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MOUNTAIN-MOVING

FAITH



Nonceba Molebatsi

To say Nonceba Molebatsi has had a difficult life would be like saying Mount Everest is a little bit of a hill.

The 39-year-old South African woman has climbed mountains of misfortune, including but not limited to, being pushed off a six-storey building, raped and strangled.

She has had surgeries on her spinal cord, pelvis, knee and left hand, which was later amputated, and declared paralysed after being pushed from the sixth floor and shattering her spine.

Nonceba believes her life might have been different if her mother hadn't given her to her grandmother to be raised.

"I felt that my mother rejected me because she gave me to my grandmother while she was getting married," Nonceba tells Challenge News, adding that this sense of rejection led to behaviour and anger issues.

Life with her grandmother, who was raising 16 grandchildren on a domestic worker's salary, was not easy. They were "poverty stricken" Nonceba says, and sometimes only had porridge and water to eat.

When she turned 16, Nonceba says she started going to parties against her grandmother's wishes. At one of those parties, someone spiked her drink then raped her.

"The person who raped me walked free; justice didn't prevail," she says. "I thought to myself that if my mother was there I wouldn't not have gone through rape at an early age."

Several years later, Nonceba was at her boyfriend's apartment when his ex-girlfriend and her friend burst in, intent on pouring boiling water on her.

They were stopped by the boyfriend but they managed to get hold of Nonceba and threw her off the sixth-floor balcony.

Nonceba needed six surgeries to repair her shattered spinal cord, pelvis and knee. Her left hand was amputated. Doctors said she would never walk again. In hospital she was approached by a Christian

woman who shared the gospel (the good news that Jesus Christ came to Earth to die for mankind's sins).

But lying down paralysed in her hospital bed, she wanted nothing to do with God and actually felt He had forsaken her.

"I was very bitter," she admits. "Why should I accept Jesus Christ when my life is a mess? I didn't want Him in my life."

But four months later, still in hospital and unable to walk, a Christian man sat by her bed and told her she would be healed if she committed her life to Christ.

Nonceba relented. She was about to be transferred to a disability facility because doctors had told her she would never walk again. She prayed and committed her life to Christ.

"After the prayer I sensed something moving in my body. I started walking again!"

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Questioning the truth

BY HARRIET COOMBE

HAVE you ever wondered why Christians believe the Bible is the truth? Is there evidence outside of the Bible that Jesus really existed? Does history back up the claims the Bible makes?

Thankfully, there is plenty of evidence available to answer these questions:

Accurate records

The Bible has the most surviving copies of any ancient document.

There are about 25,000 manuscripts of the Bible from all over the ancient world, some dating back to as early as the second century.

Although some people like to claim the Bible has been changed throughout the centuries, New Testament records are actually very accurate.

The physical evidence confirms the Bible we can read today is the same as what the authors wrote 2000 years ago.

Historical evidence

Unlike other religious texts, the Bible includes historical claims that can and have been verified.

Archaeological finds have proven numerous times that the Bible corresponds to historical reality. For example, many buried cities have been uncovered exactly where the Bible describes them being.

Consistency is key

The 27 books of the New Testament were written independently of each other. So the book of James was written without the author having previously read the Gospel of Mark, or vice versa.

And yet the messages within the books are clear and consistent. There are occasionally small differences in manuscripts, called variants, but they don't change major Christian beliefs or claims.

The New Testament books were written relatively close to when Jesus lived on the earth, and before they were written, the history was preserved by a lost art called oral tradition as the majority of people in the ancient world couldn't read.

Prophecies fulfilled

The Bible is filled with hundreds of detailed prophecies which were written centuries before the events they accurately described.

For example, it says in the Old Testament that Jesus would:

- Be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14) in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), as a descendant of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3), Isaac (Genesis 17:19), and Jacob (Genesis 28:14)
- Be betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9) for 30 pieces of silver that were used to purchase the potter's field (Zechariah 11:13)
- Be mocked and ridiculed, pierced in his hands and feet, and that lots were cast for his clothing (Psalm 22:7, 16, 18).
- Die (Daniel 9:26) as a sacrifice for our sins and buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:8-10).
- Rise from the dead after a short time in the grave (Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:10) (from answersingenesis.org)

Why would they lie?

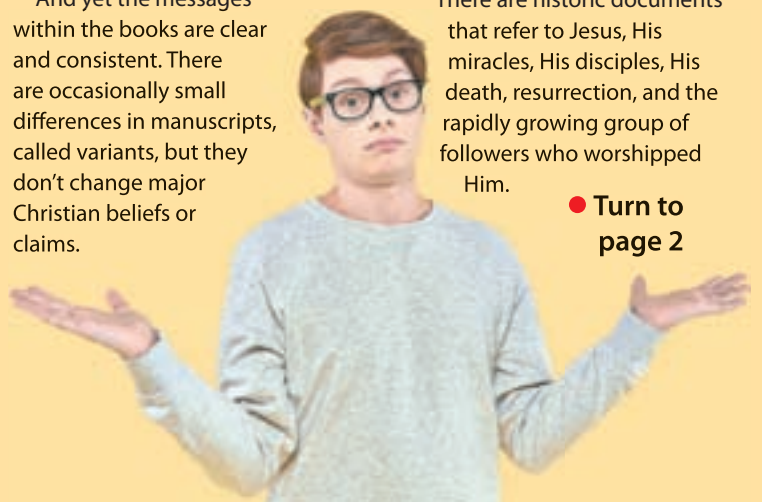
Historical evidence shows that most of the New Testament authors were put to death for their claims that Jesus died and rose from the dead.

Why, if they had concocted a lie about Jesus, would they continue to lie in the face of extreme suffering and death?

Historical documents

There are historic documents that refer to Jesus, His miracles, His disciples, His death, resurrection, and the rapidly growing group of followers who worshipped Him.

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BACK PAGE

STANDING TALL
JONATHAN ISAAC

Mountain-moving faith

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“It was a miracle and I have been a Christian from that day.”

Against all odds, Nonceba walked out of hospital.

“My life became for God and nothing else,” she shares. “I had anger issues and hatred but after receiving Christ I started working on my character. Every time I prayed I asked Him to change me to be a better child of His.”

Unfortunately her troubles were far from over. In 2008 her partner raped and strangled her and stabbed her 11 times, almost killing her.

