel of gain not taken root?

Someone once observed that the world has become one with the church! That is a sad commentary on the state of the bride of Christ. The church should unite with its Head and not the world.

When I drove out of the premises of my church this morning, I was so disoriented that I felt like getting out of Stuttgart just for respite. Can you imagine my Bishop inviting a comedian to minister to the saint of God? Well, some people may justify this by the fact that the jokes are centre around happenings in the church. Where did we imbibe this spirit of entertainment? Who imparted it to us? Is it the same Holy Spirit who through Paul forbade foolish talks and coarse jokes among Christians?

We are to be Disciples of Christ. Was there ever a time he hired comedians or used jokes to get his message across? I also think undue publicity being given Christian philanthropy is in bad taste. This is particularly irksome among Western This is particularly irksome among

Western missionaries and agencies operating in Africa. Should they dehumanize impoverished African people just because they want to elicit sympathy for their programs? Ortiz, every right thinking Christian should condemn this theatre of the absurd. It is not the gospel of Jesus Christ. I do not think it is enough for you to sit on the fence and only speak out when it is convenient for you so that you would not be seen as rocking the boat.”

Zimmermann sat with head bowed. Khan’s rebuke hit home and he could not but acknowledge that he had failed Christ by failing to deploy resources at his disposal to fight against the rot in the church. He was not blind to the antics of some ministers that propagate what Khan described as a strange gospel.

He felt it was not his duty to speak out, after all, he was not a graduate of any Bible School. He had only commented on the happenings in Khan’s church because he felt his friend needed to be told the truth.

Zimmermann smiled as he recalled a sermon preached by his pastor, Edwin Kluxman on the day his first daughter was confirmed. He had been uneasy when the man looked pointedly at him and said,

“*Some people believe they are too good to work for God. That is a silly notion because God always desires the best hands in his vineyard. That includes everyone redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. We are all called to serve wherever we find ourselves. There is nothing secular about the life of a Christian. Everything we do brings honour to God if offered to him in love.*”

Feeling contrite, Zimmermann took his friend's right hand and said,

“

Forgive me Paul. I have been such a cad looking down on you from my high horse. What you said about the infiltration of the church by the spirit of perversion is true. The situation in the Baptist Church might be tolerable for now, but it could become worse in the nearest future. It is already obvious that we are not immune to the happenings in the Pentecostal fold. I believe it is time for every believer to take a stand for Christ.

I will not put you into trouble with your Bishop by refusing to cover the events lined up for the weekend. However, I can assure you that no one will use my station to propagate falsehood and world oriented values. I see this as a golden opportunity to let the world know that Jesus also has people in high places and we will make our voices heard where it matters.

”

With that, both men embraced before Zimmermann escorted his friend to his car. As Khan drove off, he felt elated. The discussion with Ortiz was like a tonic to his spirit. He grinned and said, “Lord, I know you must have arranged this meeting. Thanks.”

POTPOURRI – JOY



While researching for this compilation, I came across many quotes from both Christian believers and people of other faiths that do not align with the Scriptural definition of the word 'joy.' Many folks use it interchangeably with happiness. Joy is not happiness because it is not of earthly origin. We are happy because of favourable earthly circumstances. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit, an evidence of His presence (Galatians 5:22-23). Joy flows from God's heart and He imparts it to us by His Spirit. Not even angels or demons can steal joy from our hearts. Of course, we can refuse to receive it since Almighty God does not infringe on our free will. We pray that the compilation will enhance our understanding of the joy of the LORD and encourage us to ask Him to fill our hearts with it.

