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I'M A NEW PERSON

Young Esther Chibuye had such a bad temper that her face would twitch when she was in a rage.

"I not only got angry but I would also blame other people for anything that went wrong," she tells *Challenge News*. "It was never my fault."

But the day finally came when the truth behind her anger was discovered.

She recalls: "One day my mother was giving me a hiding for disobeying her. She asked me why I did what I did and the first thing that came out of my mouth was 'it's the devil's fault! The devil made me do it!'"

"My mum didn't expect that answer. She couldn't continue with the hiding; the hiding session became a counselling session instead!"

Esther's mother and father were Christians. Esther grew up attending church and Sunday School, which she loved. "It's just that I never knew I needed a one-on-one relationship with Jesus."

Her mother's quick thinking that day was the turning point.

"That counselling session helped me throughout my entire life. I began to notice my mistakes and asked God to take away my sins."

She made a conscious decision to commit her life to God during an overnight prayer meeting when she was 12.

She had gone there for the music – "I love music and singing" – and left with eternal life in heaven.

"The preacher talked about the love of God and that He loves us just the way we are. He asked anyone who wanted to make a decision for Christ to come to the altar.

"I went up and that night I received Jesus. The Word touched me because I used to be bullied in school so I never thought I was good enough.

"Jesus took away my insecurities and anger and I became a new person."

Esther says the hurt from being bullied left her. She felt at peace and content with who she was. Instead of retaliating she says she chose to live by the principle of treating others the way she herself wanted to be treated.

It hasn't always been an easy walk

for the 26-year-old student. She faced some health challenges and was bedridden for a year.

Difficult people made it an even rockier path.

"I have been betrayed, accused, looked down on and judged. I've been judged by people who expect a lot from me and my siblings.

"But I thank God I have been able to cope and for helping me to forgive those who have hurt me."

Happily, she says there have been more good times than bad. Best of all, she does not suffer from poor health anymore and believes that God healed her completely.

"God has been faithful. He has lifted me up and given me more than what I prayed for."

Esther loves sharing her faith with others and has led several people to Christ.

She tells them about the peace and forgiveness He offers and that all they have to do is call on His name.

But she is also candid about the

price of walking with Christ.

"It will not always be easy but you need to endure, just like a track runner endures until he finishes the race and gets rewarded.

"You too can endure, finish the race well and be rewarded. God can transform your life and change it completely for the better if you allow Him to.

"Remember not to just talk about Jesus but to walk the talk as well."



Esther Chibuye struggled with feelings of extreme anger as a young person.

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BACK PAGE

NOT DEFINED BY THE WIN

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER

Purpose borne from tragedy

BY MARK ELLIS (ABRIDGED)

Christo Spies' father passed away when he was very young. Both his parents had been working for a gold mining company in South Africa.

"At school, they called us mine children," he tells *God Reports*. "They told us more than once that we'll end up with nothing. There's nothing else we will do. So I formed a belief that I wouldn't amount to anything."

However, Christo excelled in one area. "Luckily, I could play sports. I could hit anything with a ball."

After high school, he began working in the mines and saved to buy himself a motorbike.

Two weeks after he purchased the bike, he and his brother were involved in a crash. Initially, Christo thought he was okay.

"When I wanted to get up I couldn't because my leg was lying there next to me. It was completely off."

Doctors reattached his leg but it got sepsis where they attached it and after six operations Christo was told it would have to be amputated.

"When the doctors told me, I started swearing and throwing stuff at them. No one could come into my room. When my mom came in, I just started to cry because the only thing I could do was sports and now that was gone, so I just

cried and cried." The night before the amputation, a mysterious woman entered his room.

"She said she wants to pray for me and she's going to pray to a loving God who raised people from the dead."

"God did not cause the accident," she told him.

"But he will be with you every step of the way."

When she put her hand on his shoulder and prayed, it felt like water flowing over him that brought an indescribable peace.

Later, he inquired about the woman and no one knew of any visitors that matched her description. Now, he believes she may have been an angel.

As a child, he attended church with his mother, because she believed it was the right thing to do.

"We were very poor. We had two sets of neat clothes that we had to wear in public, and we had to go to church so people wouldn't say Mom (as a widow) can't raise her children."

After his release from the hospital, Christo was fitted for a prosthetic leg. "I was fairly thin and I struggled with it," he says. He also began studying to become an accountant.

Surprisingly, he accepted an invitation one day to play cricket – without any

running – as a designated hitter. "I believed I couldn't run, and I lived up to my belief."

But one day something surprising happened. Instead of sending the runner off in his place, he decided he would run himself. "And I did... suddenly I realised it was just a mind thing. I wanted to run desperately. I didn't get a new prosthetic – I just could run!"

● Turn to page 2



“ My leg was lying there next to me. ”

PURPOSE FROM TRAGEDY

• From page 1

Encouraged by his breakthrough, he eased his way into playing tennis, squash, and racquetball. Then a friend invited him on a 620 mile (997 km) cycling tour raising money for a Christian cause. Attracted by the fact that there would be 60 young single women – along with the men on the tour – he eagerly signed up.

“The first evening, they split us up into guy-girl prayer partners, and I got this beautiful girl as a prayer partner. She wanted to pray, and I said, ‘I can’t pray.’ She started feeding me with the gospel (the good news that Jesus Christ came to Earth to die for our sins). And I saw all these people had something that I didn’t have. I saw their joy. I saw the way they treated each other. It was not just about themselves.”