In 2013 her three-week old son woke up unwell and died while she was taking him to the doctor. In 2015, she lost her 10-year-old daughter.

Her faith crumbled. “After this I hated everything about God.”

Nonceba consulted witch doctors and became “a slave to parties. I drank heavily and started having bad friends.”

In 2015 she experienced heavy bleeding and almost died herself. The following year she was involved in a car accident but survived.

But in 2018, she had a sudden realisation.

“I realised and remembered who I am before God. I remembered His healing on my life and all the things He did for me while I was untrustworthy and unfaithful to Him. I went deep into prayer; I asked God to separate me from the things of this world and restore my faith. Bit by bit I saw changes and I was delivered. I felt like a new vessel.”

Life has continued to throw grenades at her; she was clinically dead briefly in 2020 while giving birth but was resuscitated.

Today, three years after that brush with death, she is married to a Godly man and is now a preacher. Both she and her child are healthy.

She uses her harrowing personal history to help others. “I tell my testimony to the broken and the hopeless. I bless the Lord that I can defeat the challenges that I have experienced through fasting, prayer, faithfulness and humility.

“The best part of being a Christian is to be forgiven all my sins and to be purified, led and directed by God. He is indeed a healer. I take a stand for Christ, accept God’s promises and commit my life to God.” ●



My whole life has changed

Roy Chitwila was pursuing a woman when he heard the truth that transformed his life from uncertainty and hopelessness to peace, joy and love.

The 30-year-old Zambian business man tells *Challenge News* that he grew up with a single mother, who was always busy working to provide for him and his siblings.

As he grew up, feelings of hopelessness, fear and misery began to build within him.

“I had some addictions like stealing and gluttony. I was rude, got into fights and was proud.”

Everything changed when he met a woman and asked her out on a date.

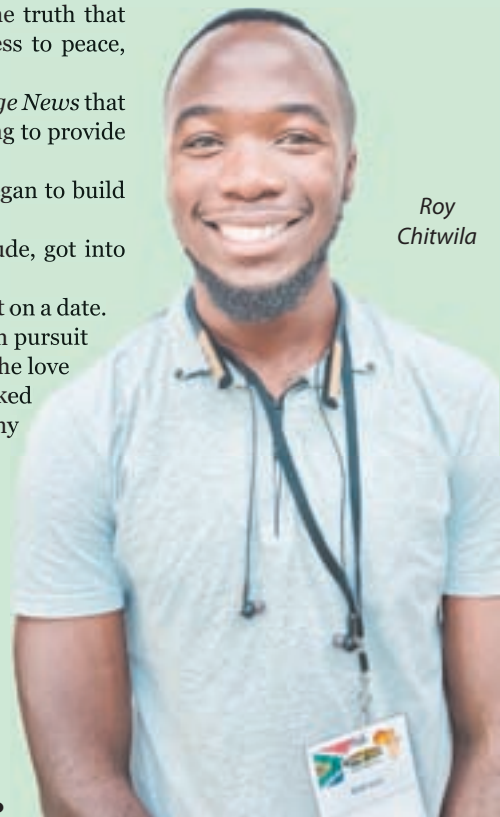
“She asked me if I could meet her at church,” Roy recalls. “In pursuit of a lady I heard about Jesus. What led me to follow Christ is the love I experienced and peace when I was among Christians. I asked Jesus to be Lord over all my life and asked God to forgive my sins and save me.”

Since becoming a Christian, Roy’s life has changed.

“The Holy Spirit [the inner presence of God in the believer] showed me the way of love, peace, forgiveness and joy.”

He referred to Galatians 2:20, which says, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Roy says “living in Christ” is the one of the best things about being a Christian, as well as experiencing Jesus’ peace and love.

He says one of the hardest parts about being a Christian is temptation to sin [wrongdoing against God] but he says, “Hope and strength come every time I pray.” ●



Roy Chitwila

I BEGAN TO FEEL AGAIN



Michaela Mulder describes her life until about two years ago as “a mess”. The Thabazimbi teenager abused drugs and alcohol and her life was filled with anger, lying, jealousy and sexual immorality.

She recalls the turning point that made her rethink everything.

“My friends and I were out,” she tells *Challenge News*. “I smoked weed and got wasted. I got sick when a boy followed me to the restroom and cornered me. Luckily my friend came in and stopped it.” The incident scared Michaela and it was the last time she smoked weed. She realised then that God had protected her.

“I heard about God through my parents but they were not living a Christian life,” she explains. “I hit rock bottom and I decided I need Jesus. I asked God to forgive my sins and to release me from them. I copied a sinner’s prayer (like the one on page 7) that I found online and just prayed it.”

That was in July 2022. Since then, Michaela says everything has changed for her.

“My relationships with friends, family and romantic relationships changed so much when I met Jesus. I started a Christian gap year in 2023 called Target Life. The Lord led me into inner healing and for the first time in a while, the walls around my heart started to break down and I began

to feel again and I started making new Godly relationships. I started to understand the heart of my Father in heaven.”

Michaela says the best thing about following Jesus is the community and fellowship she has experienced with fellow believers as well as the love and compassion she has for those who don’t know God.

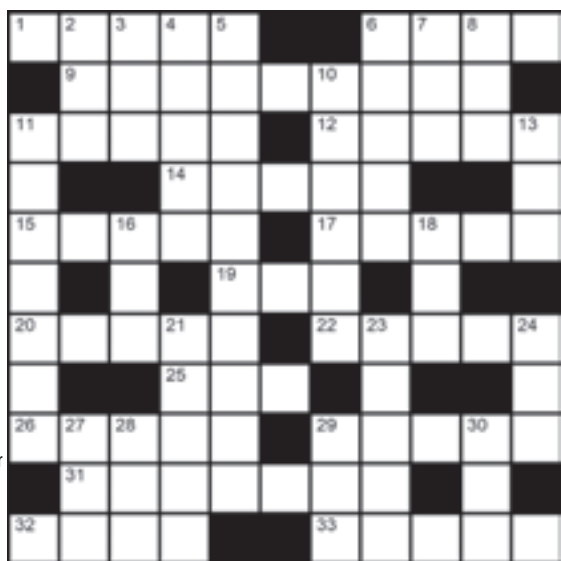
“His hope fills me every day and gives me the strength I need to overcome challenges,” she attests. “With God everything is possible.”

