

za.challenge.news

NEW YEAR NEW

LIFE

BY JANICE TEO

December 31, 1990. As everyone in his village near Kampala celebrated the coming of the new year, Ugandan Robert Mponye, feverish and bedridden, was sure he himself wouldn't live to see it.

The 23-year-old had been unwell since October with a mysterious illness that doctors had not been able to identify, let alone treat.

"It started without warning with pain all over my body," Robert told *Challenge News*. "By December I was bedridden and could barely move."

As the curtain prepared to fall on 1990, Robert prepared for it to fall on him as well. "I literally felt my life going out of me," he said.

Robert had grown up in a nomi-

nally Christian home. He had been to church often as a child but in high school he fell in with the wrong crowd, and got into drugs, drinks, crime and women. At 19, he ran away from home and for the next three years, cut off all contact with his family.

But life on the run was nowhere near as exciting as he'd imagined. In fact, it was so difficult he returned home.

"I was so relieved that my family took me back. My father cried when he saw me," Robert said.

He resumed his studies to become a teacher. But in September 1990, in his second year of university, his mysterious illness began.

Two months later Robert found himself praying on his deathbed: "God, I know I'm going to die. But please, don't take me to hell."

The miracle happened in seconds. A sudden warmth in his limbs. A surge of energy. To his astonishment, strength returned to his body.

Two minutes after praying, he jumped out of bed and ran to his father's bedroom. "Dad, I'm healed!" he shouted. His parents stared in disbelief. Ten minutes earlier their son had been dying; now he stood before them, strong and smiling.

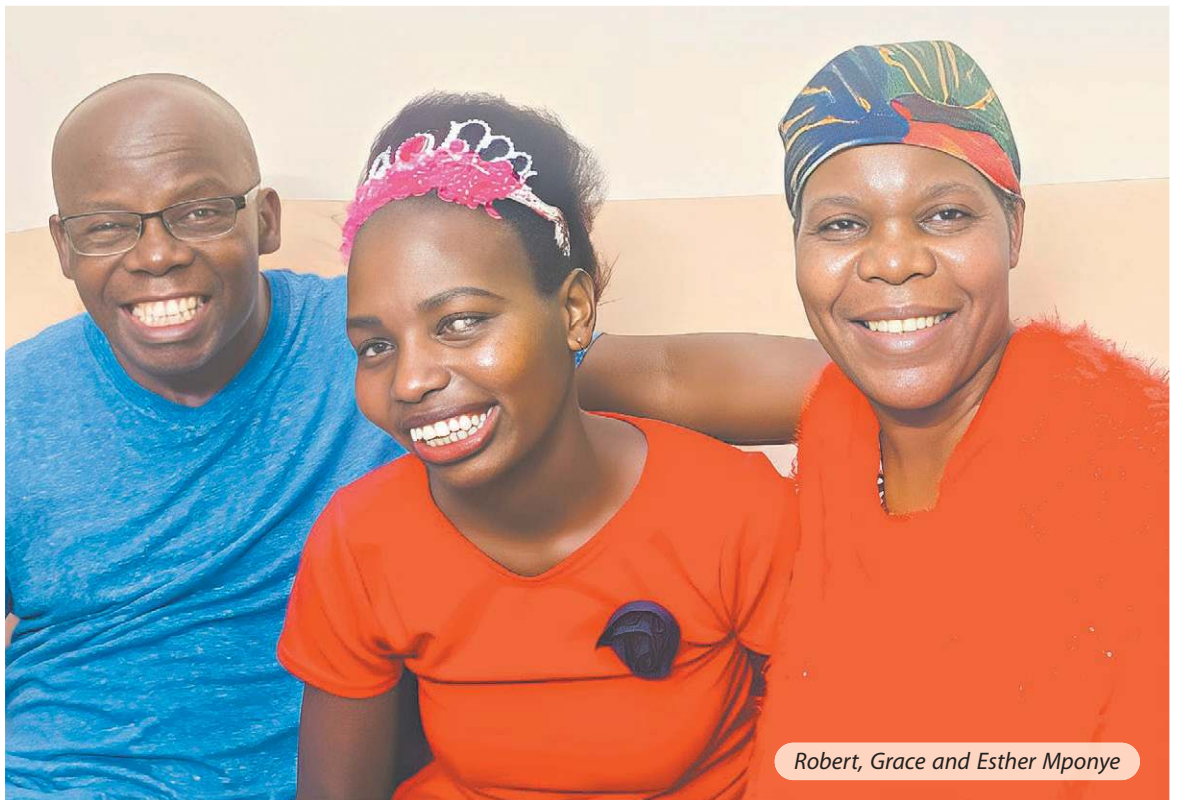
The next morning – New Year's Day 1991, and Robert's 24th birthday – Robert walked with his father to the local church where he gave his life to Christ.