Christo was amazed as he thought about one day on their tour when he was struggling, tired, and had stopped on the side of the road. One of the guys stopped to help him and poured water into his bottle. “I thought, why is this guy stopping? This is crazy. At the end of the tour, I gave my life to the Lord,” he says. Christo surrendered his heart to Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour and was born again (spiritually renewed).

After he began to follow Jesus, he stopped swearing and gave up drinking. Friends noticed the change, and inquired about it, which allowed him to share his faith with them.

Later, he received an offer from a school to become an accounting teacher and a cricket coach, while studying theology on the side. During his last two years of seminary, he attended full-time. He also met and married his wife.

After seminary, he accepted an offer to become a school chaplain and cricket coach. “I formed a system, and the basis of the system is hope. Romans 15 says God is the giver of hope: ‘*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).*’”

Christo now runs a sports ministry in Cape Town called SCAS. “Life’s greatest gift is Christ’s love and life’s greatest joy is sharing it. That’s what we try to do.”

This story was originally published by Godreports.com and it is used with kind permission.

Christo Spies is a sought after mental coach and keynote speaker who has been working with South Africa’s top companies and sportsmen.



I was a Hindu spy

Grishma Parajuli became a spy when he was 16. It’s not something the Nepalese teenager ever thought he would find himself doing, but he felt he owed it to his religion and his culture to do so.

Grishma had been told that staff and missionaries at the local leprosy mission hospital, where he was helping illiterate patients read and write letters, were purposely neglecting patients who did not convert to Christianity.

Unaware that there was no truth to this, Grishma became outraged and vowed to defend his religion and culture against this foreign influence. His anger was understandable. Not only was he born into a high-caste Hindu family, his father was also a Hindu priest.

“Some of these people were saying some of the staff there encouraged them to change their religion, to convert to Christianity,” Grishma told the Church Missionary Society Summer School in New South Wales.

“If they converted, they are happy and if they are not converted, they would just give them no treatment and ignore them.”

He reported his fears to a government officer, who asked him to name names. When he couldn’t provide any, the officer told him to spy on the group and get the information.

So Grishma joined the fellowship group, fully intending to expose them.

The members welcomed the young spy warmly and gave him a copy of the New Testament. He tried to refuse it, but someone said: “Please accept it. If you read it and believe it, you will be saved. If you don’t believe it, you will get some knowledge out of it, so please read it.”

Grishma relented. Raised to believe Christianity was poles apart



Grishma Parajuli

from his faith and background, he said he reluctantly began reading it only to “find out why”.

He began with the book of Matthew and before long found himself reading the Sermon on the Mount – and said he was confounded by what Jesus taught.

Still, when a nurse shared the Gospel [the good news that Jesus Christ came to earth to die for mankind’s sins and offer eternal life] with him, he told her he felt nothing. She responded: “One thing we can do for you, brother, we can pray for you. It’s up to God’s hand, so we’ll pray for you.”

At this, Grishma declared he would never convert. “If I am to be converted, then I will say clearly, ‘Your God is really God, but I know, I’m sure I will not be converted. I will say God is dead.’ I silenced her.”

Yet he continued to attend the meetings, and the group continued to pray for him. Finally, it was their actions that spoke loudest to him.

“I observed that missionaries and the Christian Nepalese church members are serving their neighbours with humble hearts, hugging them, touching them, washing their things,” he said.

“That touched me. The Christian service, the service of the missionaries, leaving their family, their country... coming to Nepal. Why?”

Unable to make sense of such kindness and sacrifice, Grishma put it down to the love of God.

“The power of the prayer, and power of Christian service, service of the missionaries, all together

changed my heart. I became a Christian. I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ.” He says that was a great day – the boy who lived on the roof of the world felt on top of the world.

But then his troubles began. The 18-year-old was thrown out of his home when his family discovered he

had accepted Jesus Christ.

“They compelled me to leave my home and family. I said ‘No, I didn’t want to leave my family, but I didn’t want to leave Jesus Christ.’”

“They said ‘No, you cannot do both. You have to choose one – home/family or Jesus.’ Then I finally had to choose to follow Jesus.”

The pressure to quit Christianity was great, but Grishma stuck to his guns. He moved in with Christian friends, got a job and began a life-long journey with God.

Today, with decades of ministry behind him, he is the senior pastor of Nayagaun church in Pokhara, where he has been serving for more than 30 years with his wife Laxmi.

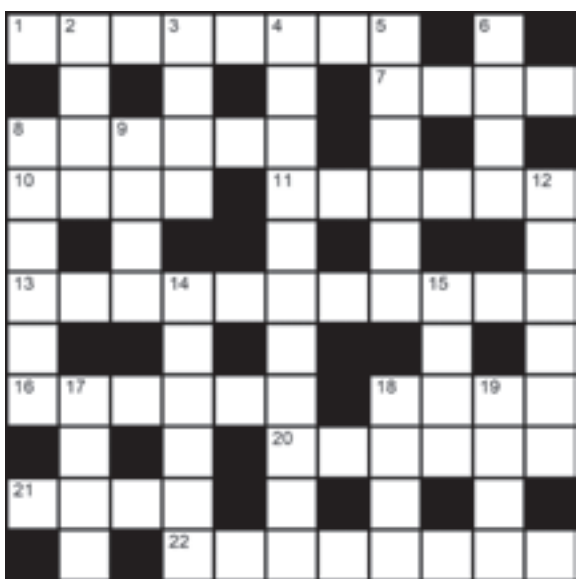
He said the church in Nepal is growing despite government restrictions on open evangelism – a fact Grishma attributed to “faithful prayer”. His own church has gone from 15 members to 1000 and has 12 daughter congregations.