Michaela’s favourite Bible verses are Psalm 91:1: “Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty”; 2 Corinthians 12:9: “But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me”; Nehemiah 8:10: “The joy of the Lord is your strength”; and Psalm 34:17: “The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles.” “No matter what His love is everlasting,” Michaela says. “Be strong and have courage.” ●

Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

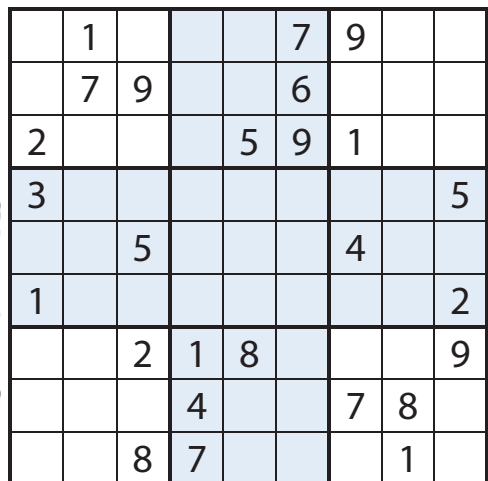
ACROSS

- 1 Spitting snake
- 6 Troubles
- 9 Field goal attempt (5,4)
- 11 Room at the top
- 12 “Come in!”
- 14 Scattered, as seed
- 15 Net access provider
- 17 Parachute material
- 19 Chum
- 20 Birth-related
- 22 Alpine call
- 25 Blend
- 26 Kind of duty
- 29 US bird symbol
- 31 Professional food provider
- 32 Just say no
- 33 Con artist’s skill



DOWN

- 2 ___ out of (decide not to)
- 3 Deli sandwich, initials
- 4 Elevate; lift
- 5 Criminal’s associate
- 6 Blowing a lot
- 7 Tenth month
- 8 Barely make, with “out”
- 10 Intently
- 11 Annual book of data
- 13 Sprint, move fast
- 16 Mark above an “i”
- 18 Young fellow
- 21 Island in “Jaws”
- 23 Egg producer
- 24 *To Kill A Mockingbird* author
- 27 Rink surface
- 28 Delivery vehicle
- 29 Electric fish
- 30 PC linkup



Questioning the truth

● From page 1

These writings have survived from early in the first century, the majority of which were handed down through Roman and Greek scribes and are free from any allegations of tampering.

First century non-Christian historians, Thallus and Phlegon of Tralles, wrote about the crucifixion of Jesus and that darkness fell over the land when He died, which they concluded was due to a solar eclipse. Another historian, Julius Africanus, wrote in AD 220 that this theory was “unreasonable”. As Jesus was crucified during the Jewish Passover holiday, which is celebrated at the full moon in the Hebrew month of Nisan, it was impossible for there to have been a solar eclipse.

In the first century, a Syrian writer, Mara Bar Serapion, wrote a letter to his son in prison which

referenced Jesus as a real person. The letter now resides at the British Museum and is often cited as evidence for the existence of Jesus.

Flavius Josephus (AD 37–103) was a Jewish historian whose writing confirms the existence of Biblical characters such as John the Baptist, Jesus’ brother James, the High Priest Annas who tried Jesus before His crucifixion, and of course, Jesus Himself. In one of his books, Josephus writes that Jesus was crucified and rose again three days later. The Babylonian Talmud is a commentary on the Jewish scriptures and was most likely compiled between AD 70 and 200. It refers to Yeshu (Jesus) and the time, reason and mode of His execution.

Do you have questions about the Bible or Christianity? Send an email to harriet@challengenews.org and we will do our best to answer it for you. ●

[SOLUTIONS PAGE 7](#)



“There was hissing, and yes ... there was barking.”

Set free from a prison of unforgiveness

“My childhood was marked by anger, lying, alcohol and sexual desires,” Mozambique man Tomé Siteo shares. He describes his family as “dysfunctional.”

He tells *Challenge News* that his father was married with children when he impregnated Tomé’s mother.

“At some point my mother went to be with him in his house as a second wife. It did not work out and she came back home. My father never wanted to hear about myself and my mother. He never took responsibility for me.”

Tomé’s anger towards his father grew from there. “I used to ask myself, ‘Is he my father? Does he think of me? He doesn’t love me because he doesn’t care for me or for my mother.’ At some point I told myself, ‘My father does not exist, I do not have a father.’”

Tomé spent his time drinking, gambling and dancing.

“I would steal my mother’s money for gambling,” he admits. At the time, gambling was illegal where he lived. One night he was gambling with friends when a man dressed in a black suit appeared suddenly.

He was a leader from a nearby church and he took Tomé and his friend by the hand as their other friends ran away.

The man had authority like a policeman and Tomé thought he was about to be arrested. But instead the man took them to his church. Tomé found the service boring and when it was over, life continued as normal for him.

But it wasn’t long before he found himself in a similar situation. One of his neighbours saw Tomé gambling and came over to him.

“He started telling me about Jesus. This time the Holy Spirit [the unseen presence of God] convicted my heart.” The neighbour led Tomé in a prayer dedicating his life to Jesus like the one on page 7.

“He invited me to church,” Tomé explains. “I was saved. I appreciate God for using this brother to lead me to Christ.”

Tomé began to read the Bible every night. “I found the passage that says, ‘Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’ (John 14:6). I was convicted... The Bible helped me to know Jesus better.”

Tomé says after becoming a Christian he noticed changes within himself, like the way he talked to others.

“I had peace that I have never experienced in my life. It was my greatest joy to share Jesus with others. I started preaching the

“ I had peace that I have never experienced in my life. ”

gospel [the good news about Jesus coming to the Earth to die for our sins], bringing many youth to Jesus Christ.

“The sexual desires (sex before marriage) that I committed, the Lord God delivered me from.”

“The fear, alcohol, anger, lying, unforgiveness and all the sin that I committed, Jesus set me free. Even the anger and unforgiveness I had to my father, I had to deal with because the Bible told me to forgive.”

Tomé recalls that a lady from his church named Celia told him, “It’s not enough to just say you forgive him, but never tell him that you did.”

She showed him Bible verses about reconciliation and forgiveness.

