

infuse

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In a recent office meeting my Team Leader asked, "whom do you model or who inspires you?" I sat quietly in my chair pondering the question. As the hands went up and my peers shared their role models, I realized I too thought highly of those mentioned. But, do I look to them to model my life after?

When looking to someone to model one's life after, shouldn't we look at one's character? Integrity is a character trait and a person with integrity is one who keeps his/her promises. Who can you trust and does he/she walk the talk? Disappointment is inevitable when one puts his/her trust in man. Why? Because there is usually an inconsistency between what one asserts and what one lives. God on the other hand, will never let us down.

God's Promises are sure. God does not lie, so we can believe in His testimony, "I the Lord do not change" (Malachi 3:6), so ultimately we can depend upon His promises. The Israelites were given a promise, but chose to rebel against God in the wilderness. They did not believe in the promise. They did not put their trust in the Lord.

There is no benefit in God's Word for us if we don't include trust, faith and commitment in His promises. "For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith" (Hebrews 4:1-2). God deserves our trust and commitment because He does what He says He will do. God has perfect character and He is the source of all hope.

While Abraham Lincoln, Helen Keller and Winston Churchill, are all people of tremendous character and accomplished much, they are just people. Christ, on the other hand set the standard for all of us to live by. Christ is our role model. And as such, we should look to Him when it comes to trusting in the promises from God.

Jesus trusted in the power of the promises of God. "I am that bread of life" (John 6:48), "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12), "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). God empowered Jesus Christ with authority and Christ fully believed in all of God's promises including that the Father would raise Him from the grave.

God's promises are many and certain. Please take the promises of God and plant them deep within your heart and soul so that you may live a life that is Christ-like and ultimately be a part of the greatest promise of all, eternal life (John 10:27,28).

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IS HE A MAN THAT HE SHOULD LIE?

By Emmanuel Donkor

Kerry wanted a sports car on her twenty-ninth birthday and was looking forward to that fateful day. The thought of driving that new car filled her with joy and happiness. However, she was disappointed when she finally learned she could not get the car she so badly wanted. The major priority, according to her husband, was for them to save up for their dream house. Even though the decision was right based on their priority, she was sad at not getting what she wanted.

Like Kerry, we all get excited with high hopes at the prospect of getting a new car, the dream vacation, dining at our favorite restaurant, especially when it comes as a promise from our families and loved ones. However, like Kerry, we often get disappointed when we do not get what we desperately want due to one reason or another. In some cases, because our needs are limitless yet, the resources to satisfy these needs are limited, we often tend to satisfy the ones that are more pressing in our lives. That is the essence of human existence. But the same cannot be said about God's promises.

Unlike man, resources do not limit God. He owns everything in the Universe (Psalm 24:1-2). The psalmist affirms the earth and all there is belongs to Him, which includes among other things human beings.

So while our families and loved ones can and in some cases disappoint us due to limited resources with which to fulfill the promises, God is limitless and so are His promises. His promises are assured; they can be relied on. He is a God who does not change; He is the God of yesterday (retrospective God) the God of today (God of the now) and God forever (God of eternity). How about that for a promise?

God's promises are guaranteed to be fulfilled, even though it might seem otherwise. We often get frustrated with the 'waiting game' and give up easily. Abraham, the 'father of many nations' went through similar circumstances. Bible scholars and commentators reveal it took close to twenty-five years for the promise of the 'destiny child' Isaac to be born.

Until then, Abraham had to lean on God's promise through faith, knowing well, "God had the power to do what he has promised" (Romans 4:21). Because He owns the world, which includes us and thus knows what is best for us, He fulfills His promises when the time is right. The promise, we need to know, is for an appointed time.

So, you would ask, when would God's promise of a job, husband or wife, business and ministry be fulfilled? Well, we do not know when it will be fulfilled. However, what we do know is that even though we do not fully understand the delays, it surely does not mean denial. At the right time, it will surely come to pass.

We do not perform any special duties in order to receive God's promises. Quite to the contrary, His promises are ours to take. Particularly, His promise of salvation, which is the bedrock of our existence, is free. That is because it is a promise, which is made by grace; not according to any ritual we perform. Ours is to sit back and relax patiently as He works to have them fulfilled. How simple can this be?

If there are any guarantees in our world today, it's got to be God's promises. They are assured even in the face of delays. So why don't you today, switch to God's promises? Besides, He is not a man that He should lie. It's your call. **i**

HIS PROMISES Are

By Rory Ries

Living in Missouri guarantees you one thing; nothing stays the same. If we are talking about the weather, you could possibly walk out the door in the morning sweating and wearing shorts. As school lets out it may be freezing rain and you stand there mesmerized by how drastically everything changed. Plus, you may wonder how in the world are you going to get home

in that mess without freezing to death.

Not only is the weather unstable, but also overall, life can be very unstable. We have our ups and downs and some days are better than others. We may start the week off not knowing what is in store for us, or our future may be a major concern since we don't know what it is we are to do with our lives. Our friends may let us down from time to time and disappointments in this life can cause havoc in our everyday life. All these things can bear down on us and they can sure cause us to have doubt in everything we do.

There is one place where you can go where doubt doesn't exist and it may be sitting right on one of the shelves in your bookcase. The book that is filled with promises and guarantees is the Bible. There is a saying that has been around for years and it goes something like this, "the only guarantee in this life is you have to pay taxes and you have to die." That's

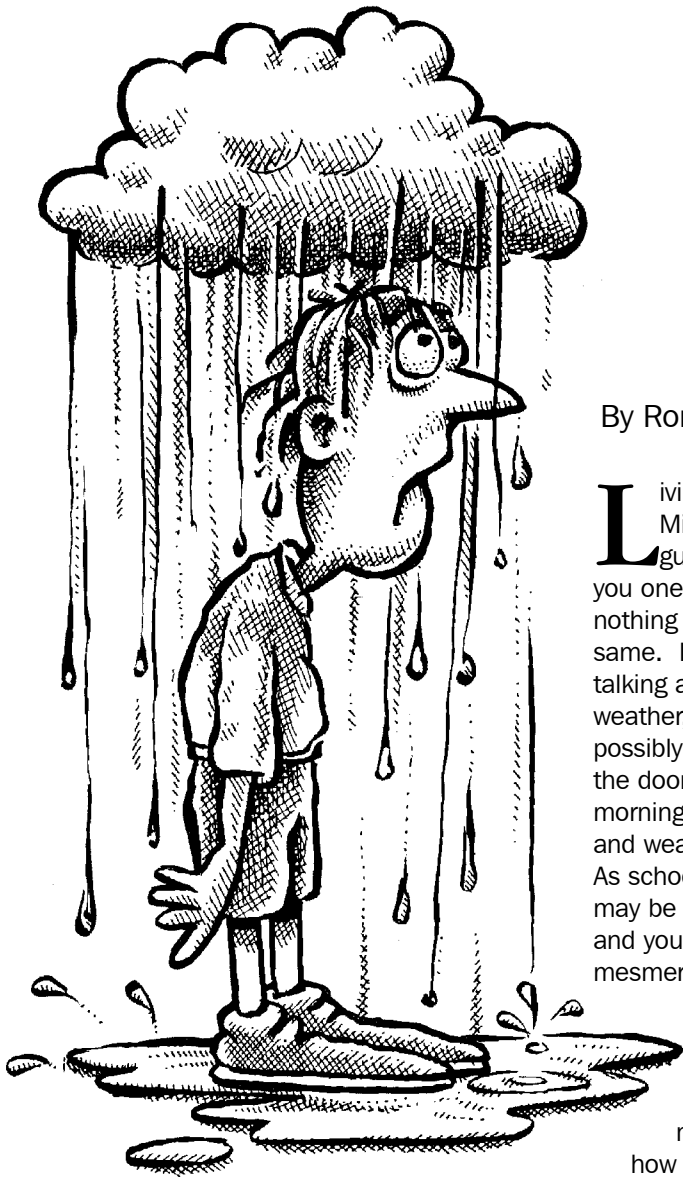
not very promising nor is it very uplifting.

If you pick up God's word you can find exactly what you need and the blessings that come from His word are abundant. The blessings also stem from many promises God has made. The other exciting news is God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). When God makes a promise you can count on Him coming through with His promise. God's word is true (2 Sam. 7:28). David acknowledged God could be trusted and He will never let any of us down.