“There are many in Nepal like me, suffering for Jesus – there are many people who are persecuted from family, persecuted from government, persecuted from other religious groups; many suffer because they have accepted Jesus Christ. We focus on personal evangelism because now we cannot do mass evangelism,” he said.

“People can share their faith. They can give their testimony to their friends, neighbours, their coworkers and they can invite people to the church. People come and hear the Gospel, and they accept Jesus Christ.”

Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

- ACROSS**
- 1 Letters A to Z
 - 7 Train track
 - 8 Quiz show answers, often
 - 10 Walk in water
 - 11 Carsick feeling
 - 13 Defoliant used in Vietnam war (5,6)
 - 16 Part of a plant
 - 18 Dry; barren
 - 20 Siberian plain
 - 21 Fasten with ties
 - 22 Military or police rank
- DOWN**
- 2 Old Italian money
 - 3 Possess
 - 4 Accountant (informal) (4,7)
 - 5 Shock, ordeal
 - 6 Bee home
 - 8 Changes slightly
 - 9 Hanging out doing nothing
 - 12 To-do list
 - 14 Desert rovers
 - 15 Geekish sort
 - 17 Future branch
 - 18 Youngest Brontë
 - 19 Wrinkle remover



Wayward son convinced by truth

Michael Phiri’s parents must have despaired of their only child. The devout parents would bring him to church every Sunday, but Michael preferred “misbehaving with girls” and stopped listening to his parents.

Instead of bringing him happiness though, his lifestyle made him miserable, he tells *Challenge News*.

“Church didn’t make sense to me,” he explains, adding that the stumbling block for him were the idols that were worshipped in that church. “I didn’t believe in them.”

A visit to a friend’s church in 1979 changed all of that. Michael had just turned 20. That day, the pastor preached on John 3:16 – “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.*”

“That was the day I truly became a Christian because I was convinced by the Word of God,” Michael shares. “That Bible verse showed me His love. That verse and also John 1:12, which says, ‘*Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He*

gave the right to become children of God.”

When the pastor asked the congregation who wanted to commit their lives to Jesus Christ, Michael did not hesitate.

That was 43 years ago. Since then, this once wayward son has served in ministry in various roles. He was a music director, then the director of evangelism in his church in Zambia.

In 2008 he answered the call to enrol in Bible College. On the advice of his pastor at that time, he started a new church, one which he pastors to this day. “From the time I became a Christian my life has changed so much and I have learned to trust God in every situation,” says the 62-year-old. “I have learned how to communicate with God through the Scriptures and I have learned how to lead others to Christ.”

He says the best thing about being a Christian is knowing you actually become a child of God. “In every situation you are not alone; God your Father is always with you.

“Jesus Christ is alive and He will return again to Earth. Heaven and hell are real.”

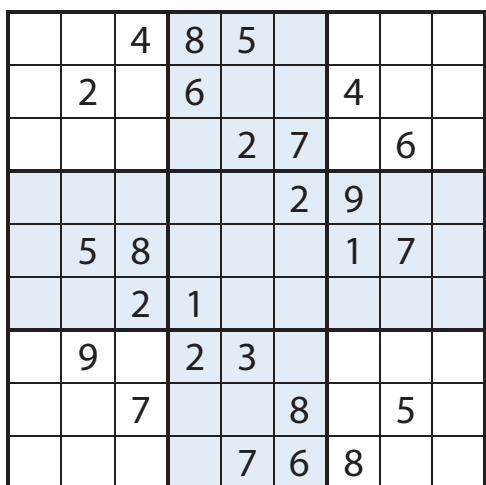


Michael Phiri

SOLUTIONS PAGE 7



“Good thing we didn’t sell the dog sled.”



Middle class masquerade

It sounds like a lovely, happy middle-class life. The Land Cruiser in the driveway, loaded up with fishing and camping gear. Model planes in varying stages of being built scattered around.

“Growing up, my siblings and I had both parents and three children in a house,” South African Eveline Laureti says. “One could say we were a happy family.”

But not everything was as it seemed. There was alcohol and friends who were not a good influence, according to Eveline. God was nowhere to be found.

There was also pain and discomfort. Born with a dislocated hip, Eveline was almost perpetually in plaster casts to correct her bones until she was six.

Tragedy struck on July 10, 1986 when the family was involved in a car accident.

Her father died from internal injuries; her mother became a quadriplegic at 39.

Eveline was badly hurt and unable to attend her father’s funeral as she was still in hospital.

When the dust had settled the three siblings were fostered out to their uncle and grandmother, who sent them all to boarding school.

Depression hit Eveline at 17, after her grandfather died. Later, she was placed in an orphanage, which added to her gloom and saw her turn to cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana to cope.

However, it was during this difficult time that she met a nurse who read the Bible to her.

The nurse

read Philippians 4:4-13, which encourages us not to be anxious but to trust God in all situations. Eveline says verse 13 in particular – “I can do all this through Him who gives me strength” – struck a chord with her.