“I was convicted by God and I went with Celia to the house of my father. I sat with him and I opened my heart to him. I confessed to him all I had in my mind. I told him how I hated him, how I was angry with him, but I told him, ‘I forgive you my father. Can you forgive me?’ He said, ‘I forgive you my son and thank you for forgiving me.’ I was set free from that prison of unforgiveness. Today I am a servant of God by His grace.”

Now 23 and married, Tomé tells others that we are given a chance and time to live.

“Ecclesiastes 3:1-3 says there is a time for everything under the sun. A time to be born, a time to live and a time to die.

“Our coming to the world is God’s decision. We never choose or decide to come, but God brings us to life. Also the time to die is in the hands of God. We don’t know when and how it’s going to be, but God knows.

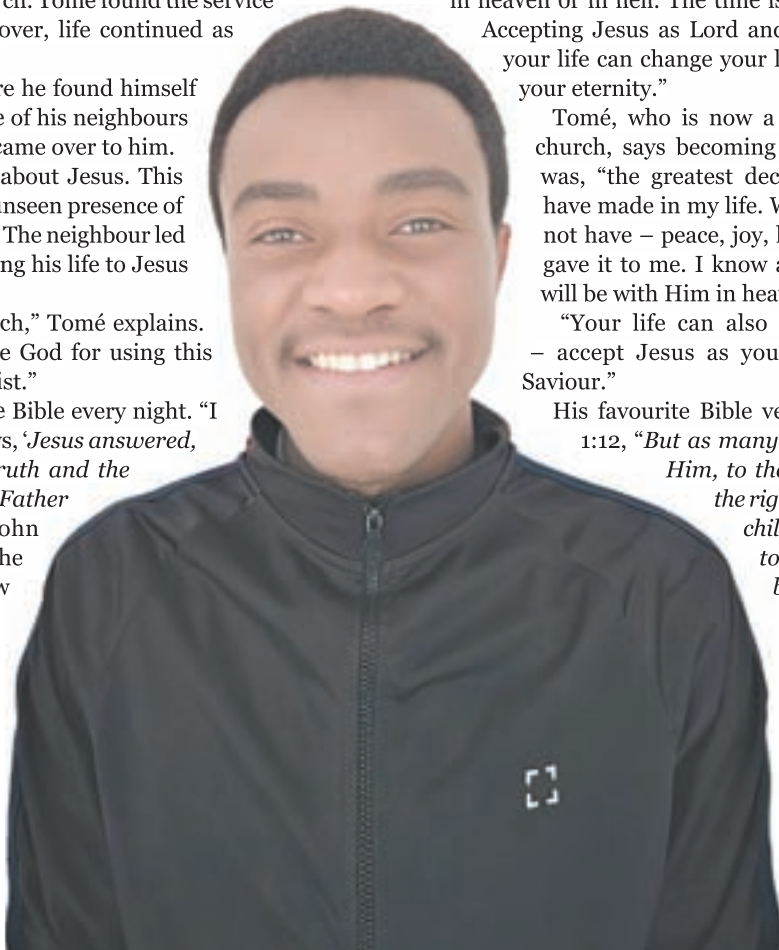
“God also gave us time to live and while alive we have power to choose and decide to follow Christ Jesus or to follow the devil. We can decide to spend eternity in heaven or in hell. The time is very short.

Accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour of your life can change your life now and your eternity.”

Tomé, who is now a pastor of a church, says becoming a Christian was, “the greatest decision that I have made in my life. What I could not have – peace, joy, love – Jesus gave it to me. I know after I die, I will be with Him in heaven forever.

“Your life can also be changed – accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour.”

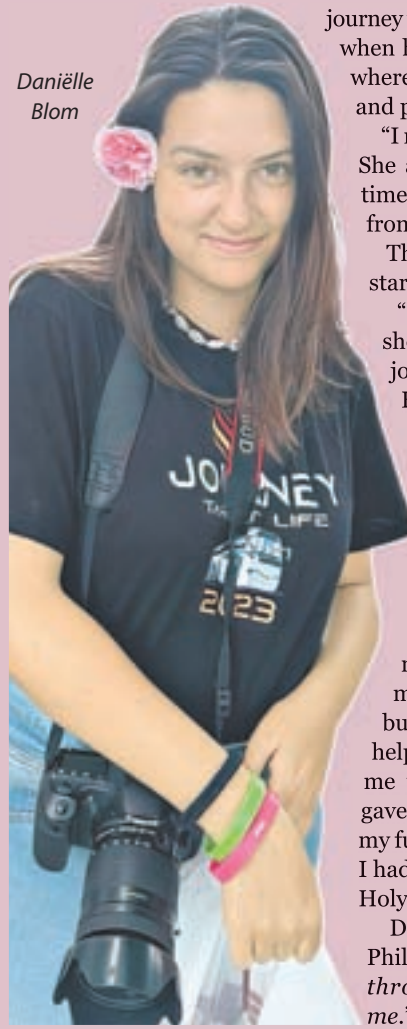
His favourite Bible verse is John 1:12, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”



Tomé Siteo

I AM NEVER ALONE

Eighteen-year-old Daniëlle Blom grew up in a Christian household and always tried to be the best person she could be. But although she kept trying, she kept failing and falling into issues like sexual immorality, jealousy and unforgiveness.



Daniëlle Blom

Daniëlle tells *Challenge News* that her journey with God started when she was 12, when her family went to a small group where Christians gathered for worship and prayer.

“I realised my sins,” Daniëlle recalls. She asked God to forgive her but as time went on, she began to drift away from her faith.

Things changed in 2023 when she started a Christian gap year.

“I recommitted my heart and life,” she shares. “I have now started a journey of purity with the Lord.

He has taught me how to set boundaries and build meaningful relationships... He has given me a godly confidence to no longer feel afraid of what people will say or do against me. The best part of being a Christian is that

I don’t have to go through my life alone because God is with me. I realised that God’s not just ‘the man upstairs’, but a Father I can build a relationship with. He has helped me through my fears, helped me through my dad’s heart attack, gave me clarity with my worries about my future, and gave me strength when I had nothing left. God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are always with you.”

Daniëlle’s favourite Bible verse is Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

A Precious commitment

Having an evangelist for a father is no guarantee of good behaviour in the family. Precious Simelane is proof of that.