Our friends will let us down and sometimes even our own family will let us down. It is a part of life that some of us have to unfortunately experience. Do not put your trust in a friend (Micah 7:5). We are also told not to trust in ourselves (Proverbs 28:26). This goes against man's thinking and reasoning. God says the man who trusts in himself is a fool, yet the world teaches all you need to do is trust yourself. Many have created a life of pain and suffering while trusting their own judgment. It can be a very dangerous trick if we look to ourselves for answers.

Solomon instructed us to trust in the Eternal with all of our heart and He will direct our paths (Proverbs 2:5). He also says do not lean upon your own understanding. Why does Solomon say that? It is because we can let ourselves down and make bad decisions. We are given a promise here and that promise is if we turn to our God and look to Him for help and guidance, he will come through and guide and make clear which way we are to go.

We can read the story about Moses and Israel coming out of Egypt. God delivered Israel from hundreds of years of bondage and slavery. Along the way they came to the Red Sea. The raging waters of the Red Sea were in front of them and the Egyptian army was behind them (Exodus 14). What was Israel's response to this trouble they were facing? They started to think like humans and immediately complained to Moses and questioned his leadership. They chose to lean upon their own understanding. How does Moses respond to their mutiny? He told them to be still and stand back and watch God



PROMISES

For Sure

deliver them from these dangers (Exodus 14:13-14).

God made a promise of deliverance and He came through. Sadly, Israel seems to always question God and they ended up wandering through the wilderness for forty years (Deuteronomy 8:2). We don't have to have doubt nor do we have to be heavy laden with the worldly burdens. Whatever it is we may be experiencing at this time or whatever trouble we may be facing we have a Father who loves us and wants nothing but the best for us (Matthew 6:32-34). This is another promise you can hang onto and be at peace.

Of course to receive these promises we have to do our part. One example is we are to honor our father and mother. The promise is if we honor them then we will be blessed and we may live long on this earth (Ephesians 6:1-3). When we do our part by obeying God we will be truly blessed and every promise He has made to us will come to pass. God says He will bless the nation that will live their lives in obedience to Him by carefully observing all of His commandments (Deuteronomy 28:1-2). The United States has been blessed in many different ways. Unfortunately, we are turning more and more to ourselves and leaning upon our own understanding.

Jesus promised his disciples the Father would send the Holy Spirit and they did receive the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Luke 24:49, Acts 2:2). That promise he gave to his disciples is for you too. It is a promise for those who God calls (Acts 2:39). All a person has to do is repent, become baptized, and have the hands laid upon them to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 38).

One of the very last promises Christ made is He is coming quickly (Revelation 22:20). He is coming to bring judgment upon the nations who have rejected him and have gone about living their lives upon their own understanding (Revelation 19:15). He is also coming to set up His Kingdom where all the earth will know who He is and who the Eternal is (Isaiah 9:6-7). Man will no longer live his life according to his own understanding. The world will be filled with the knowledge of the Eternal and there will be great peace and great rejoicing. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

Take a good look at the promises that are there for you to claim. Write them all down. God is true and there is no lie found in Him. That is something you can rejoice over and find great peace in knowing you have someone you can really trust and He will never let you down. **i**

HE PROMISES

By Sarah Hoeck

From Genesis to Revelation
there are promises throughout
the rainbow reminds us
what it's all about

Everything is possible through God
He'll take you as his own
and when you are in trouble
He'll throw you more than just a bone

He promises that He's holy
that He'll fight for you
He promises to do miracles
(read Exodus, you know it's true)

He promises you eternal life
He'll punish those who sin
He promises anyone can be saved
but you've got to let Him in

He has a plan for you and
He promises to come soon
although we don't know
if in the morning, night, or noon

He won't be like people
He'll keep his promises to the end
God's promises are different
from the ones told by your friends

For, if God promises
something to you or me
we can count on it
because it's guaranteed

TRUE WORSHIPPERS

“But a time is coming, and it is already here! Even now the true worshippers are being led by the Spirit to worship the Father according to the truth. These are the ones the Father is seeking to worship Him.”

John 4:23, Contemporary English Version

By Fanny Mandik

What has worship got to do with character? How can character be built through worship? Worship and character seem to most of us to be two different areas of teaching. John 4:23 reveals God seeks in us the character of a true worshipper!

Before moving on, let's make things clear first. When the Father talked about 'worshippers', He didn't refer to the worship leaders, singers, musicians or dancers who serve as worship ministers in the Church. Jesus uttered this verse when He had that famous conversation with the Samaritan woman, who was thirsting after the living water. She encountered Jesus and found the living water. That's worship. So when the Father talked about 'worshippers', He talked about those who encountered Jesus and experienced the living water in their life. These persons could be anyone: a preacher, a worship leader, an usher, a Bible School teacher, a janitor, a sales man, a doctor, an accountant, an engineer, a beggar or a CEO.

When we talk about worship, we talk about relationship. Read John 4:23 carefully and you will see three things that make a true worshipper:

1. BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT.

God is Spirit; everyone who worships Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

2. WORSHIP THE FATHER.

There is a question my husband always asks his worship class students. Why

did God call Himself 'Father' in John 4:23? Why didn't He name Himself 'God' or 'Lord' or 'Master' or 'King'?

First, it revealed a relationship—a very up close and personal one. God did not design worship as a 'duty' or 'task', or something we oblige to do. If we don't worship God, He will punish us and we will die. No! He doesn't want us to have that image in our mind. He desires us to know Him as a loving Father who is tender, yet just and glorious. Secondly, God called Himself Father because it refers to the very basic, intimate and limitless relationship for every creature. The Father-Child relationship is the purest and the most unconditional relationship in the universe. This is the kind of relationship God intended us to have from the very beginning.

3. ACCORDING TO THE TRUTH.

Who is the truth? JESUS. John 14:6 stated, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can go to the Father without Me."

Just like the Samaritan woman, when we encounter Jesus, we find the way to the Father. We find the truth that God created us to be His own, His children. We find the real life; a life that has been redeemed on the cross. Worship is a life-changing experience. The Samaritan woman had one when she met Jesus. How come? When we worship the Father, He infuses us with His entire being. It's more than

just His blessings. It's more than just His love. More than just His power and promises. It's Himself! He infuses us with the fullness of Him! "That you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:19b). In other words, worship is letting God dominate or rule over our entire being, so that there is no more space for our self. "He must become greater; I must become less" (John 3:30). This is how God builds His character in us through worship. The result? After being infused by His entire being or the fullness of Him, each area and element of our life, and even each micro cell in our body experiences a transformation. How?

You know when you worship someone, you long to be that person. It's the same when we worship our heavenly Father, the ultimate Creator of the universe and the King of kings. We will be so overwhelmed that all we are eager to do is to love Him, to adore Him, to please Him, to do what He wants us to do, and to be what He wants us to be! We are being totally, crazily, insanely, deeply in love with Him! Those of you who had been crazily in love with someone know exactly how it feels. Basically, you will do ANYTHING for him or her. That desire comes out of love. This is what God wants. He wants to build our characters out of love. He wants us to understand this. It is so much easier to build character if it comes out of an in-love heart.

This is where the transformation starts. When we worship God, He firstly gives a new heart, spirit and pure thoughts (Ezekiel 36:26-27). God gives us the desire to be faithful, and His Spirit makes us eager to obey His laws and

teachings. As we continue to worship, God then changes the way we think, so we will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to Him (Romans 12:2). Finally our attitude and behavior will change accordingly.

"But a time is coming, and it is already here!" (John 4:23). What 'time' was Jesus referring to? He was referring to the time to experience a personal encounter with our very own Creator.

"These are the ones (worshippers) the Father is seeking to worship Him." Max Lucado wrote in one of his inspiring books, It's Not About Me, "We are His mirrors, you know. Tools of Heaven's heliography. Reduce the human job description down to one phrase, and this is it: Reflect God's glory. As Paul wrote: "And we, with our unveiled faces reflecting like mirrors the brightness of the Lord, all grow brighter and brighter as we are turned into the image that we reflect; this is the work of the Lord who is Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18) ... Beholding leads to becoming. Becoming leads to reflecting" (pp. 82-84).

Yes, we are indeed the mirrors that reflect the Father in this world. When people see us they should see the Father. Again, as Max Lucado wrote, "may we have no higher goal than to see someone think more highly of our Father, our King. So, trash-bin the thought that quotes 'to build characters means to have a hard time.'" Building character through worship is a wonderful and overwhelming journey of life that God grants us. We should enjoy and cherish it. Enjoy the journey! **i**

Announcements



Jasmin Scarlett and Shey Smith of the Toronto, ON, Canada church were married in Toronto on July 3, 2006.