“This is when I made a choice for Christ,” she says.

In her final year of high school, Eveline met a couple she came to regard as her godparents.

“This was a turning point in my life. They accepted me just as God, my heavenly Father, accepts each of us. Broken. Frail.

“Through them I learnt the meaning of dedication and sacrifice.”

Not long after leaving school, Eveline went to Paris and there she met the first man she would marry. They had two children together, something she says is an absolute miracle.

“The doctors told me that because of my hip problems I would not be able to have a normal birth but my son was born normal, with no complications. Our daughter was born in 2002. The umbilical cord was around her neck but we prayed and everything was fine.”

Sadly, in 2013 Eveline lost her husband, but as heartbroken as she was, she continued to trust in God.

She prayed: “Yet You Lord, are our Father. You are the Potter and we are the clay. We are all the work of Your hand.”

Eventually Eveline remarried last year. “God sent me another friend to love me and our children. We are still serving and Lord willing we can continue on this path for a long time.

“When God makes a way, you can trust Him.” •



Eveline and her husband.

ENJOYING A LIFE FREE OF FEAR

Like so many young men, Aubrey Maleka grew up lacking a loving, strong father figure, which he says affected him profoundly. His dad was a violent man and the family was poor.

Lacking a good role model, Aubrey dropped out of school in Year 10, started using drugs in his early teens and was in jail by the time he was 17.

However, he was aware that what he was doing was wrong and he had been told about God in the squatter camp where he lived. He knew God would send him to hell for all the wrong things he had done. “I always knew that if I didn’t change, my life would end up in fire,” he admits.

Heroin (known on the streets as Nyaope) was his drug of choice.

“It was my stronghold. I tried so

many times to leave it and come out clean,” he says. “But I failed many times on my own.

“I have stolen many things in my life. I have broken into houses, robbed businesses and hurt so many people, even my family and relatives,” he confesses.

Then, when Aubrey was 27, he was serving a prison sentence for house breaking and theft when he heard the gentle voice of God saying to him,

“Is there anything too hard for the Lord?”

Aubrey decided right then that he didn’t want to end up in hell “with Lucifer the father of all liars and the king of wickedness” but “spend the rest of my life with Jesus Christ.” He prayed a prayer giving his all to God and declares “I was totally transformed and delivered”.

“My life is totally changed because I have found joy, peace and happiness of soul. I am now enjoying a life free of fear. I don’t fear death or anything else.

“Instead of being a criminal, I am studying for a degree at a Christian University and am a trainee pastor. I also have a job in the mining sector and am about to get married!”

What a turnaround for a young man whose life seemed so hopeless.

“Many times I have failed,” he acknowledges, “But the Word of God [the Bible] gave me hope, courage, life, restoration, love, joy, forgiveness, healing, deliverance and much more.

“I am so grateful,” Aubrey tells

Challenge News. “I can testify that whatever things are impossible with man, with God [they] are possible. There is nothing too hard for the Lord. No matter how bad you think you are, no matter how others see you, God sees a different person in you. God still loves you and only He can change your life. Accept Christ Jesus as your Lord and your personal Saviour. Your life will never be the same again!” •



Aubrey Maleka

“I was totally transformed and delivered.”

“There is only one secure foundation: a genuine, deep relationship with Jesus Christ, which will carry you through any and all turmoil. No matter what storms are raging all around, you’ll stand firm if you stand on His love.”

– Charles Stanley

WHERE IS GOD IN THE MIDST OF TRAGEDY?

BY MARILYN ADAMSON

GOD is the Creator of the universe who yearns for us to know Him. That is why we are all here. It is His desire that we rely on and experience His strength, love, justice, holiness and compassion. So He says to all who are willing, “Come to Me.”

Unlike us, God knows what will happen tomorrow, next week, next year, the next decade. He says, “I am God, and there is no one like me, declaring the end from the beginning.”¹

He knows what will occur in your life and can be there for you, if you’ve chosen to include Him in your life. He tells us that He can be “our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble.”² But we must make a sincere effort to seek Him. He says, “You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”³

That doesn’t mean that those who know God will escape difficult times. When wars or rampant disease cause suffering and death, those who know God will be involved in that suffering also.

But there is a peace and a strength that God’s presence gives. Reality tells us that we will experience problems in life. However, if we go through them while knowing God, we can react to them with a different perspective and with a strength that is not our own. He is bigger than all the problems that can hit us, and we are not left alone to deal with them.

God has created humanity with the ability to choose. This means that we are not forced into a relationship with Him.

He allows us to reject Him and to commit other evil acts as well. He could force us to be loving. He could force us to be good. But then we would be robots. Instead He gave us the human dignity of free will.

We have, by our lives and actions, distanced ourselves from God. The Bible says that “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way.”⁴

The consequences? Our sin has separated us from God, and it affects more than this life.

The penalty for our sin is death, or eternal separation from God.

However, God has provided a way for us to be forgiven and know Him.

God came to earth to rescue us. “For God so loved the world that He sent His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”⁵

Jesus left the safety and security of His home, and entered the hard environment we live in.

Jesus got tired, knew hunger and thirst, battled accusations from others and was ostracised by family and friends.

But Jesus experienced far more than daily hardships. Jesus, the Son of God in human form, willingly took all of our sin on Himself and paid our penalty of death.