The children’s worker tells *Challenge News* that she was a naughty child who used to disobey her parents, lie and steal food.

However, having an evangelist as a father meant that Precious

heard the gospel (the good news that Jesus Christ came to Earth to die for humanity’s sins) more often than most other children, and one day that message hit home.

“At every service my father would always give people the chance to give their lives to Jesus,” she says, “and one day I responded to that call.

“I knew that to be a Christian was to be very safe because when you are in the hands of God, you are protected.

“And I also wanted to be sure of going to heaven. When I prayed and committed my life to Jesus I had a great assurance of salvation.”

That was more than 40 years ago. Today, Precious is herself teaching children about her faith as she serves in her church’s children’s ministry and at a community Bible Club for children twice a week.

In fact, she seems to have inherited her father’s gift as she is also part of a group that does door-to-door evangelism once a week.

“There is always opposition from the devil, but I have grown spiritually by praying daily and obeying Him.

“God has made me to be a children’s teacher so I also teach Sunday School. I want to tell as many about Christ as possible,” concludes Precious.



Precious Simelane

nudge

WITH KARL FAASE

Blind to our own faults

FOR anyone who knows anything about Christian faith and belief, you would have heard of the term sin. It refers to the things we do that disappoint God.

Sin is a generalised term for a range of attitudes and actions that break our relationship with our Creator. Yet sin impacts our lives in other ways as well. It not only breaks our relationship with God but our relationships with others and with ourselves. Sin impacts our ability to clearly see and understand ourselves.

Have you ever noticed how easy it is to see the sins of

others and yet be completely unaware of your own sin and failure? It is like a blindness that impairs our ability for accurate self-reflection. It is so easy to see where others fail, yet what about our own faults? Why are they so hard to see and accept? We seem to have a different standard for people around us than we do for ourselves. We want understanding from others, but don’t give it in return. It is another reason for us to humbly come before God and ask for personal clarity, understanding and forgiveness.

Afrikaans translation

'N BOOM WORD AAN SY VRUGTE GEKEN

Vandat hy kan onthou, maak sy lewe nie sin nie, sê Lloyd Kacha. Hy het al die stukke van die legkaart gehad, maar kon hulle nooit laat inpas soos hulle moet nie.

Hierdie verskil was tussen sy gedrag en sy geloof. Lloyd se ouers was pastore, en natuurlik was hy met Bybelse waarhede en gereelde kerk en Sondagskool bywoning grootgemaak.

Lloyd het outomaties aanvaar dat hierdie gewoontes hom ook 'n Christen gemaak het. So hoekom, het hy homself vir baie jare afgeveer, het hy nie 'n Christen lewe gelei nie? In plaas daarvan, vertel hy Challenge News, was hy liewer vir die dinge van die wêreld as die dinge van God. Hy het geen eerbied vir God gehad nie, het "baie verkeerde dinge" gedoen en "het altyd slegte gedagtes" en bese planne gehad wat skande vir sy familie teweeg gebring het. "Ek het wrokke gekoester en gesukkel met onvergewensgesindheid, haat en woede. Dit was vir my duidelik dat ek nie die Gees van God binne in my gehad het nie. Maar dit het my meer verwar. Ek was 'n Christen was ek nie? Ek het tog elke Sondag kerk bygewoon en dit het my die valse oortuiging gegee dat ek wedergebore is, wat glad nie die waarheid was nie."

Maar in 2015, toe Lloyd 14 jaar oud was, het alles vir hom duidelik geword. Hy het 'n jeugkamp bygewoon en het geleer dat hy nie op sy ouers se geloof, of op gereelde kerk bywoning kon staat maak om 'n Christen te wees nie.

Hy het geleer dat dit nodig is om self 'n verbintenis aan Jesus Christus te maak en 'n persoonlike verhouding met Hom te hê.

"Dit was gedurende Bybelstudie. Ons het oor verlossing en hoe ons werklik gered kan word geleer. Ek het uiteindelik verstaan dat ek nie wedergebore as 'n Christen is nie. Daardie dag, op Oktober 31, 2015, het ek finaal my lewe vir Christus gegee, en van daardie dag af het my lewe verander."

"Om in 'n Christen gesin gebore te wees beteken nie dat jy self 'n Christen is nie. Jy word 'n Christen wanneer jy bely dat Jesus die Here en Verlosser is van jou lewe. Jesus is nou in volle beheer van my lewe."

Lloyd se geloof het van daardie dag af floreer, en die twee en twintigjarige volg nou in sy ouers se voetspore – hy studeer tans in Suid Afrika om 'n pastoor te word. Sy boodskap is: 'Jesus is die Weg, die Waarheid en die Lewe. Niemand kom na die Vader toe behalwe deur My nie.' (Johannes 14:6)

"Jesus roep jou," sê Lloyd. "Dit maak nie saak wat jy gedoen het nie, Hy het vir jou en my gesterf sodat ons die ewige lewe kan hê."

"Hy verseker ons in Openbaring 3:20 'Kyk, Ek staan by die deur en Ek klop. As iemand My stem hoor en die deur oopmaak, sal Ek by hom ingaan en saam met hom die feesmaal hou, en hy saam met My.'"

English translation

Finding the perfect fit

For the longest time, Lloyd Kacha says his life didn't make any sense. He had all the pieces of the puzzle but he could never make them fit the way they should.

The disconnect was between his behaviour and his beliefs.

Lloyd's parents are pastors and so naturally he was raised with Biblical beliefs and regular church and Sunday school classes. Lloyd took it for granted that this automatically made him a Christian too.

So why, he asked himself for many years, didn't he live a Christian life? Instead, he tells Challenge News, he was more in love with the things of the world than the things of God.

He had no reverence for God, did "a lot of wrong things" and "I always had bad thoughts, evil plans to the point of bringing shame to my family."



Lloyd Kacha

"I struggled with resentment, unforgiveness, hatred and anger, which made it clear to me I didn't have the Spirit of God in me. "But that confused me even more. I was a Christian, wasn't I? I was still going to church every Sunday and this gave me the false conviction that I was born again, which wasn't the truth at all."

The penny finally dropped in 2015, when Lloyd was about 14.

He attended a youth camp and learned that he could not depend on his parents' faith or regular church attendance to be a Christian.