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,
peace, patience, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;
against such things there is no law.*

GALATIANS 5:22-23 (ESV)

*"The soul of the one
who serves God
always swims in joy,
always keeps holiday,
and is always in the
mood for singing."*

– St. John of the Cross

"LIGHT SHINES ON THE
RIGHTEOUS AND JOY
ON THE UPRIGHT IN
HEART. REJOICE
IN THE LORD, YOU
WHO ARE RIGHTEOUS,
AND PRAISE HIS HOLY
NAME"

PSALM 97:11-12



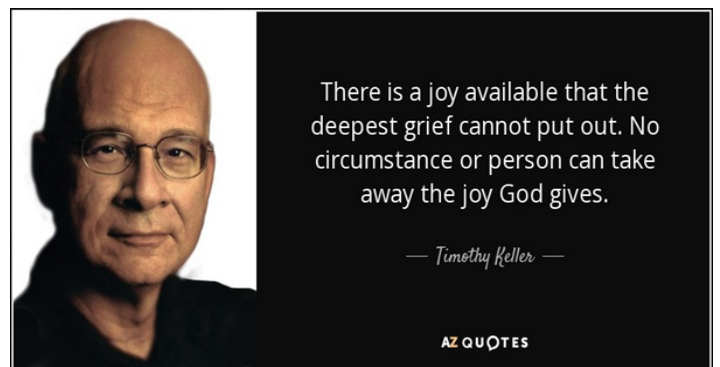
"When anxiety was
great within me, your
consolation brought
joy to my soul."
Psalm 94:19



"CHRISTIAN JOY IS A GIFT OF
GOD FLOWING FROM A GOOD
CONSCIENCE."

SAINT PHILIP NERI

AZ



There is a joy available that the
deepest grief cannot put out. No
circumstance or person can take
away the joy God gives.

— Timothy Keller —

AZ QUOTES

Spiritual joy is what you
experience when you choose to
give thanks to God no matter
what happens - even when things
go wrong.

Jim George



God is so committed to your
ultimate joy that he was willing to
plunge into the greatest depths
of suffering himself for you.

Timothy Keller

@quotelancy

May the God of hope
fill you with all joy
and peace as you trust in him

Romans 15:13

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I have told you this
so that my joy may be in you
and that your joy may be complete.

John 15:11

May the God of hope fill you with all
joy and peace in believing, so that by
the power of the Holy Spirit

you may abound in hope.

Romans 15:13 ESV



WEeping
MAY ENDURE
FOR A NIGHT,
BUT JOY
COMES
IN THE MORNING.
PSALM 30:5

THIS DAY IS HOLY TO OUR
LORD. DO NOT GRIEVE, FOR
THE

*the joy of the
Lord is your
strength.*

~ NEHEMIAH 8:10 ~

"Always be full of joy
in the Lord.

I say it again—
rejoice!"

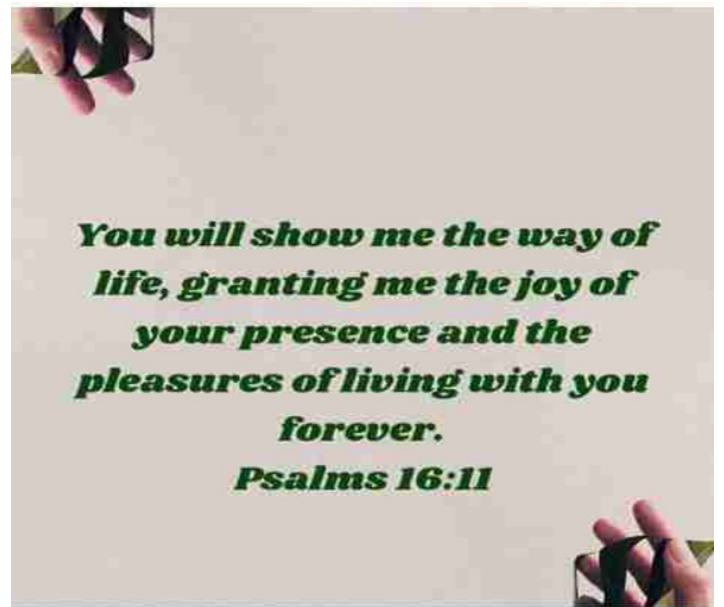
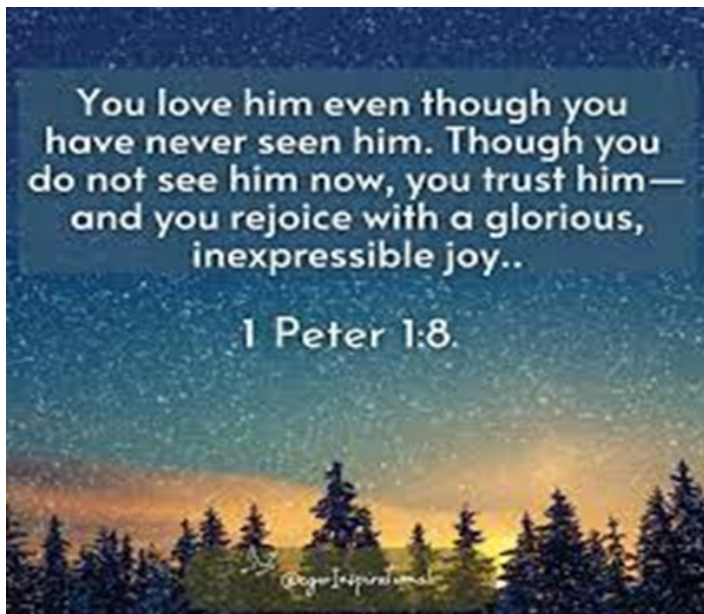
-Philippians 4:4 NLT