“In this is love, that he laid down his life for us.”⁶ He went through torture, dying a slow, humiliating death of suffocation on a cross, so that we could be forgiven.

Jesus told others ahead of time that He would be crucified. He said three days after being buried He would show Himself physically alive to those who saw His crucifixion.

On that third day, Jesus’ tomb was found empty and many people testified to seeing Him alive.

He now offers us eternal life. We don’t earn this. It is a gift from God offered to us, which we receive by faith when we ask Him to enter our lives. If we turn away from our sin and turn back to God,

we can have the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.⁷ What about heaven? God does have a better place He offers us. In this world, God will wipe every tear from people’s eyes. There will be no more mourning, crying, death or pain.⁸

Right now you can ask God to enter your life. You can do this through prayer. Prayer means talking honestly with God. At this moment you can call out to God by telling Him something like this in sincerity: “God, I want to know You. I want to receive Jesus Christ and His forgiveness into my life. I don’t want to be separated from You anymore. Please forgive my sin. Be the God of my life from this day onward. Thank you God.” •



Footnotes:

(1) Isaiah 46:9 (2) Psalm 46:1 (3) Jeremiah 29:13 (4) Isaiah 53:6 (5) John 3:16-17 (6) 1 John 3:16 (7) Romans 6:23 (8) Revelation 21:4

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“To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretence, jumbles us out of our self-righteousness, and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us.” - Timothy Keller

English translation

Touched by compassion to a bleeding woman

Zacharia Tnllam had come to a major crossroad in his life. It was 1995 and the high schooler was old enough to know something was broken in his life that needed to change.

“There were specific things which I struggled with,” he says. “Addictions, a bad temper and lying. Even when I knew I was wrong in certain situations, I could not admit it. Instead, I chose to lie.”

He knew the decisions he was making in his life would have consequences. He had attended Sunday School as a child. He knew right from wrong. In fact, he loved listening to the stories about God but that was where his commitment ended.

“I did not know God on a personal level,” he admits. “It was all just nice stories and games. I didn’t know the deeper truths of what it meant to be a Christian.”

“Even when I knew I was wrong in certain situations, I could not admit it.”

All of that changed, though, during Zacharia’s time in high school.

“I heard more about God and started accompanying my parents to church,” he tells *Challenge*.

One day in 1995, a mission team went to Zacharia’s school. One of the ministers on the team talked to the students about Jesus and how He had healed a woman who had bled for 20 years. (The story can be found in Matthew 9, Mark 5, and Luke 8).

Zacharia was amazed by the story and touched by the compassion and love Jesus had shown for the outcast woman. “I knew that He was God and the God of all Creation.”

That very day, Zacharia realised what he needed in his life and decided to become a Christian: “I wanted eternal life after death. So, I received Christ as my personal Lord and Saviour and was baptised with water [an outward sign of his inner commitment].”

He explains, “I first confessed myself as a sinner,

confessed my sins and then prayed to God for His forgiveness. Now, my life is so much better because it’s all about Christ. I love interacting with my new friends who know about Jesus.”

Now, the 41-year-old looks back and knows that he made the right decision.

Zacharia’s favourite Bible passage comes from Romans 8 verses 31-34, which says, “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all - how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died - more than that, who was raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”

Zacharia admits it can be hard to do the right thing when temptation comes, yet he knows that he is a changed man because of what Jesus has done in his life and wants to share this with others.

Zacharia works as a prison officer and has many opportunities to talk to the inmates about Jesus and the salvation He freely offers. Quoting from John 14:6, he says, “I can tell them about Jesus being the only Way, the only Truth, and the only source of Life.”



Zacharia Tnllam

Afrikaans translation

Geraak deur ‘n vrou met bloedvloeiing

Zacharia Tnllam het by ‘n groot kruispad in sy lewe gekom. Dit was 1995, en die hoërskool leerling was oud genoeg om te weet dat iets in sy lewe stukkend was, en dat verandering nodig was.

“Daar was spesifieke goed waarmee ek gesukkel het,” sê hy. “Verslawing, ‘n slegte humeur en leuens. Selfs toe ek geweet het dat ek in sekere situasies verkeerd was, kon ek dit nie erken nie. In plaas daarvan het ek gekies om te jok.”

Hy het geweet dat die besluite wat hy in sy lewe gemaak het gevolge sou hê. Hy het Sondagskool as kind bygewoon. Hy kon reg en verkeerd onderskei. In werklikheid, was hy lief daarvoor om die stories oor God te hoor, maar dit was waar sy toewyding geëindig het.

“Ek het God nie in ‘n persoonlike verhouding geken nie,” erken hy. “Dit was alles net mooi stories. Ek het nie die dieper waarhede van wat dit beteken om ‘n Christen te wees geken nie.”

Maar dit het alles verander gedurende Zacharia se hoërskool jare. “Ek het meer van God gehoor, en ek het begin om saam met my ouers kerk by te woon,” vertel hy vir *Challenge*.

Eendag in 1995, het ‘n sendingspan na Zacharia se skool gegaan. Een van die predikante op die span het vir die studente oor Jesus vertel, en hoe Hy ‘n vrou wat vir 20 jaar aan bloedvloeiing gely het, genees.

(Die verhaal kan in Matteus 9, Markus 5 en Lukas 8 gevind word).