Anika Sandy-Hanson of the Gaithersburg, MD/DC church graduated from Howard University in Washington D.C. with a Doctor of Philosophy, Ph.D. in Educational Psychology in August 2006.

Jordana McVey of the Monterey, CA church was baptized on July 28, 2006.

Jeremy Brown of the Montgomery, AL church, Andra Garbes of the Detroit, MI church and Laura Plath were baptized on October 13, 2006 in Myrtle Beach, SC at the Feast of Tabernacles.

We would like to hear and celebrate your happy news with you. Let us know about baptisms, graduations, engagements, weddings, births, etc. Please send your announcement and picture to infuse@cgi.org.



Elizabeth McVey and Tyler Barnett of the Monterey, CA church were engaged on August 11, 2006 in Santa Barbara, CA. They will be married on March 29, 2008.

SIGNS

By Jeff Reed

Does God keep His promises? Is there proof to justify the belief that He keeps His promises, or do we have to rely on blind faith that He will do what He tells us in His Word?

I stumbled across a couple of websites that insist there is no evidence God keeps His covenants with men. One declares “God is imaginary,” “prayer is pure superstition,” and “the Bible is repulsive.” It offers 50 proofs God does not keep His promises. Another website provides an annotated Bible that labels certain parts as “contradictions,” “absurdity,” “injustice” and “intolerance.” To an ignorant observer there may be basis to their claims. This is because these websites use no evidence from science or history to support their reasoning, but generally rely on quoting the Bible out of context. I was instantly reminded of what the apostle Peter wrote, “First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, ‘Where is this “coming” he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation’” (2 Peter 3: 3-4).

The promise of the return of Christ is still yet to be fulfilled, but the signs God has given to us of His already fulfilled promises can assure us of it. In the 23rd Psalm, King David uses the

analogy of a shepherd caring for his sheep to describe how God had kept His promises to him. We can apply these scriptures to our own experience of fulfilled promises.

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.” Psalm 23:1

God has promised we shall never be in need. If we put Him first in our lives we can be assured He will take care of our secondary requirements. Christ tells us to, “not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?” (Matthew 6:25-26). I have been a Christian for over 13 years and have seen God provide for my basic needs even when my circumstances looked bleak.

A few months after I was baptized, I was stranded in a blizzard. My car slid off the side of the road and I was stuck in over 15 inches of snow. I was the only one on the interstate and was 40 miles from home. I was not near any buildings or homes in which to seek shelter. Blizzards in my home

state of Alabama are rare, so I was not prepared. I only had a thin coat with a broken zipper to keep me warm and no gloves. I got out of my car and began to walk. Cell phones were not common back then, so I couldn’t call anyone for help. Needless to say, this was a low point in my life. As I was walking through the snow I asked “My Shepherd” for help. Within minutes, a 4-wheel drive truck pulled up next to me and the driver told me to get in. He went 80 miles out of his way and drove to me to my front door. I was not in want.

“He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters.” Psalm 23:2

God has promised to give us direction. “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Psalm 119:105). The Word of God, His Law, and most notably the Ten Commandments give solid direction for us to follow. It is common knowledge that having goals and living according to solid moral principles have the natural result of true success in life. I have read through countless self help books, listened to numerous motivational speakers and have come to understand that none of them are as

of His Promises

valuable as God's Word. The results of God's law in practice are a clear sign of a fulfilled promise.

“He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” Psalm 23:3

God has promised to forgive us so that we may be given His righteousness. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them” (2 Corinthians 5:17-19). We are restored to a perfect state not by anything we can do for ourselves. It is only by the blood of Christ. Jesus’ sacrifice was promised in Isaiah 53:5, “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities.” This was written over 700 years before it was fulfilled. This is clearly a sign of God keeping a promise.

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” Psalm 23:4

God promised to give us comfort. “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14: 16-17, KJV) This promise was

fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts, when God gave His Holy Spirit to the church. I understand this promise firsthand because I have the Spirit of God inside me.

Three years ago I was in the hospital recovery room after having surgery to remove cancer from my chest. The drugs they were giving me gave me no comfort. But the Holy Spirit comforted me. I had peace, joy, and hope when by the worlds reckoning I should have had none.

Everyone who has God’s Spirit can confirm the love of God in his or her lives along with me. Just ask them. This is a clear sign that only can be experience by baptized members of the Church of God.

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Psalm 23: 5-6

God promises us eternal life. “Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Corinthians 1: 21-22). If we have His Spirit, we are guaranteed eternal life. That is a tremendous promise and sign to believers. It is something that will not be completely fulfilled until the return of Christ, but we can experience it now. Our eternal life begins today.

Skeptics may scoff about God’s promises. Fortunately, one day they will understand. For us, we can experience those promises now. **i**

THE PROMISE

The Promise We Will Inherit If We Belong To Christ

By Loren M. Chamberlain

**“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the Promise.”
(Galatians 3: 29)**

What a wonderful statement this is and believe it or not, there are many who do not understand it. This was written primarily for the Gentile-born converts in Galatia: By giving Christians this “Promise” God has made a formal pledge indicating we are heirs.

While we are not yet possessors of our reward, we are heirs and what we shall inherit is the promise made to Abraham. Therefore, whatever the reward of the saved and wherever the saved spend eternity is a definite and specific promise of God. This revelation should be exciting news to all Christians knowing their eternal future is secure and in the loving hands of our savior Jesus Christ. This statement we read in the book of Galatians sums up the whole of the Gospel because it is an abbreviated statement of the very purpose and plan of God for mankind.

Our hope of salvation and eternal life could not be put in better hands than that of Jesus Christ and God our Father.

THE PROMISE CONFIRMED BY JESUS

Jesus, by bringing a new message, the “Gospel,” validated and confirmed the promises made to the Fathers. Who are the Fathers the promise was given to, and what are the promises made to them? In Acts 3: 13 we read the following, “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus.” We know assuredly then that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are the fathers referred to and the Promise, whatever that Promise is, has now been confirmed by Jesus. If we belong to Christ, then we are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to this promise Jesus confirmed.

THE PROMISE MADE TO ABRAHAM

The Lord said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing” (Genesis 12: 1-2). So Abram moved out in faith from Ur to Haran and finally to Canaan. In a symbolic manner we are

called out of the spiritual Babylon of this world. “So Abraham left, as the Lord had told him” (verse 4). Abraham did not argue, bicker or make trivial objections, he simply departed immediately and went to a certain land where God led him, the land we call Israel today. We must also obey God and come out of this world immediately if we desire to inherit the promises made to Abraham.

It is difficult for us to comprehend the great inheritance that awaits us provided we surrender ourselves to God and obey as Abraham did, relying on the faith of Jesus and not our own faith. This inheritance is so magnificent it is like trying to comprehend the incomprehensible. As we read in 1 Corinthians 2: 9, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him but God has revealed it to us by His spirit.”

Just what did God promise Abraham? We will find the answer in Genesis 12: 6-7, “Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. The Canaanites were then in the land, but the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” The promise was the inheritance of the Land of Israel.

THE PROMISED LAND

The land where Abram was, the land of Canaan is called Israel today. That then is the “Promised Land.” The question is, for how long? The answer is, forever. The inheritance is to be an eternal inheritance, which of necessity involves and includes everlasting life!

To inherit a piece of land the boundaries must be described. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates” (Genesis 15: 18). We know these boundaries relate to land on earth not up in heaven. We must put our trust in the sure word of God, not in what people may think.

Other scriptures show the territory of Christ’s Kingdom is to expand and spread ultimately to include the whole earth. “It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith” (Romans 4: 13). Notice also in Romans 4: 16, how it is confirmed again that it is by faith that we inherit. “Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring, not only to those who

are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.”

OBEDIENCE BEFORE INHERITANCE

In making this Promise to Abram, God conditioned it on obedience. Abraham did obey. First, he left his native land, his friends, and relatives, his old way of life. He forsook all, and followed where God led. Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. Abraham did not stop to reason it out or make excuses or rebel he simply obeyed. God did not take Abraham’s son as a sacrifice He simply wanted to test Abraham’s willingness to obey, in Faith.

After Abraham passed this most difficult test, were there any further conditions to the promise? “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore” (Genesis 22: 15-17). Now the Promise was unconditional. Abraham had performed his part of the covenant, this agreement.

Today people from every nation may come and take of the waters of life freely because God has kept His Promise and the Promised seed, Christ, has come.

HEIRS TO THE PROMISE

How are all nations blessed through these promises? Paul said to the Gentile-born Galatians, “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3: 29). The original covenant with Abraham was intended for the whole world, not just for his descendants. All believers partake of this covenant and are blessed as children of Abraham.