He learned that he needed to make a commitment to Jesus Christ and have a personal relationship with Him.

"It was during Bible study. We learned about salvation and how one can truly be saved. I finally understood that I was not born again as a Christian."

"That day, on October 31, 2015, I finally gave my life to Christ and from that time onwards my life has changed."

"To be born in a Christian family does not mean you are a Christian."

"You become a Christian when you yourself confess Jesus as the Lord and Saviour of your life. Jesus is now the controller of my life."

Lloyd's faith has flourished since that time and the 22-year-old is following in his parents' footsteps – he is a student pastor in South Africa.

His message is that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life and that no-one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6).

"Jesus is calling you," Lloyd says.

"It doesn't matter what you have done, He died for you and me so we can have eternal life."

"He gives us the assurance in Revelation 3:20: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door I will come in and eat with him.'"

“He died for you and me so we can have eternal life.”

Are there contradictions in the Bible?

WHILE some claim that the Bible is full of contradictions, this simply isn't true. The number of apparent contradictions is actually remarkably small for a book of the Bible's size and scope. What apparent discrepancies do exist are more of a curiosity than a calamity. They do not touch on any major event or article of faith.

Here is an example of a so-called contradiction. Pilate ordered that a sign be posted on the cross where Jesus hung. Three of the gospels record what was written on that sign: In Matthew: "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews." In Mark: "The king of the Jews." In John: "Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews." The wording is different, hence the apparent contradiction. The remarkable thing, though, is that all three writers describe the same event in such detail – Jesus was crucified. On this, they all agree. They even record that a sign was posted on the cross, and the meaning of the sign is the same in all three accounts!

What about the exact wording? The gospels were originally written in the Greek language, which didn't use a quotation symbol as we do today to indicate a direct quote. The gospel writers were making an indirect quote, which would account for the subtle differences in the passages.

Here is another example of an apparent contradiction. Was Jesus in the tomb for two or three nights before His resurrection? Jesus said, prior to his crucifixion, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40). Mark records another statement that Jesus made, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles, who will mock Him and spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him. Three days later He will rise" (Mark 10:33,34).

Jesus was killed on Friday and the resurrection was discovered on Sunday. How can that be three days and nights in the tomb? It was a Jewish figure of speech in Jesus' time to count any part of a day or night as a full day and night. So Friday, Saturday, and Sunday would be called three days and three nights in Jesus' culture. We speak in similar ways today – if a person were to say, "I spent all day shopping," we understand that the person didn't mean 24 hours.

This is typical of apparent contradictions in the New Testament. Most are resolved by a closer examination of the text itself or through studying the historical background.

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Zulu translation

Ngathola okungilingana kahle

sikhathi eside, Impilo yakhe yayingenamqondo ophusile kusho uLloyd Kacha. Wayenakho konke kodwa wayengakwazi ukukuhlanganisa ngendlela efanele.

Lokhu ayekukholwa nokuziphatha kwakhe kwakungahlangani. Abazali baka Lloyd abafundisi okusho ukuthi wakhuliswa ngezifundo zeBhayibheli ekhulela kwa Sunday school

U Lloyd wakuthatha kalula lokho ecabanga ukuthi kumenza umKrestu naye. Kodwa kungani, ehluleka ukuphila Impilo yobuKrestu yonke leminyaka? Empeleni, etshela iChallenge news wayethanda okomhlaba kakhulu.

Wayengamesabi uNkulunkulu, wayehlala enza amaphutha "ehlala enemibango emibi" ezezinhlelo ezimbi ezaziletha amahlazo emndenini wakubo.

"Nganginezondo, ngingathetheleli, ngingolaka, kwakusobala kimi ukuthi anginawo uMoya kaNkulunkulu kimina."

"Kwangidida kakhulu lokho, ngangingumKristu akunjalo? Ngangiya esontweni njalo ngesonto okwaletha ithemba okungesilo lokuthi ngizelwe kabusha, okwakunjalo."

Kwavuleka amehlo ngo 2015 u Lloyd eneminyaka ewu 14.

Wayesenkonzweni yabasha lapho ezwa khona ukuthi angeke ancika okholweni lwabazali bakhe nokuya njalo esontweni akumenzi umKristu. Wafunda ukuthi udinga ukuzithathela esakhe isinqumo azinikele kuJesusu Kristu abe nobudlelwano naye.

"Kwakuyisikhathi sefundo lapho afunda khona kabanzi ngokusindiswa. Ngagcina ngiqonda kahle ukuthi ngangingazalwanga kabusha njengomKristu."

"Ngalelolanga lika October 31 2015, nganikela

impilo yami kuKristu kusukela ngalelolanga impilo yami yaguquka. Ukuzalelwa emndenini wamaKristu akukwenzi umKristu. Uba umKristu uma wena uvuma uJesusu njengeNkosi noMsindisi wempilo yakho. UJesusu uYena manje obusa impilo yami."

“Wasifela ukuze sibe nokuphila okungunaphakade.”

Ukholo luka Lloyd lwaqhakaza kusukela ngaleso sikhathi lensizwa ena22 ilandela ezinyathelweni zabazali bakhe ufundela ukuba umfundisi eSouth Africa.

Umlayezo wakhe ukuthi uJesusu uyindlela, neqiniso nokuphila akekho oza kuBaba ngaphandle kwakhe Johane 14:6. "UJesusu uyakubiza," kusho uLloyd "akuhluphi ukuthi wenzeni, wasifela mina nawe ukuze sibe nokuphila okuphakade."

"Usinikezela isiqiniseko kuSambulo 3:20 'Bona, ngimi emnyango ngiyangqongqotha; uma umuntu ezwa izwi lami evula umnyango ngizongena ngidle naye.'"

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MY BROKEN HEART WAS HEALED

Two years ago, when Mia van Rooyen was just 17, she was struggling with depression and didn't see a point in living any more. When she was hospitalised in a mental health facility she felt she had hit rock bottom. She saw that she had two options and the one she took transformed her life forever.

Mia does not have fond memories of her childhood growing up in Pretoria. She was abused from a young age and didn't have a good relationship with either of her parents.

Looking back now, Mia says the abuse affected how she viewed people as well as God.