Zacharia was verstom oor die storie, en was geraak deur die deernis en liefde wat Jesus betoon het aan die uitgeworpe vrou.

“Ek het geweet Hy is God, en die God van die hele skepping.” Daardie einste dag het Zacharia besef wat hy in sy lewe nodig het, en hy het besluit om ‘n Christen te wees: “Ek wou die ewige lewe na die dood hê. Toe het ek Christus as my persoonlike Heer en verlosser ontvang.

Hy verduidelik, “Ek het eers myself as ‘n sondaar erken, my sondes bely en het tot God gebid vir Sy vergifnis. Nou is my lewe soveel beter want dit gaan alles oor Christus. Ek hou daarvan om met my nuwe vriende wat Jesus ken, te kommunikeer.”

Nou, as hy terug kyk, weet hy dat hy die regte besluit gemaak het. Zacharia se gunsteling Bybel verse is Romeine 8: 31-34 wat sê, “As God vir ons is, wie kan teen ons wees? Hy het Sy eie Seun nie gespaar nie, maar Hom oorgelewer om ons almal te red. Sal Hy ons dan nie al die ander dinge saam met Hom uit genade skenk nie? God self spreek hulle vry. Wie kan ons veroordeel? Christus Jesus het gesterf, maar meer as dit: Hy is uit die dood opgewek, Hy sit aan die regterhand van God, Hy pleit vir ons by die Vader.”

Zacharia erken dat dit moeilik kan wees om die regte ding te doen as versoeking kom, maar hy weet dat hy ‘n veranderde man is, deur wat Jesus in sy lewe gedoen het, en hy wil dit met ander deel.

Zacharia werk as ‘n gevangenebewaarder en hy het baie geleenthede om met die gevangenes oor Jesus te gesels, en die verlossing wat Hy so vryelik bied.

Hy haal aan uit Johannes 14:6, en sê, “Ek kan hulle vertel oor Jesus wat die enigste Weg, die enigste Waarheid en die enigste bron van lewe is.”

Zulu translation

NGATHINTWA UZWELO LOMAMA OPHAYO

Zacharia Tnllam wayefike ekugamanxeni kwendlela empilweni yakhe. Kwakuwunyaka ka 1995 lomfundi wamabanga aphezulu wayazi ukuthi kukhona okungahambi kahle empilweni yakhe okwakudinga ushintsho.

“Kwakukhona izinto ezithize ezazingihlupha,” esho. “Ukugqilazeka, ulaka kanye namanga. Noma ngangazi ukuthi ngisephutheni ezimeni ezithize, ngangingeke ngivume. Ngangingamane ngiqambe amanga.”

Wayazi ukuthi lezenzo zakhe zizoba nemiphumela emibi ekugcineni. Wafunda kwa Sunday school ekukhuleni kwakhe. Wayazi okuhle nokungekuhle. Empeleni wayezithanda izifundo ezimayelana noNkulunkulu kodwa ukuzinikela kwakhe kwakuphelela lapho.

“Wayengamazi uNkulunkulu yena ngokwakhe,” evumela. “Kuyena kwakuyindaba emnandi. Ngangingazi amaqiniso ajulile okuthi kusho ukuthini ukuba umKristu.” Konke lokho kwashintsha, uma uZacharia eya emabangeni aphezulu. “Ngezwa kakhulu ngoNkulunkulu ngaqala ukhamba nabazali bami ukuya esontweni,” etshela i challenge.

Ngelinye ilanga ngo 1995, iqembu labashumayeli lavakashela eskoleni soZacharia. Omunye wabashumayeli wathshela abafundi ngokuphiliswa kowesifazane owayopha iminyaka ewu20. (Lendaba itholakala ku Mathewu 9, Marku 5 nakuLuka8). UZacharia wathinteka ngalendaba nesihe nothando uJesu alubonisa lowesifazane owayelahlwe. “Ngazi ukuthi unguNkulunkulu wendalo yonke.”

Ngalo lelolanga uZacharia wazi ukuthi uyamdinga, wakhe wakhetha ukuba umKristu. “Ngangifuna Impilo engunaphakade uma ngifa. Ngase, ngamukela uJesu Kristu njengeNkosi ngabhabhadiswa (uphawu lwangaphandle lwesinqumo sanga phakathi).”

Echaza, “ngavuma ukuthi ngisoni, ngavuma izono zami ngacela ukuthethelwa uNkulunkulu ngomkhuleko. Manje, impilo yami seyinqonono kakhulu, ngoba isingoKristu. Ngiyathanda ukuzibandakanya nabahlobo bami abasha abazi ngoKristu.” Manje ubheka emuva azi ukuthi wathatha isinqumo esiphusile. Ivesi elithandwa uZacharia likubaRoma 8:31-34 lithi: Uma uNkulunkulu engakithi, ubani ongamelana nathi? Ongagodlana iNdodana yakhe, wayiNikelela thina sonke- angeke futhi yini kanye Nayo, asinike konke? Ubani ongabeka icala labo uNkulunkulu abakhethile? UNkulunkulu olungisayo, ubani obalahlayo? Akekho, uJesu Kristu owafayo, waviruswa waphakanyiselwa esandleni sokunene sika Baba la esinxusela khona njalo.”