To the Ephesians Paul wrote, “Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called ‘uncircumcised’ by those who call themselves ‘circumcision’ (that done in the body by the hands of men)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to

the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2: 11-13). The Ephesians were Gentiles before they became Israelites through Christ and they were strangers from the covenants; and promises without any hope and without God. Now by the blood of Christ they have been made near.

WHEN DO WE INHERIT?

Imagine Abraham has never yet received the promised inheritance though God’s promise was made unconditional because Abraham obeyed God. “By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going” (Hebrews 11: 8). Christians like Abraham are heirs that have not yet inherited. The message Christ delivered was the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. It follows that the land of this earth, the land of the promise Jesus came to confirm, is the territory occupied and governed by the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is not of this world, but we can know assuredly that it is near when we begin to see the following signs. “There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21: 25-28).

While these disasters cast gloom upon the world, ultimately it is cause not for us to worry but for great joy. When we see these events happening we will know that the return our Savior and Messiah is near, and we can look forward to His reign of justice and peace. We can wait with confidence upon Christ’s return to bring justice and restoration to all the children of God. **!**

CANDY IS JUST DANDY

Can you identify the following treats?

1. A famous swashbuckling trio of old.
2. Indian burial grounds
3. Galaxy
4. What bees make
5. Round flotation device
6. Twin letters
7. Red Planet
8. Not laughing out loud
9. Can’t hold on to anything
10. A famous author
11. Famous former baseball player
12. Famous New York Street
13. A sweet sign of affection
14. A favorite day of working people
15. Nut happiness
16. Pleasantly plump
17. Two female pronouns
18. A feline
19. Single women look for him
20. Sun explosion
21. Bite with a crunch noise
22. Children of the cane
23. A lottery amount
24. Lactic flops
25. Determines who wins the game
26. Home of movie stars
27. Superman’s favorite hangout

-
- Answers:**
1. Three Musketeers
 2. Mounds
 3. Milky Way
 4. Bit O’Honey
 5. Life Savers
 6. M&M’s
 7. Mars Bar
 8. Snickers,
 9. Butterfingers
 10. O’Henry
 11. Baby Ruth
 12. 5th Avenue
 13. Candy Kiss
 14. Pay Day
 15. Almond Joy
 16. Chunky
 17. Hershey
 18. Kit Kat
 19. Mr. Goodbar,
 20. Starburst
 21. Krackie,
 22. Crunch Bar
 23. \$100,000
 24. Milk Duds
 25. Skor
 26. Hollywood
 27. Clark Bar



**View the Infuse
Video and
Photo album
from the Feast
online at
infuse.cgi.org**

One of the most beautiful sites in the world...

By Jeremy A. Brown

At the 2006 Feast of Tabernacle in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina three young people made one of the most important decisions in their lives. Andra, Laura, and Jeremy all made the decision to be baptized on Friday, October 13, 2006, which was the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. It was a cool Friday evening and very cloudy. It was one of the most beautiful sites in the world, I was told. These three young people were becoming a part of God's family (the church). The three young people were baptized simultaneously and on the final baptism, the sun broke through the clouds and shined brightly until night came. It was as if the angels in heaven were rejoicing at the marvelous site.

I am Jeremy, one of the young people who made the decision to be baptized. I have been in the church for nine years and I finally made the decision that I was ready for baptism. I realize being baptized is not something you wake up one day and say, "I want to be baptized." You have to make a conscious decision on whether or not you understand the commitment you are making to God. You are making the commitment to God that you will obey His laws with all your heart no matter the circumstances, you will keep his Holy Days and you accept Him as your Savior.

Now we all know we humans are not sinless, so God understands after we get baptized we will still sin and make mistakes. Who does not trip and fall sometimes? But each time you trip you must make some progress, get up and try again.

Before I was baptized I feared I would be changed from the humorous young man I am, to a serious person and lose my sense of humor. I know many other people who are considering baptism, and have the same fear. I let this prolong my getting baptized. But I am here to tell you, when you are baptized your personality does not take a dramatic 360 degree turn. The only difference I have experienced since my baptism is the ease in understanding the Bible when I read scriptures, wanting to give more to the church, and the need to be active in the church.

As I stated at the beginning of this article, being baptized is the most important decision you will make in your life. Once you get baptized, you are making a commitment to God. It is almost as if you are getting married and divorce is not an option. Baptism is not something to be scared of, it is something everyone should do, but you need to understand the commitment you are making to God.

Trust me, we need many more young people to start stepping up in the church. As you can see, many of our ministers are getting older, but there are not many young people stepping in to take their places.

So, I hope this will help you understand the importance of baptism. **i**



Feast of Tabernacles Myrtle Beach

By George James

There are many things worth celebrating when considering God's great Feast. For example, the beautiful location, a time to escape our regular routine, rekindling of friendships, thought provoking spiritual messages, uplifting music that edifies the heart and the camaraderie with fellow brethren are all noteworthy experiences.

However, there is also another item that was an integral part of the Feast of Tabernacles celebration—a dynamic program that has become near and dear to my heart—Infuse. The Infuse program is now in its third year of operation. It is a program geared toward involving the younger population in God's church. The age range is from the late teen years on through the mid thirties, but Infuse excludes no one and invites any and all to attend its services and activities.

The Infuse services for the 2006 Feast of Tabernacles in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina were held at 9:15 am. Part of the services consisted of praise and worship music, which was led by some very talented musicians and singers. Music and singing proved to be a strong spiritual dimension to the Infuse services and added mightily to the glorification of our heavenly Father. Minister Roger King himself got in on the musical performances on the last day of the Feast. His singing and work on the keyboard received a huge and enthusiastic ovation.

The theme selected for the Infuse services was the evidence of God's existence. Minister Mike James, who primarily conducted the Infuse services, had a speaker prepared for each day. Speakers included George Ramocan, George James, Jeff Reed, Tony Buchert, Steve Sandy and Mike James. The speakers in considering the evidence of God's existence

presented a variety of examples. Some areas of interest included, asking questions that will expose the holes in evolutionary thinking, second law of thermodynamics, the complexity of the human body related to the human spirit, documentation of recorded history, archaeology, complexity of an animal's eye, the holy spirit and powerful testimonies in the lives of some fellow brethren. From one who was privileged to speak and who was an audience member for the other speakers, I can honestly say the presentations were powerful, informative and intellectually stimulating.

Infuse had energy that extended into fun and interesting activities too. A kick off party began the week that included lunch and the opportunity for sharing and conversing with fellow Infuse participants. Herb Hanson and Anika Sandy-Hanson also provided a Bible game to get the spiritual thinking into gear. Craig Smith helped put together a beach party and volleyball tournament. The volleyball tournament was the best I had ever seen at the Feast. We had nearly ten teams participate in the super-competitive games with good sportsmanship. Many also came by to watch and cheer, and this made our environment all the more delightful.

There were additional activities that made Infuse a solid all around

blessing for its participants. First, there were opportunities to let our Christian light shine with service to others. Street Reach Ministries and a homework center were two examples of this. Andra Garbes and Elizabeth McVey helped to promote these outreach activities. A women's Bible study conducted by Noni McVey was also a part of the Infuse festivities. Several Infuse participants also got together for some laser tag as well. Additionally, Elizabeth McVey was able to piece together a very fun evening of dance lessons. We had a terrific instructor too from the South Carolina area help us out with our lesson.

In closing, we all know God's Feast is an incredible blessing for all of us. On the other hand, those of us who have chosen to be a part of the Infuse experience know the Feast experience is enhanced because of the Infuse experience. So to all involved with Infuse I extend heartfelt thanks. And to all in the CGI who have been reluctant to attend an Infuse service for any reason I say to you your attendance at an Infuse service is always welcomed. And finally to all fellow believers across the country, no matter what organization you are from, you are always welcome to attend with Infuse too. May God our Father and Jesus Christ His son continue to direct and guide Infuse with the right direction and spirit. **i**



SUBMISSION & Faith

By Noni McVey

Hebrews 11 is probably one of the best-known chapters in the Bible because it is God's Hall of Faith. Of the seventeen great people of God listed in this chapter only two are women. While both Sarah, Abraham's wife and Rahab, the Jericho prostitute are distinctly different they have something very much in common. They are both women of faith.

SARAH

There is no greater example of true submission and complete faithfulness in God's promises than the story of Sarah. Through time, God transformed Sarah into a woman of courage, loyalty and faithful submissiveness to her husband. God changed her doubt into believing in His promises. Sarah was faithful to His promise when it mattered most.