"I grew up in a Christian environment but I didn't want to get close to God or get to know Him," she admits. "My view of God was distorted by people who were Christian. But it wasn't God who hurt me, it was people."

Nevertheless, Mia says she closed off her heart and self-isolated.

"I carried a lot of anger and bitterness in

my heart toward people and God. I never pursued a relationship with God, instead I ran away, hid away from Him, because I also struggled a lot with shame about my life and what had happened to me. I couldn't fathom God, the Creator of the universe, loving me and wanting a relationship with me. I developed



eating disorders in high school, it became an idol in my life."

When she was hospitalised, she saw two options before her – continue on the destructive path she was on or give God a chance. She took the second option and prayed to God to commit her life to Him.

"Looking back I realise God was there all along, standing with open arms and a patient and gentle heart, waiting for me to run into His arms."

As Mia looks back on her life she recognises that God sent people into her life, to show her His love and help her with the healing journey.

Mia says now that God has changed her life.

"God revealed Himself to me in such a gentle way, slowly piecing together all the broken pieces of my heart. He freed me from the mindset I was in – self-hatred, bitterness, eating disorders, depression, unforgiveness – and the journey still continues.

"The biggest, most freeing thing I learned and now understand is God's unfailing love. I don't think I will ever be able to fully comprehend it. But I've tasted the sweetness of His love and I just want more."

In the two years since becoming a Christian Mia says, "I've learned He is a loving Father, always has been and always will be standing with open arms. His plans for me are good. Choosing God doesn't mean life will suddenly be easy and without problems but I have a loving Father, Who died on the cross for me, to lead me and guide me and comfort me through this life."

Her favourite Bible verse is Romans 5:8-11: "But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life."

A dinosaur made by the flood

BY KEVIN LAMOURE, CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

BEGINNING in the early 1970s, American paleontologist James A. Jensen (1918-1998) led a series of fossil-hunting expeditions in Colorado's Dry Mesa quarry (Jurassic).

During this time, "Dinosaur Jim" uncovered a number of huge dinosaur bones, including vertebrae, and shoulder and pelvic elements.

He found what appeared to be three new types of dinosaurs, all of them truly giant long-necked sauropods.

One of these, which he named *Ultrasaurus macintoshi*, would stand out above the rest.¹

It was apparently a brachiosaurid, estimated as over 30 metres long, and weighing as much as 180 tonnes.² *Ultrasaurus* ("beyond lizard")³ was described as "a whopping great dinosaur!"⁴

Discovered and described in the 1970s and 80s, this giant sauropod captured the imaginations of many during the early 1990s, when "Dinomania" was affecting popular culture.

Giant identity crisis

But in the background to all this fame, *Ultrasaurus* had scientific problems, including a name clash with a Korean dinosaur find in 1983. So, in 1991, *Ultrasaurus*

became *Ultrasauros*.

However, it was about to lose a lot more than its name. A critical assessment of the fossil bones assigned to *Ultrasauros*, undertaken in the mid-1990s, revealed that it in fact never really existed.

It was a mistakenly interpreted chimera, comprising up to three different sauropod dinosaur species: *Brachiosaurus*, *Supersaurus*, and/or *Barosaurus*.⁵

A 'Chimerasaurus' made by the flood

This makes sense if one interprets the world through the lens of the Bible's worldwide flood. During the flood, all vertebrate life on land that

was not in the ark was eventually overcome by water (Genesis 7:21-22).

That included the enormous, whale-sized sauropod dinosaurs.

After succumbing to the prevailing waters, the giant bones of Jensen's sauropods had become separated from each other.

This was likely due to a process of "bloat and float" rotting of the ligaments that had held them together⁶ and/or scavenger action.

Thereafter, powerful water current action in the midst of this massive, complex catastrophe likely jumbled up these bones, before they were rapidly entombed by flood-carried sediment.

This would have protected them from further scavenging and decay.

The minerals in the encasing sediment caused it to soon harden.

Such events would have resulted in a disordered bonebed.

However, when this bonebed was interpreted under an evolutionary worldview it led to the 'discovery' of a dinosaur that never existed.

A biblical legacy

The story of *Ultrasauros* is more than just an interesting episode in the history of dinosaur discovery. It can actually teach us important biblical truths, e.g.:

- The relevance of a biblical worldview that takes Genesis as history.
- The amazing "extreme engineering" displayed in Christ's creation of dinosaurs.
- The incredible power and complex dynamics of the flood.
- The awesome seriousness of God's judgment on sin.

All of this points to the profound reality of what Christ accomplished, by dying on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

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HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

Anyone can gain the eternal life offered through Jesus Christ

We read in God's word: "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16)

OUR PROBLEM:	Separation from God "Everyone has sinned. Nobody is good enough because God's standards are perfect" (Romans 3:23)	ADMIT
GOD'S REMEDY / SOLUTION:	Jesus died on the cross "God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8)	BELIEVE
OUR RESPONSE:	Trust Jesus by receiving Him "To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12)	COMMIT

Here is an example of how you can pray.

Dear Father in Heaven. I come to you now because I want to be saved. Please, forgive me of my sins. I believe that you sent your Son Jesus Christ to die for me and that you have raised him from the dead. I now ask Jesus Christ to come into my life as my Saviour and Lord. Take control of my life. Please make me the person You created me to be. In Jesus Christ's name. Amen

The Lord Jesus says: "I tell you the truth. Everyone who believes in me has eternal life." (John 6:47).
He gives life of a wonderful quality that continues forever.

What now?

1. Tell someone - either a Christian that you know or email us at info@challengenews.org
2. Use the resources in the green box on this page to find a Bible to read and more information regarding Christianity.
3. Keep praying. Talk to God anywhere, about anything. He is always listening, and you don't need a formula.
4. Reach out to the ministry that distributed this paper (see back page) and/or find a Bible-teaching church to attend.

AS A NEXT STEP: Please send me: Bible Some 'starting off' literature Information on a helpful church

I have prayed the prayer [ABOVE]

* Please tick and write clearly *

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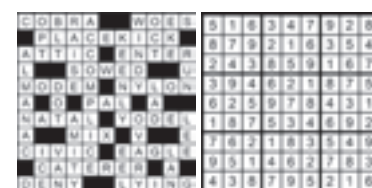
Want to explore more?