UZacharia uyavuma ukuthi kunzima ukwenza okulungile njalo, umakufika izilingo, kodwa uyazi ukuthi uyindoda eguqukile ngenxa yalokhu uJesu akwenze empilweni yakhe afisa ukukwazisa nabanye. UZacharia ungujele, unamathuba amaningi lokutshela ababanjwa ngoJesu nensindiso aphana ngayo mahhala. Usho etomula kuJohane 14:6 ukuthi uJesu iyona yodwa iNdlela, neQiniso kanye nomthombo wokuPhila.”

“Noma ngangazi ukuthi nginephutha ngangingeke ngivume.”

“LOOK UP ON A starry night and you will see THE MAJESTY AND POWER of an infinite Creator.” - Billy Graham

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FROM DRUNKARD TO DISCIPLE

Tinus Coetzee lived a life of vice. He drank to excess, smoked to excess, was a slave to pornography and was a corrupt businessman to boot.

A sworn atheist who believed people just became food for plants and animals when they died, he believed in absolutely nothing.

"I was virtually an alcoholic," he writes in *Joy!* Magazine.

"This did not mean I drank every day, but how much I drank when I partied. It was nothing to finish a bottle of brandy, warming up before the real party started.

"I partied at least two to three times a week at that stage. It was always about how quickly I could get myself extremely drunk. I always thought that I was the life of the party. No party was complete without Tinus there!"

He smoked up to 40 cigarettes on a normal day; that number shot up to 60 during parties.

He was also enthralled by pornography.

"I loved the videos that friends sent me on a daily basis, and my mind was filled with lust – to such an extent that I could not wait to receive my daily dose of pornography.

"Every word that came out of my mouth was foul, and I was jealous of everyone who did better than I did."

He also admits to being a nasty piece of work in business.

"I did horribly corrupt business deals, was not afraid to bribe people, and used others for my own benefit.

"I treated my staff like dirt and paid them as little as possible for maximum productivity.

"I enriched myself at all costs.

"I was proud and conceited, deaf to anyone cautioning or rebuking me. It was all about me, myself, and I."

God was the furthest thing from Tinus' mind one evening while at a bar doing what he did best - drinking, smoking and telling dirty jokes.

When his brother Tjaart, who had become a Christian years ago, put worship music on, Tinus got annoyed but by that time was too drunk to care.

"Then," he says, "the most amazing thing happened to me...I heard the Holy Spirit saying, 'What are you busy doing, My son?'"

"I thought it was just a stupid thought, but then I heard it again,

“It was all about me, myself and I.”

"What are you doing, My son?"

"For an atheist, this was extremely strange. I became emotional and just knew that this was Jesus speaking to me.

"He said, 'My son, your liver is My liver, and your lungs are My lungs; your eyes are My eyes. Every time you look at pornography, I have to look at it with you. Every time you drink, I have to drink with you. Every time you smoke, My lungs also hurt.'

"That shook me to my core."

The effect was immediate and dramatic.

Tinus poured his brandy away and promised the Lord that he would never drink again.

He says his life changed completely after that encounter.

"I still battled with smoking for a few months, but I have since stopped smoking, stopped drinking, and I have turned to Him whenever thoughts of lust rise up in my mind. The Lord is helping me every day.

Tinus Coetzee with his wife Lisa



"I got saved and I got disciplined. It's been a couple of years and my life is still changing on a daily basis.

"I thank the Lord Jesus Christ for loving me enough to save me. I can-

not wait to spend time in the Word every day, because it is all about my relationship with Jesus, He who called me out of darkness to His light (Eph 5:8)." •

Bird tracks before birds existed?

BY DON BATTEN, CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

TRACKWAYS preserved in stone in South Africa look very much like those from modern birds. However, deep time 'dating' puts them at 215 million years ago, over 60 million years older than the oldest bird fossil (Archaeopteryx, 150 Ma).¹

The evolutionary story that birds evolved from dinosaurs already had problems – for example, Archaeopteryx, clearly a flying bird, predates any of its supposed ancestors.

How could a grandson be older than his grandfather?

The researchers identified six characteristics of the prints that were consistent with birds making them. However, bird tracks that put birds



STOCK PHOTO

"[the foot type] is not distinctly avian, as it lacks a well-developed digit III metatarsophalangeal pad and preserves no direct evidence of associated hallux [hind toe] impressions."

However, there are modern birds with a three-toe foot design (i.e. no hallux), such as cassowaries, emus, rheas, and bustards.

Also, at least the lesser rhea tends to leave prints without evidence of a "metatarsophalangeal pad"² Although turkeys have a small hallux, they can leave prints in mud with little evidence for it.³ Furthermore, some of these birds have rather thick digits, which resemble the "morphotype I" prints that the authors don't associate with birds.

The authors speculate that "it is likely that morphotype II tracks were made by a yet-to-be-found tridactyl archosaur." In other words, bird-like feet evolved on a dinosaur-type of creature a long time before birds evolved!

These prints would have formed about 4,500 years ago, during the inundatory phase of Noah's Flood, when the waters were rising, during the first 150 days. The birds made the footprints on sediments already laid down, as they were briefly exposed with the ebb and flow of tides and tsunamis.