In Genesis 3:16, God said to Eve, "Yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." Submission to one's husband is part of the burden brought upon every married woman due to Eve's sin. Sarah's story illustrates how submission to one's husband is a monitor of one's faith in and submission to God. A submissive wife is one who has complete faith God is working through her husband to do what is best for her.

STORY OF FAITH BEGINS IN UR

While Sarah isn't mentioned in Genesis 12:1-3, her story of faith certainly begins there. God said to Abraham, "Leave your country, your

people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Abraham, with his Father Terah, wife Sarah and nephew Lot left the city of Ur, a thriving city on the banks of the Euphrates River not knowing where God intended for them to go.

Do you think it is fun to move? Certainly not. The move for Sarah could not have been an easy one. While Sarah packed up the household, and prepared to leave family and friends, she didn't know where she was moving to, or how long the journey would be.

As will be illustrated later in Sarah's story, she certainly was not an empty headed, spineless woman. Names had meaning in ancient times and the name Sari means princess. Sarah was a beautiful woman, as we will read and I believe she was gracious, cultured and well educated. So while Sarah willingly submitted to Abraham's decision to move, she did so because it was the right thing to do, not because she had no opinion.

The first stop of their journey was Haran (Genesis 11:31). After Terah died, Abraham, at the age of 75, left Haran with his entire household for the land of Canaan. It is another move to another unknown place. In spite of the unfamiliar, Sarah took the ultimate step of trusting in God's faithfulness.

She believed God would guide her husband to the place He had chosen for them. What is a woman's ultimate step of faith? I believe it is the ability to willingly submit to the judgment of one's husband whether it is sound or unsound. As women we must trust in His faithfulness to take care of us in spite of our husbands' decisions.

ARRIVE IN CANAAN

Once they entered Canaan, it seemed the land of "milk and honey" was becoming barren due to a famine. At times, have you found yourself doing what you believe God has instructed with all your heart, and doors open for you to only feel He has left you alone? While Abraham doesn't say it, I wonder if he questioned why God sent him to a promised land that was heading into a famine.

Due to this severe famine, Abraham moved his household once again to Egypt (Genesis 12:10). How do you think Sarah felt about a third move? If Abraham had consulted Sarah, what do you think she would have said? She may have pointed out his lack of faith to stay in the place God had sent them to. Where was Abraham's submission to do what God instructed him to do?

There are many times in a marriage when a wife can find a hole in her husband's plan. Unfortunately there are many husbands that do not find it important to consult with their wives on major decisions. Moving forward with such ill thought out plans can, in the

end, hurt the entire family. But once again, Sarah willingly went along with Abraham's plan to leave Canaan and go to Egypt.

CAN'T SINK MUCH LOWER

As Abraham and Sarah were about to enter Egypt, Abraham said to his wife, "See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; and it will come about when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you" (Genesis 12:11-13). This was a partial truth since Sarah was Abraham's half sister.

This is certainly a tribute to Sarah's beauty as she was sixty-five years old when this event took place. Her beauty was not just in the eyes of Abraham, "And it came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. And Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house" (Genesis 12:14,15). I can't begin to imagine what was going through Sarah's mind. It seems this would have been the time to say, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

Sarah knew God's promise. She knew a great nation was to come from Abraham's seed. Did she willingly do what Abraham requested because she felt expendable? Since she was barren, did she believe Abraham, at any cost, needed to live and have children even if it was with another woman? Whatever was going through her mind, Sarah obviously believed God would make Abraham the father of a great nation and God would deliver her. God intervened

and revealed to Pharaoh that Sarah was Abraham's wife. Pharaoh, the pagan king, rebuked Abraham for being dishonest to him and sent him on his way.

SARAH'S TURN

After living in Canaan for ten years, Sarah had borne Abraham no children (Genesis 16:1). Sarah decided to "help" God out by devising a plan to be sure Abraham would be the father of a multitude. Sarah knew the promise God made to Abraham, but she didn't know whom the mother of the promised descendants would be. Sarah convinced Abraham to take Hagar, the Egyptian servant and have a child through her.

How many times do we become impatient waiting on God to answer a prayer? Giving one's husband to another woman was a sacrificial thing for Sarah to do. But the act of giving Abraham to her servant was an impulsive sin, which had a huge effect on Abraham and Sarah's relationship. When Hagar became pregnant with Ishmael and then unmanageable, Sarah blamed Abraham for everything, even though it was her idea to begin with.

Where was Abraham's faith God would provide a son? While Abraham should have rejected Sarah's plan to begin with, he dodged his responsibility when he told Sarah, "Your servant is in your hands, do whatever you think best" (Genesis 16:6). Whether in ancient or current times, it's tough for any woman to follow a man who is incapable of making decisions, runs from responsibilities and is a wimp.

Do you know what your husband's aspirations and goals in life are? Are you working together to achieve those goals? Does your husband know your short and long term goals? It's hard to submit to a man who doesn't know where he is going. Go to God in prayer and ask Him for guidance and wisdom. Ask Him to help you help your husband fulfill God's plan for his life and yours.

THEY LAUGHED

Here is a fact that helps us all; even great men and women of faith have their moments of faithlessness. There is no greater example of this than when Abraham and Sarah both laughed at God. Yes, while much emphasis has always been put on Sarah laughing at God, Abraham laughed at God as well. "Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, 'Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?'" (Genesis 17:17). Abraham not only laughed, but he tried to convince God to accept Ishmael (Genesis 17:18).

But God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him" (Genesis 17:19). This is the moment God made a promise to Sarah through Abraham. God made three specific promises to Sarah; (1) He would bless Sarah, (2) make her a mother of nations and (3) kings of peoples



and so at age 75, Abraham receives word from the 'boss' that retirement will be delayed. **Genesis 17:1-4**

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would come from her.

Then Lord appeared to Abraham in the person of a visitor to his tent, and Sarah overheard him say, "I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah you wife shall have a son" (Genesis 18:10). Sarah was listening at the tent door and laughed to herself, saying, "After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being so old also?" (Genesis 18:12).

Have you ever laughed at God? Maybe you haven't laughed, but have you ever doubted His ability to solve your most difficult problems? Do not think for a moment the walk of faith is easy. The struggles of faith are real. Just as real in Abraham and Sarah's time as they are for us today. Staying true and focused to God's plan will allow faith to triumph. I believe the turning point in Abraham and Sarah's faithful walk occurred when they both laughed at God. "Why did Sarah laugh?" God asked quickly, "Is anything too difficult for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:13, 14). God challenged and pierced their wavering hearts with this statement.

Paul said this about Abraham, "And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform" (Romans 4:19-21). The writer to the Hebrews said this of Sarah, "By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised" (Hebrews 11:11).

Abraham and Sarah's faith had been rewarded. They had a son and he was called Isaac, which means "laughter." Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me" (Genesis 21:6).

DOING IT AGAIN

Just when one thinks, "never will I do that sin again," watch out because Satan is there waiting for the opportunity. After compromising his wife 20 years earlier, one would think Abraham would never do it again. But, he did. Abraham offered Sarah to Abimelech, King of Gerar for the same reason he offered her to Pharaoh. Once again, God intervened. Amazingly, Sarah agreed to Abraham's plan. God delivered again and this example is continued evidence of Sarah's faith and God's faithfulness.

OBSTACLES ARE ALWAYS IN THE WAY

After Isaac had been weaned, Abraham made a great feast. During the feast, Sarah noticed Ishmael poking fun at Isaac. Sarah went to Abraham and said, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac" (Genesis 21:10).

This is submissive Sarah talking to Abraham. This is the same woman Peter commends in I Peter 3:5, 6, saying that she "obeyed Abraham, calling him lord." When it was important, Sarah wasn't afraid to speak up. Healthy submission doesn't mean you never articulate your opinion. If you don't communicate what is on your mind, it could be a sign of low self-esteem, fear of a disagreeable situation or you are trying to avoid responsibility. Never be guilty of saying, "no one cares what my opinion is," "All I want is peace, and I don't care what I must do to have it," "You make the decision, I don't want to be blamed for making the wrong decision." Sarah said what was on her mind and she was right.

God told Abraham to listen to Sarah and to do what she said (Genesis 21:12). Here is an example of how God wants a wife to help her husband solve a problem. Women are "helpers" and should be advising, correcting and praying for their husbands.

Sarah and Rahab are the only women mentioned in Hebrews 11, the Hall of Faith. Read an online-exclusive article about Rahab at <http://infuse.cgi.org>

THE ULTIMATE TEST

"Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham. Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you" (Genesis 22:1, 2). As in the beginning it is true to the end, Sarah is not mentioned in this chapter. But I believe she must have known what was going on.