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YOU MAKE KNOWN TO
ME THE PATH OF LIFE;
YOU WILL FILL ME WITH
FULLNESS OF JOY IN
YOUR PRESENCE, WITH
ETERNAL PLEASURES
AT YOUR RIGHT HAND.
-PSALM 16:11

KATIE M. SCOTT

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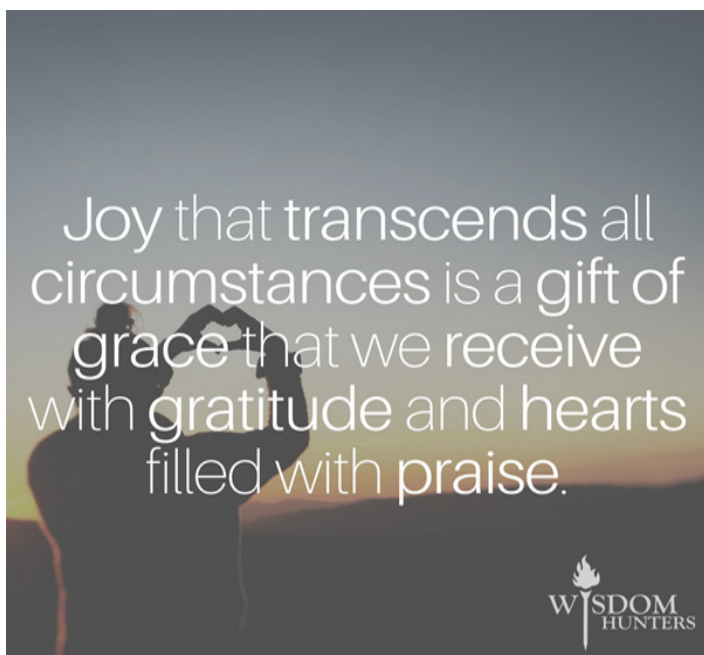


Are you BORN AGAIN?