This model predicts that we will find footprints lower than any animal that could have made them, thus 'dated' in the evolutionary system as millions of years older. The fossil record follows this prediction for many types of creatures; these bird tracks are just the latest example. •

References and notes:

1. Abrahams, M. and Bordy, E.M., The oldest fossil bird-like footprints from the upper Triassic of southern Africa, *PLoS ONE* 18(11): e0293021, 2023.
2. Search 'lesser rhea footprint' on naturepl.com to see a photo of same.
3. Gonzalez, M., Turkey tracks: Identification guide for snow, mud, and more, a-z-animals.com, updated 4 May 2023.

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		More inspiring faith stories - back issues of Challenge News at challengenews.online	

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]

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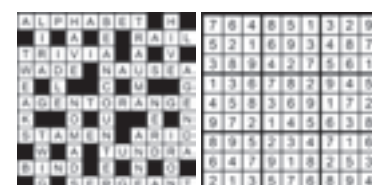
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Scottie Scheffler of the United States plays his second shot on the 11th hole during the final round of the 2024 Masters Tournament at Augusta National Golf Club on April 14, 2024 in Augusta, Georgia. (Photo by David Cannon/Getty Images)

INSET: Scottie holds aloft the 2024 Masters trophy. (Photo by Warren Little/Getty Images)



NOT DEFINED BY THE WIN

World number one golfer and now two-time Masters champion Scottie Scheffler says his “identity is secure forever”. But his identity isn’t in winning – though he admits he does enjoy that – it’s in the fact that his “victory was secured on the cross”.

The 27-year-old won his second Masters Tournament in three years on April 14 and says he’s “trying to glorify God” through his golf career, giving all the credit to the Lord when speaking with reporters after his wins. This is something he does a lot, having also won back-to-back Players Championships in 2023 and 2024.

When asked how he balances his desire to golf competitively without letting it define him as a person, he says, “That all goes back to my faith... The reason why I play golf is because I’m trying to glorify God and all that He’s done in my life.”

Before his first Masters win, Scottie’s wife, Meredith, reminded him that his “identity isn’t a golf score”.

“If you win this golf tournament today, if you lose this golf tournament by 10 shots, if you never win another golf tournament again, I’m still going to love you, you’re still going to be the same person; Jesus loves you, and nothing changes,” Scottie recounts his wife’s reassurance.

“All I’m trying to do is glorify God, and that’s why I’m here, and that’s why I’m in this position.”

Scottie says his wife regularly prays for him.

“Every day when we go out there,

Meredith always prays for peace, because that’s what I want to feel on the golf course, is peace and have fun and just feel [God’s] presence,” he says.

Scottie says his wife helps him to remember: “God is in control, and the Lord is leading me, and if today’s my time, then it’s my time.”

Scottie says he doesn’t expect to win. “You don’t expect things to come to you in this life, you just do the best that you can with the hand you’re dealt and just go from there. I never really thought I was that good at golf, so I just kept practising and working hard.”

Scottie’s caddie, Ted Scott, is a veteran in the game who was on the bag for Bubba Watson for nearly 15 years previously.

Ted had been planning to retire until he got Scottie’s call, and knows

the Augusta Course better than almost any one.

“You know, I can’t speak highly enough of Ted as a person, and as a caddie,” Scottie told a press conference after his win.

“I respect him so much just as a person. He’s such a fun guy to be around, he’s a man of faith and I love him. I can’t say enough about him. The qualities you look for in a person, Ted embodies pretty much all of them.”

One of the biggest reasons Scottie wanted to work with Ted was because they’re both Christians. They first met through a Bible study about a year before they teamed up.

The caddie told Sports Spectrum Podcast in 2018, “People a lot of times think, well, if you become a Christian, God’s just gonna make everything easy for you, and that’s not the case.

“But having the God of the universe, the Creator, on your side just makes things a lot easier to deal with. And the principles of the Bible are something that, when you use them, you can see it manifest in your life.”

“[Ted] keeps things loose,” Scottie says.

“We have a lot of fun together. I respect him a lot as a person, and I respect his work ethic as a caddie. And so, for me, it’s been a pretty easy relationship so far, just because I respect him so much.”

Scottie believes it is faith, family and friends that give his life meaning.

“I’m a Christian guy, so that’s important to me,” he said in a 2019

interview with PGATour.com.

“But even if you’re not a Christian, it is important to spend life with people you enjoy. If you don’t have close, quality friends, I don’t think whatever you’re doing is important. So that would be my most important advice to someone. Find something you enjoy doing, and enjoy doing it with other people.”

The person Scottie enjoys spending the most time with is his best friend since high school, his wife, Meredith, whom he married in 2020.

Meredith told Golf Digest: “At the beginning of high school I always thought he had a super humble ambience about him, that he was just a really down-to-earth guy that doesn’t take himself too seriously. Even when he had amazing accomplishments, that wasn’t the

most important thing about him.”

Speaking to reporters after his recent Masters win, Scottie admitted he was keen to return home to Meredith, especially as they are expecting their first child in a few weeks. Before the competition he even shared that if she went into labour mid-tournament, he’d leave the Masters, even if he was in the lead!

One of the regular golfers at Scottie’s home golf course of Royal Oaks Country Club in Dallas concurred: “As good a golfer as Scottie is, he is an even better person and the membership here certainly knows that.”

“My faith affects all aspects of my life, not just my life on the golf course,” Scottie explained.

“The Lord has given me a skill and I’m trying to use it for His glory. Outside of that, I’m just out here trying to do my best.”



Scottie and Meredith Scheffler married in 2020.

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