Abraham and Sarah are the only husband and wife mentioned in God's Hall of Faith. They had a close relationship with one another and the Lord. Their faith walk was done together. The ultimate test for Abraham and the moment of true submissiveness for Sarah was next. Scripture says Abraham believed God could raise Isaac from the dead (Hebrews 11:19). Do you think Sarah believed as well? Do you think Sarah watched as Abraham and Isaac prepared for the journey to make a sacrifice?

Was every challenge Sarah faced a preparation for the true test of faith, which was watching Abraham and Isaac leaving to make a sacrifice without an animal? Is this final test the reason Sarah is in God's Hall of Faith? The wife of noble character is described in Proverbs 31. "She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life" (Proverbs 31:12). A woman can only be this kind of wife when she believes nothing is too difficult for God.

Sarah believed in and worked for the fulfillment of God's promises. Abraham and Sarah did not always have confidence in their faith. As individuals and a married couple they went through challenging times. Abraham and Sarah had a growing faith in God's promises. Our God is faithful to His promises and this should give us tremendous comfort. **i**

What is Marriage All About?

By Mike James

Is marriage a fading tradition with no real meaning in this modern world? Is it becoming obsolete? Why should people commit to marriage if the divorce rate is so high? We need to understand why marriage is so important to God.

Let's begin by going to the beginning. In Genesis 1:27-28 we read God created man and woman in His image. He also told man and woman to be fruitful and multiply. Genesis 2:22-24 tells us the woman was made from the man and men and women should come together as one flesh. An interesting point to consider in this is the relationship between the Father and the Son who are described as one (John 10:30) just like the relationship between a man and woman.

God is also described as love and in order for a man and woman to operate as one there has to be love in the relationship. I believe God brings men and women together to have them come to a better understanding of what love is. As many married couples will tell you, marriage is not always easy, but through the relationship of marriage great spiritual lessons can be learned. Due to the differences between males and females conflicts are bound to arise. The lessons in marriage come from putting aside your needs for the other and vice-versa.

Losing yourself in the marriage is similar to giving up yourself for God. Notice how Ephesians 5:22-33 it tells us

the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church. In other words the husband takes the leadership role, but this does not mean the domineering role. Because it also tells us husbands must love their wives as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. In other words, husbands have to sacrifice for their wives giving of themselves as servants.

The other major point to address is that God wants men and women to reproduce. The profound thing about this is if man and woman are in the image of God then what they reproduce is also in God's image. Why does God want to create more and more beings in His image?

God is reproducing after His own kind just like the animals mentioned in Genesis were reproducing after their kind. God uses marriage as the method by which He increases His family. This is why marriage is such a profound institution. It is the very means by which God is increasing His family. Notice these scriptures that address this family that God is creating. Romans 8:14-17 tells us we are co-heirs with Christ and will be glorified with Him. I Corinthians 15:45-49 expresses we shall take on the image of Christ at the resurrection. Christ says in John 17:21-22, He wants us to have the glory that He and the Father have. Many other scriptures express this same truth. Marriage is not something to be taken lightly. We must be cognizant of the importance of and what marriage is before we decide to enter into this profound institution.

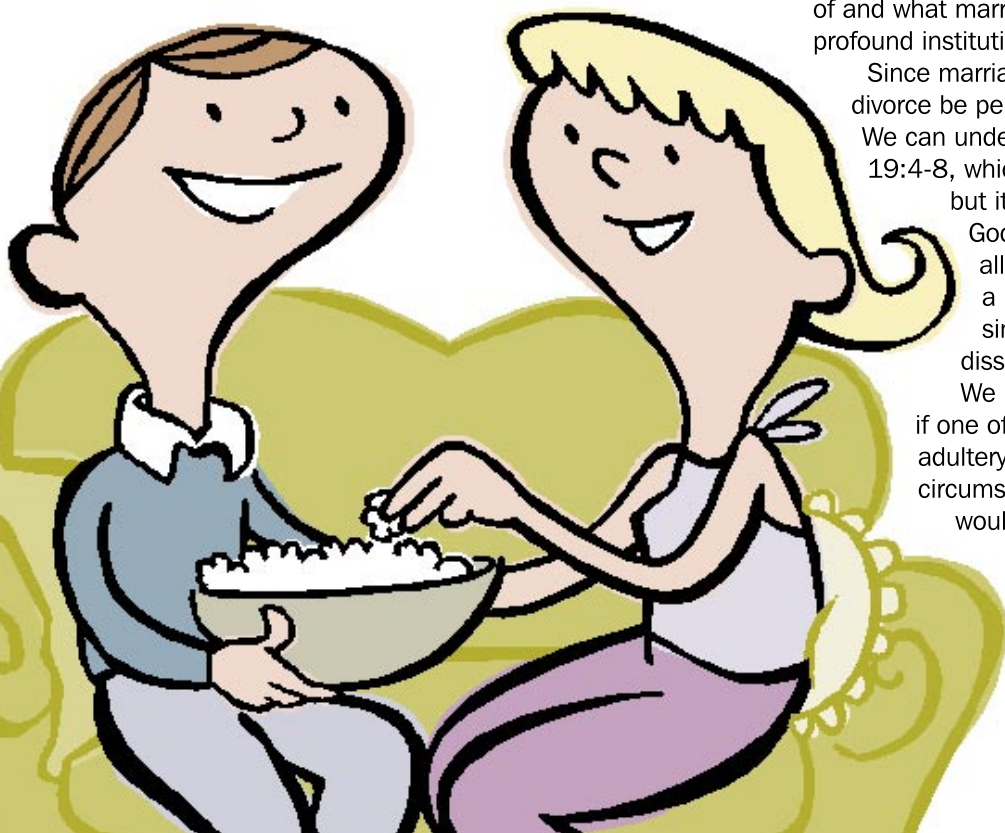
Since marriage is so important to God, why would divorce be permitted in God's law (Deuteronomy 24)?

We can understand this better when we look at Matthew 19:4-8, which states that God does not want divorce, but it was allowed due to man's imperfection.

God does not want anyone to divorce but allowance has been made because continuing a problem marriage could lead to even more sin and heartache if the marriage were not dissolved.

We read in Matthew that God allows divorce if one of the marriage partners has committed adultery but can divorce be allowed for any other circumstances? Another example where divorce would be permitted would be in the case of a believer married to an unbeliever. If the unbeliever opts out of the marriage then the believing brother or sister is no longer bound to the marriage (I Corinthians

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Waiting Patiently

FOR GOD'S PROMISES

By Ruth Kerr

“You’ll just have to wait.” These are words every impatient person hates to hear. After all, we North Americans have created an almost wait-less society. We have drive-through banks. We download concert tickets in seconds. We microwave pot roast in 10 minutes. Who needs to wait for anything anymore? We can have everything we want NOW.

So what’s the big deal about waiting patiently? Who needs it!

We do, as it turns out. Much more than we realize.

THE BENEFITS OF PATIENCE

If we humans had our way, we wouldn’t have to wait for anything. Sometimes it seems unfair God asks us to wait. Doesn’t God realize how urgently we need things? Doesn’t He understand what we need right now?

Make no mistake; God knows we desperately want immediate results. But perhaps God wants something from us. Maybe He wants us to develop a little patience.

The dictionary says *patience* is having calm endurance during pain or difficulty. A patient person can wait stoically for the outcome of an adverse situation. Such a person is not hasty or impulsive, which can often make a bad situation worse.

Have you ever noticed the amazing effect a calm person has in a crisis? In a situation where everyone is panicking, the calm person always becomes the leader. He or she focuses everyone’s attention on the task at hand and is able to restore order. Who has not been grateful to such a person in a time of upheaval?

God treasures that quality, and that’s why He wants to develop it in us. Patience doesn’t just help us weather life’s storms; it helps strengthen our fellow man.

WAITING FOR GOD

God has made abundant promises to us. Some promises will be fulfilled in His Kingdom, while some will be fulfilled now. Even so, we must be patient. “Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord” (Psalm 27:14).

What does this verse mean? Does it mean we grit our teeth and endure our circumstances? Is this the best way to wait for God—to batten down the hatches and wait out the storm?

In a way yes, in another way, no.

The Hebrew word for “wait” in Psalm 27:14 is *qawah*, which tells us *how* to wait. The word has a few shades of meaning: to hope in; to wait for; to look for.

In other words, God tells us to not lose hope while waiting for His promises. He also tells us to look for Him, to watch for Him. This means He is faithful to fulfill what He has promised (Hebrews 10:23). God is active here on planet earth, and will show us the way if we are willing to follow.