"That day God gave me a new life. I truly became born again," he shared.

After graduating, Robert prayed for direction. "I told God, I don't want just a job – I want to go where I can glorify You."

He fasted and prayed for three days. On the third day, he sensed God speak through Isaiah 55:5: "Nations you do not know will run to you."

A friend told him about a teach-



Robert, Grace and Esther Mponye

ing job in the small Ugandan town of Mityana. Robert took it – and has served there ever since.

He later married Esther, a fellow teacher, and the couple soon welcomed a daughter, Jemima. Robert was content raising his family, working at the local school and

picking up preaching engagements in nearby towns.

He had no idea what was about to happen.

In 2004, while he was away preaching, his wife called.

She told him some locals had found a newborn baby dumped in

a latrine pit and had brought her to the hospital. Wrapped in a plastic bag and thrown down the 30-foot drop, she should not have survived.


Yet she did. But who would take her?

● Turn to page 2

XHOSA/SESOTHO/ZULU/AFRIKAANS story PAGE 6

Fun for Kids Pages 4,5

BACK PAGE



UNBREAKABLE SPIRIT
MONTY WILLIAMS

The habit that heals

BY HARRIET COOMBE

EVERY JANUARY, WE make promises to ourselves – eat better, work smarter, save more, stress less. We buy new planners and try to shake off whatever last year threw at us. But if we're honest, most of us drag one thing into the new year whether we want to or not: hurt.

It might be something small we never dealt with, or something big we've learned to carry like a heavy backpack. A friendship that soured. A family wound. Someone who betrayed our trust. Or even regret about choices we made ourselves.

We tell ourselves we've moved on – but some part of us knows we haven't.

Why forgiveness matters

Forgiveness is one of those things we admire in other people but struggle to practice ourselves. It feels too costly, too unfair, too vulnerable. And yet, the research keeps saying the same thing: carrying resentment affects us more than the person who hurt us. It chips away at our emotional health and even our



Stock photo

physical wellbeing. Forgiveness isn't pretending things didn't happen. It isn't excusing anything. It's simply deciding that the wound won't be in charge anymore.

That's hard work. But it's also freeing. And a new year is as good a time as any to think about it.

The most radical act of forgiveness in history

No matter your beliefs, it's hard to ignore the impact of Jesus' words on the cross: "Father, forgive them."

He wasn't talking about His friends.

He was speaking about the very people who were in that moment rejecting Him, mocking Him, and killing Him.

It's hard to find anything else like that in history – someone forgiving others at the exact moment they're being wronged. But they weren't the only people He forgave on the cross. Ephesians 1:7 puts it, "[God] is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son [Jesus] and forgave our sins."

● Turn to page 2

The day hope returned

Twelve years ago, South African Vivian Makhanya was “a walking corpse”.

The divorcee, who was 51 at the time, had been working hard at the 2019 World Cup, which was held in South Africa that year.

The work took its toll on her and her blood pressure sky-rocketed.

In March the following year, she was admitted into hospital with stage five kidney failure and spent the next few years doing dialysis three times a week.

As difficult as that time was, Vivian says she was sustained by her faith in God.

She had committed her life to Jesus Christ when she was 23, after hearing the gospel (the good news that Jesus came to Earth to die for our sins) preached at school.