Here are some free, helpful, Christian online resources

Online Bible - Olive Tree app (we recommend that you start with an easy-to-read version like the ESV)		Audio Bible - Bible.is app , or Youversion Bible app	
Christian radio station - CBN radio app (different channels for all genres of music)		Christian podcasts and sermons - Edifi app	
Christian movies, serials and kids' shows - Good. app		Daily thoughts and inspiration - Our Daily Bread app	
Advice on specific issues, Bible reading plans and studies for new believers - Youversion Bible app .		The Bible explained with visual aides - Bible Project on YouTube .	
Alpha Film Series on Youtube - an online introduction to Christianity		For kids - Superbook Kids Bible, videos and games app	
Comic book Bible online - goodandevilbook.com		Manga Messiah app Christian comic with free games app, illustrated in Japanese-style art	

YMI (meant to be read as "Why am I?") Christian news outlet for young adults with various content, devotionals and resources. ymi.today

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STANDING TALL

Jonathan Isaac of the Orlando Magic dunks the ball against the Milwaukee Bucks in November 2023 (photo by Rich Storry/Getty Images). INSET: Jonathan Isaac stands as others kneel before the start of a game between the Brooklyn Nets and the Orlando Magic on July 31, 2020 (photo by Ashley Landis - Pool/Getty Images).

Jonathan Isaac began his professional basketball career in 2017 when he was selected sixth overall by the Orlando Magic in the NBA draft but was then plagued by injury which kept him sidelined for three seasons. Despite not playing, the 26-year-old Haitian-American still managed to make headlines when he stood for what he believed in despite pressure around him to conform.

Six months after joining the Magic in 2017 Jonathan was ruled out with a right ankle sprain.

In his second year in the league, he became a starter for the Magic in 64 games, posting career-high averages in points, rebounds, assists, and blocks per game.

In October 2019 he posted 24 points in a 95-104 loss to the Toronto Raptors but in January, he was sidelined after suffering a traumatic knee injury during a 122-101 win over the Washington Wizards.

He played again in August 2020, winning 132-116 over the Sacramento Kings but tore his left anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) during the game.

Despite a successful surgery on it that month, the injury kept him off the court until January 2023.

During his return he recorded 10 points, three rebounds, and two steals in nine minutes in a 113-98 win over the Boston Celtics. During practice the following month, he tore his left adductor muscle and underwent surgery, ending the season for him.

In 2020 Jonathan made headlines when he refused to kneel during the National Anthem or wear a Black Lives Matter t-shirt with the rest of the league following the death of African-American George

Floyd while in police custody. At a press conference, reporters questioned whether he believed black lives mattered.

“Absolutely,” he replied. “I believe that black lives matter. A lot went into my decision and part of it was my thought was that kneeling and wearing a t-shirt doesn’t go hand in hand with supporting black lives... Everything that plagues our nation, that plagues us as a society I think the answer is the gospel [the good news that Jesus came to earth to die on the cross for our sins].”

Jonathan later told Liberty University students, “The heartbeat of what I was trying to do was (share) that I believe that we all fall short of God’s glory, and if any of us are throwing stones at any person or anything, we are throwing stones in a glass house. If we would love each other the way that God loves us, which is in spite of our sins and shortcomings, there could be real change between white and black people, for all people.”

Jonathan has written a book about his decision to stand for what he believes in called *Why I Stand*.

In the book, Jonathan describes being raised in a church-going family in the Bronx. When his parents divorced, Jonathan moved to Florida with his mother.

“Coming from Bronx, New York, a predominantly Black community to Naples, Florida, a predominantly white community, ‘different’ is exactly what I was,” Jonathan writes. “That was the first time that I started to develop a sense of

anxiety and really, self-awareness that I was different from the other kids and I wasn’t fitting in. And so that led me towards basketball and starting to refine my skills there. The girls started to talk to me, the guys wanted me to be on their team. And so that drove me to put every single ounce of time and practice that I could into basketball, into becoming better.”

The hard work paid off and Jonathan was accepted to play at Florida State University on a full scholarship. But his intense fear of failure followed him, manifesting in anxiety attacks. He was prescribed anxiety medication, which helped him to be able to play.

The anxiety continued when he was selected by the Orlando Magic in 2017.

During his rookie season he was invited to a chapel service.

“The chaplain started the message and he quoted Luke 6:46 that says, ‘Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do what I say?’” Jonathan remembers. “And the verse hit me like just a ton of bricks. I started to reflect on that verse even in the game, at night-time I’m thinking to myself, that’s me.”

After a season-ending injury, a stranger told him, “I can tell you how to be great.”

“Tell me,” Jonathan replied. The stranger said, “You have to know Jesus.”

“Have to know Jesus? Man, I’m a Christian, I grew up Christian,” Jonathan said but deep down he knew he was missing a personal

relationship with Jesus. “I was hell bent on experiencing everything that the NBA had to offer,” Jonathan tells the Christian Post. “I had that kind of cliché Christianity of ‘I go to church from time to time or when times get tough, I pray’, but it wasn’t something that was real or tangible. From that moment on, my life got flipped completely upside down. I really got a sense of God intervening in my life and leading my footsteps and ordering things in order to get my attention.”

“I finally said, ‘Wow, God, you love me for me. I don’t have to work for it. I don’t have to be perfect.’ I was so used to walking around with so much anxiety and trying to plan what I would say, plan what I would do, because I didn’t want anybody to reject me. So it was the first time in my life that I could take a breath and be like, ‘I’m okay. God loves me for me. I don’t have to perform. I don’t have to make a shot.’” Those beliefs were tested in the summer of 2020 when Jonathan chose to

stand for the freedom found only in Christ.

“Any political structure or ideology, doesn’t, in itself, have the necessary tool for salvation,” he explains. “Which is what I ultimately believe is what everybody needs. I look out into the world, I can see that racism is not the only thing that plagues the hearts of men. But I know based on what I’ve experienced, in my life, that the gospel is what changes the hearts of men... I believe that if we can choose to love people the way that God loves us, which is in spite of our faults, in spite of our mistakes, in spite of our sin, and we can choose to forgive people the way that God forgives us and ultimately get back to God in the first place, we can have the real change that everyone is aiming to get to, but is trying to do it by alternative measures.”

Jonathan recently launched an athletic apparel brand dedicated to his Christian faith called UNITUS.

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