But we must wait patiently.

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, THE PATIENT GET GOING

Waiting patiently isn’t as passive as it sounds. The word *patient* also has a surprising, often overlooked meaning. It holds the key to waiting for God’s promises.

To be patient also means to be diligent.

A patient, diligent person is a preserving person, a working person, someone who doggedly keeps at it no matter what. A patient person doesn’t give up.

Being patient doesn’t mean we stop all activity and wait for the storm to blow over. Patience means we become diligent stewards. Christ told us as much in Matthew 24:45-51, “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge... It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.”

Waiting patiently means we get busy! Just like our Father.

THE PATIENCE OF GOD

We are not the only ones who wait. God waits too. He waits for us to *grow*, to mature and to fulfill *our* promises to *Him*. That’s right – God is waiting for us to do what we promised. Did we promise Him we’d stop smoking or taking drugs? Did we promise we would make a commitment to Him through baptism? Did we promise we’d become a better Christian?

Maybe we haven’t made any promises to God. Do we still expect Him to act on our behalf when we refuse to budge? Do we demand He fix situations that are the results of our poor choices?

No matter how patient we think we’ve been with God, how much more patient has He been with us? But, unlike us, He never gives up on us or loses hope in us. He never stops loving us or casts us aside as being useless or non-existent. Isn’t this the kind of patience we should have in Him?

Let us, then, wait and hope in our Lord. **■**

Are All of God's Promises for Me?

By Fanny Mandik

The answer to that question is: definitely yes!

The widely-known John 3:16 says, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

This verse is the proof God wants everyone to receive and live His eternal promises. For that, He has given the way: His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. All we need to do is to believe in Jesus as the Way.

We don't have to climb Himalayas or swim through the Nile River or cross the five oceans in the world to get God's promises. Wherever we are, when we believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of the Living God, we have already received all of God's promises. More than just receiving, we will live those promises eternally!

“THIS IS THE SECRET: THAT THROUGH THE GOOD NEWS THOSE WHO ARE NOT JEWS IN GOD'S BLESSING. THEY BELONG TO THE SAME BODY, AND THEY SHARE TOGETHER IN THE PROMISE THAT GOD MADE IN CHRIST JESUS.”

EPHESIANS 3:6

GOD'S PROMISES

In a simple way, we can say of His promises as:

1. Forgiveness of our sins in the past
2. Assurance of a blessed life in present time
3. Success for our future. “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).

God's desire is for us to have a perfect and abundant life on earth and in Heaven! John 10:10 remind us of this perfect life God planned for us, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that *they may have life, and have it to the full.*” Having life to the full means living the life planned by God. The life enriched with God's acceptance, approval and blessings.

Does it mean we will not encounter problems anymore? No! It means, no matter what the situation we are facing, we cannot be defeated by the situations or problems. Immanuel, God is with us. It means He is always there to help us to conquer any situation. “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any

powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37-39).

HOW CAN I GET THOSE PROMISES?

First, as mentioned in John 3:16, **believe in Jesus Christ who had died and rose again to save us personally.** If we believe in Jesus, we become His children. This is very important, why? Because only children have the right to get the inheritance promised by the Father. When we become God's children, we are His heirs. As heirs, we have all access and authority to use and enjoy all the facilities our Father owns. “Because you are sons, *God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.”* So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and *since you are a son, God has made you also an heir*” (Galatians 4:6-7).

Secondly, **receive the Holy Spirit.** Why do we need the Holy Spirit? First, as written above, the Spirit calls out “Abba, Father”—it's the Holy Spirit who enables us to have a Father-child relationship with God.

Second, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth who leads us into all truth. “But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will

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7:12-15).

Fraud could also be grounds for a divorce. If it was discovered after a marriage that one or the other spouse wasn't a virgin when they married, the marriage could be considered non-binding (Deuteronomy 22:13-21).

The Bible does not provide other reasons for divorce, but the law does not provide us a ruling for every possible situation. We sometimes have to determine the intent of the law from what we know about the law. For example, let's say a husband was beating his wife on a regular basis and he would not seek help for his sin, do you think divorce should be permitted in such a case? Of course it should. The husband beating his wife is engaging in a sinful action. Even

though God hates divorce it could be permitted in such a case because God is a God of mercy (Matthew 9:13). This woman needs to get away from that man to protect herself. What if a husband or a wife became an alcoholic or a drug addict and there were children in this marriage. What if the addicted spouse psychologically or physically abuses the children and will not seek help? Should the other spouse be bound in such a situation? I think not, the destructive behavior of one of the marriage partner's is sin that could lead to the greater harm of those in the family.

Committing to marriage is a commitment to giving up yourself. There are many reasons the

divorce rate is so high, one of the reasons could be that many do not understand the enormous effort it takes to give your self completely to someone else. Make sure you count the cost before you take your marriage vows and realize that the deep spiritual meaning of marriage is not something to take lightly. **i**

“JESUS WAS LIFTED UP TO HEAVEN AND IS NOW AT GOD’S RIGHT SIDE. THE FATHER HAS GIVEN THE HOLY SPIRIT TO JESUS AS HE PROMISED. SO JESUS HAS Poured OUT THAT SPIRIT, AND THIS IS WHAT YOU NOW SEE AND HEAR.”
ACTS 2:33

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tell you what is yet to come” (John 16:13). And the truth will set us free. “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). The Spirit of God will guide us day by day to live a blessed and victorious life in Jesus. The Holy Spirit will reveal all the truth we need so we can be set free from bondages, sins, confusions, sicknesses, defeats, loses and all the lies the devil has planted in our mind. If we want to know more about God's promises, we have to read the Holy Bible everyday. The gentle Holy Spirit will reveal more and more about what God has in mind and heart for each of us.

We really need the Holy Spirit in living God's promises. Our minds are very limited. The Holy Spirit has limitless access to God's mind and heart; He will reveal what's in the Father's heart and mind for us.

Everyday I always thank God for sending His Holy Spirit to guide, help and teach me about God and His truth. That is why John Bevere wrote in his book *Drawing Near*, “Receiving the Holy Spirit is not an option; it's a command!”

Second Corinthians 1:20-22 declares, “For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through Him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God. Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.”

When you believe, you already receive those promises. Do not think you can get those promises by doing something nice or good...you receive the promise of God by believing

that you already have it through Jesus Christ. Doing good deeds is the fruit of living in God's promises.

THE OUTCOME OF LIVING IN ALL OF GOD'S PROMISES

The outcome of living in all of God's promises is **living in Holiness**; it is living according to God's will to honor Him. Second Corinthians 7:1 mentions, “Since we have these promises, dear friends, *let us purify ourselves* from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” How do we purify ourselves? By living according to the Word of God.

Day by day, He will perfect us in the knowledge of Him. By that, **we will be effective and productive believers who bear fruits of righteousness**, so we will have the qualities of Jesus Christ, our great example, as written in 2 Peter 1:4-8, “Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. *For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Enjoy God's promises in your life now! **i**

From Russia With Love



By Brian Christensen

God created Adam and Eve, with thoughts of companionship, family, and future generations. These are heavenly things and blessings of God. Adam and Eve were fruitful and multiplied. Genesis 9:1 says God also instructed Noah and his family to be fruitful and multiply. Having children is a large part of our society and a blessing from God as a natural growth of families and mankind. What if we can't have children or do not wish to have children? Does this mean we are ungodly or not blessed?

This issue can cause a tremendous amount of stress, anguish, and pain. This is especially true when we want to have children and cannot. It can also cause feelings of guilt and self-doubt when one does not wish to have children. It is important to note all of the feelings I just mentioned are evil and used as tools by Satan to tear us down. After all, why would Satan want a Christian family to grow? The biggest threat to Satan is the multiplying of Christians. He will prey on the weak, and a child is most vulnerable. Satan will attack embryos, fetuses, young children, teens, and do anything, which will prevent the creation of a baptized Christian. This is why God the Father and Jesus, our Savior take a special interest in children. Youth are innocent and easily victimized by evil. The best time for Satan to attack is before a being is formed. In Genesis, the story of Abram and his desire to have children, shows us how easily we can lose faith in God and let doubt lead us astray. Even though God had promised

Abram a son, he still had doubts and felt compelled to conceive with Hagar.

IF WE CANNOT HAVE CHILDREN ARE WE PUNISHED?