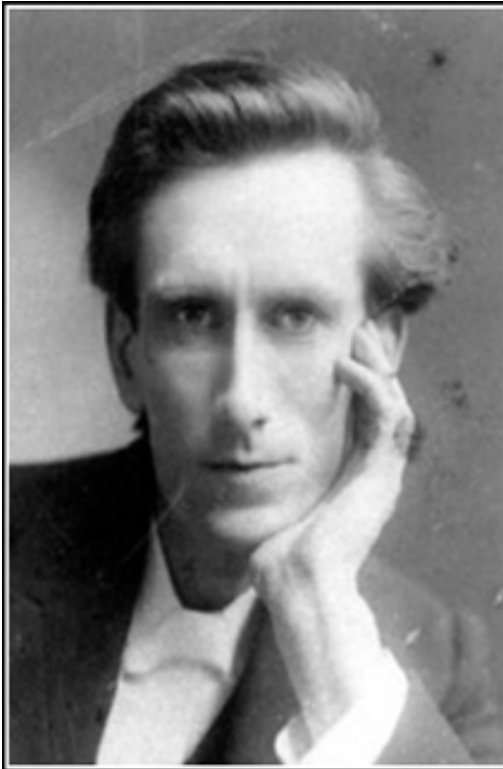
"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life."
1 John 5:13 ESV

- B** Believing Jesus is the Son of God?
1 John 4:15; 1 John 5:1
- O** Obeying God's Word?
1 John 2:5-6; 1 John 2:3
- R** Rejecting the world, its desires, and its priorities?
1 John 2:15; 1 John 5:4
- N** Needing Jesus' cleansing and confessing your sin?
1 John 1:9-10
- A** Awaiting Jesus' return eagerly?
1 John 3:2-3
- G** Getting your prayers answered?
1 John 5:13-15
- A** Adoring God's people?
1 John 3:14; 1 John 4:7
- I** Indwelt by the Holy Spirit?
1 John 3:24; 4:13
- N** Not continuing in patterns of sin?
1 John 2:29; 1 John 3:9; 1 John 5:18

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A	Admit that you are a sinner.
	Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death."
B	Believe that Jesus paid for your sin at the cross.
	Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love for us: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 6:23 "but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus."
C	Confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and commit your life to Him.
	Romans 10:9 "That if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."



We tend to use prayer as a last resort, but God wants it to be our first line of defense.

— Oswald Chambers —

AZ QUOTES

“

Prayer is not the least we can do; it is the most.

JOHN BLANCHARD

GRACIOUSQUOTES.COM

Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance. It is laying hold of His willingness.

Martin Luther

@quoting

Prayer is beyond any question the highest activity of the human soul.



Man is at his greatest and highest when upon his knees he comes face to face with God.

Quote by Martyn Lloyd-Jones

"Pray first before doing anything. Do not worry about it alone. Pray with all your heart for even the smallest thing. Pray for justice and righteousness. Do not try to do it on your own, trusting in your own strength is denying God and the angels. If God helps, you can do it. Continue to pray so that you understand this. God does the work!"

ManHee Lee
Shinchonji



"Think of boredom during silent prayer as an act of purification. In this uneventful moment, God purifies us of the false god of good feelings."

— RICH VILLODAS

Parade



THE MISSIONARY CHURCH IS A PRAYING CHURCH. THE HISTORY OF MISSIONS IS A HISTORY OF PRAYER. EVERYTHING VITAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE WORLD'S EVANGELIZATION HINGES ON PRAYER. ARE THOUSANDS OF MISSIONARIES AND TENS OF THOUSANDS OF NATIVE WORKERS NEEDED? PRAY YE THEREFORE THE LORD OF THE HARVEST, THAT HE SEND FORTH LABORERS INTO HIS HARVEST.

- JOHN MOTT -

LIBQUOTES.COM

Have a conversation with God. [Revelation 3:20](#)
The Creator of the universe is waiting for you.

ABC of Salvation Prayer



A Admit to God that you are a sinner. That you don't measure up to His perfect standard and deserve punishment.

[Romans 3:23](#), [Romans 6:23](#)

B Believe the Good News. Jesus paid the entire cost for your sins. He knows everything about you and is ready to accept you into his family forever.

[John 3:16](#)

C Confess that Jesus is Lord. Say it out loud, tell others what He is doing in your life.

[Romans 10:9](#)

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"A day without prayer is a day without blessing, and a life without prayer is a life without power."

EDWIN HARVEY

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