I can say this with conviction, because I went through all of these feelings in my desire to have a larger family. My wife and I wished to raise more children, beyond our oldest daughter; however, we could not do this naturally. We spent a few years going through the in-vitro process. Our only successful round resulted in three embryos, which did not survive. We were devastated. At this point, our thoughts began to take us down a road of doubt. Why were we being punished? Why was God not answering our prayers? After counseling and talking to one another, we realized God was in control and we had to trust in Him. Our God is not vengeful and does not punish people without cause. Satan would like us to believe this, however, we must stand firm in the knowledge that God knows all things. Go to Him in prayer and believe His ways are always best. In Matthew 21:21 Jesus shows us the power of prayer.

Soon after this, a co-worker was talking to me about a similar situation he and his wife were going through. They were in the process of adopting a child from Ukraine. It was a long and difficult process, but their excitement and joy was amazing. We began to research international adoptions and

decided to start a journey towards adopting two children from Russia. We spent eighteen months of "labor," taking classes, filling out paperwork, meeting with social workers, receiving government clearances, and absorbing the expense of an agency. Our efforts were finally rewarded with our first trip to Russia. The people of Russia were wonderful and extremely helpful to us. We soon realized the differences between the U.S.A. and Russia were mostly language and governments.

Our journey took us to a southern region called Stavropol, where we visited two orphanages. Many of the children were ill or malnourished, however, their care was remarkable. The workers at the facilities had nothing, but gave their hearts to these unfortunate children. We endured through some difficult decisions and doubt. Then we were introduced to a one-year-old boy named Nikoli and a three-month-old girl. We chose these two children and flew back home to await the legal process and review medical information with our doctor. Our wait lasted a few months before we were notified to return to Russia for the court process. Nikoli and Lena became our children and fulfilled our dreams.

TRUST AND OBEY

During our darkest time, we did not know God was denying us at that time

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because He was ultimately blessing two innocent children, who had not even been created yet! How wonderful and awesome our God is. This is why patience and trust in God is so important. When we desire something, or have doubts and fears, it can make us vulnerable to Satan. My wife and I wrestled over decisions to have children, the in-vitro process, and which children to choose. These decisions tormented us, until we realized, we could pray and place the burden with God. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matt.11:28). All we had to do was pray, accept and follow His decision.

There are also a number of people who do not wish to have children and feel wrong for being that way. Don't let Satan play with your emotions of guilt. We are all given

talents according to His will and parenthood may not be a talent for you. God does love and cherish little children, but He also loves you, whether you have children or not. Do not allow Satan to hinder your relationship and faith in God.

Trusting in God when we deeply desire something and do not know the final outcome is extremely difficult. The foundation of your faith is shaken and tested. I shared my story because it taught me how much I needed God and to have faith in Him. There are two Hymns we sing. One is titled "Trust and Obey," and the other is "Where Ever He Leads I'll Go." These are not just songs to sing in church, but also words to live by. I don't have to look any further than Nikoli and Lena to remember it. **■**

We Are Heirs of God and Joint Heirs with Christ

...And That's No Lie

By Margie Marang

God can do anything. But there is something God cannot do. "Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began" (Titus 1:1-2).

"Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath that by two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who had fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us" (Hebrews 6:17-18).

Did you catch that? The one thing that God cannot do is lie. Everything God says in the Bible has to be true. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). As long as we have the Holy Spirit we are in the category of Romans 8:1.

Remember we are heirs of God and joint heirs of Jesus Christ if we have the Holy Spirit. "But if the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwells in you" (Romans 8:11).

How will we make it into God's Kingdom? You have to have God's Holy Spirit when you die or when Christ

returns to this earth. "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our Spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs-heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if in deed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:16-8).

If we are children of God and Heirs of God and joint heirs of Christ then what ever Jesus inherits, we will inherit also. So when we receive God's Holy Spirit we become very special to God because at that time we become a child of God. If you have children, are your children special to you? Of course they are. God is the same. His children are very special to Him.

What has Christ inherited? "God who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds" (Hebrews 1: 1-2).

Remember we are joint Heirs with Jesus, and He has inherited all things. "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things" (Romans 8:31-32)?

Remember, God cannot lie. We get everything God has and that includes all of the Promises. **■**

A CRY IN THE DARKNESS

By June Rush

Shh, listen. Do you hear the cry in the darkness? “Won’t someone please help me?”

I am dying out here in the streets. “Who is this Jesus I have been hearing about on the radio?” They are saying, He is the only way in which I can be saved from death, but I had never heard His name before tonight. Where does He live? I need to find Him now before it is too late. “Please, won’t someone help me? I am begging you, whoever can hear my cry that knows who Jesus is, please, won’t you have mercy on me, for I am dying out here in the darkness.”

I have been on drugs and alcohol since I was thirteen years old. I ran away from home, and steal every day to support my habit. I sleep in dumpsters, on street corners, in abandoned buildings, where mice, rats, and roaches run rampant. The lost and lonely, sick and diseased, and the rejected of the world are out here, and no one who cares what happens to them.

People pass by us as though we don’t exist, because of our tattered clothing, and holey shoes.

Oh, the pain is growing worse and I can’t hang onto life much longer. Does anybody hear my cry or care what happens to me?

Wait a minute; I hear a man’s voice, echoing through the darkness, the fog, and the filthiness that encompasses me. “I will help you,” he says, drawing closer to me as no other person has dared to do. I see a faint flicker as he draws closer. He is carrying a candle in his hand.

“I know this Jesus you heard spoken about on the radio. He is our Lord and Savior, He loves you and if you will accept Him into your life and live by His ways, your sins will be forgiven, and you will be healed

from your addictions.”

He then took a book out of his briefcase, which He called the Bible. I recall him saying something about God, “whoever He is” and that He sent His only Son to die on a cross to save all humanity from their sins, and all I had to do was repent and turn my life around. I asked him what does repent mean? He said, just tell God you are sorry for the lifestyle you have been living, and ask Him to help turn your life around, and ask for forgiveness of your sins. He then read something from the Bible He held in his hands, “Repent and be baptized everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

Wow, it is morning all ready, and we had talked all night about Jesus, and at last, I fully understood, just whom He is.

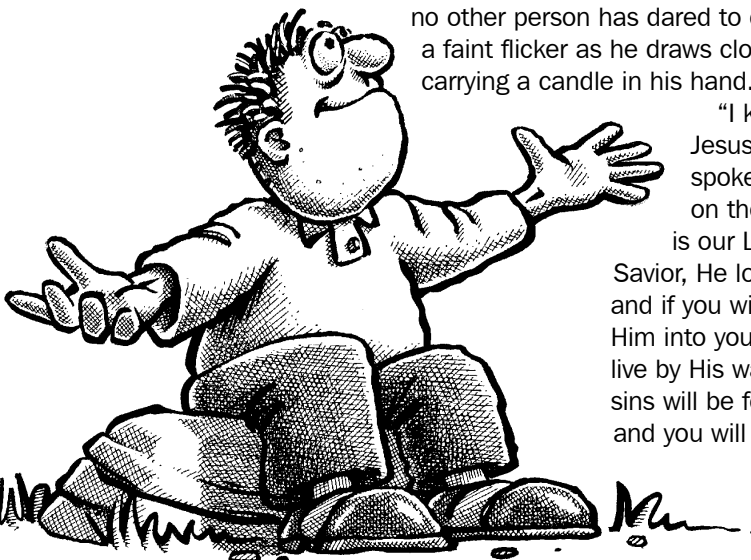
As we knelt down on the dirty pavement, both of us exhausted from the long night, we prayed together, and then I cried out, “Father, please forgive me, for I am a sinner, and I commit my life to you right here and now. Thank you, Father for sending this kind man to teach me about who you are and the sacrifice you gave, ‘your only Son’ for a lowly sinner such as I.”

Now, I know when I die, I will live again with you. He advised me to read Matthew 6:9-14, as an outline on how to pray.

I read it, and this is what it says, “This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”

Shh! Listen. Do you hear the cry in the darkness?

Then take your candle. Go light your world. **i**



in the next issue:

PARENTING

Spring 2007

**How You Can Contribute
to the Spring 2007
Issue of infuse**

We're looking for articles, short stories, artwork, poetry, essays, personal experiences and reviews from you.

GUIDELINES: Articles should be approximately 750-1,000 words. Only electronic versions are accepted. Submissions should be centered on the next issue's theme of **Parenting**.

DEADLINE: All submissions must be received by **February 1, 2007**.

If you are interested in contributing to the next issue of **infuse**, contact Noni McVey by writing to infuse@cgi.org or call 831-625-0231.

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The responsibilities of fathers and mothers.

Saying “no” to your child.