“Jesus said we will have peace in Him even though we go through challenges. And Romans 8: 31 says, ‘If God is with us, who can be against us?’”

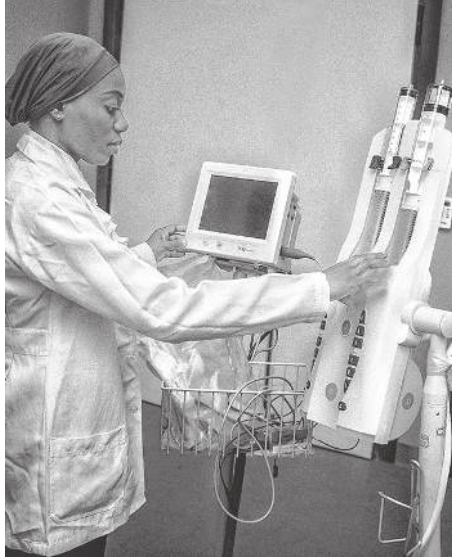
Vivian says before becoming a Christian she struggled not just with her physical health; she says she was “full of anger, jealousy, unforgiveness and fear. I also had low self-esteem and an inferiority complex.”

“I was filled with love and a sound mind.”

After committing her life to Christ, however, she says her hardness of heart and fears disappeared.

“I was filled with love and a sound mind. The best part about being a Christian is to be obedient to God’s Word and to meditate on it. To be available to be used for His purpose.”

Her health woes came to an end in March 2019 when she received a donor kidney. “Now by God’s grace I am healthy and strong. I would like to say to others that they must repent and receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.”



Stock photo

NEW YEAR NEW LIFE

● From page 1

Robert and Esther were well-known in town for taking in and helping poor or abandoned children and educating them for free. It was to Esther that the hospital staff naturally turned.

“My wife told me: ‘I believe that God wants us to take this baby’. So we took her and named her Grace.” Grace had major health issues.

Her eyes, eaten away by maggots while she was underground, were swollen shut.

It took five major surgeries before she was a year old to open them surgically.

Open yes, but sightless; Grace was completely blind.

And then, another miracle.

When Grace was about 18 months old the family was at church when the toddler suddenly began walking on her own, without needing to hold anyone’s hand as she usually did.

As Robert and Esther watched her navigating the chairs and tables without help, they suddenly realised she could see!

“God healed Grace in that service. We danced, we cried, we praised God!” That miracle changed everything.

“One night, my wife said, ‘God is going to bring more Graces to us,’” Robert remembered.

“I joked ‘I think one Grace

is enough.’ But that was God’s plan.”

In the following months, more children showed up at Robert and Esther’s door

– orphans, abandoned babies, those whose parents had died or couldn’t afford school fees. Robert and Esther taught and cared for these children themselves in their home for free.

What began with a handful of pupils soon became King’s Kid Ministries, officially founded on 13 February 2005.

Today, the ministry cares for more than 350 children, providing food, clothing, education and vocational training.

Funding is often tight, but the Mponyes have worked to make the project self-sustaining. They’ve opened a bridal salon,

a bakery, a catering service, computer training, and most recently a corn flour mill that supplies both the school and the wider community.

But Robert never forgets where his story began – on his deathbed, gasping for breath, pleading with God for mercy.

He knows what it means to be given a second chance – and he is determined to give the same to others.

“He rescued Grace and me from the pit. And He is still doing the same for many others today.”



Grace, a living miracle.

Ask Y: Peter Meadows answers your questions about God

QUESTION: SURELY IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT I BELIEVE AS LONG AS I DO BELIEVE?



ACTUALLY THERE MAY be no bigger issue than what it is we believe in. That’s how it is in life so why should it be any different when it comes to our relationship with God?

For example, imagine you are about to leap from an airplane to make a sponsored parachute jump. You do the training, understand the techniques, and believe the physics of billowing parachutes will not let you down – other than gently.

You are free to choose your own parachute – the one you ‘believe’ in. There are three options. One has bloodstains on the outside and a tag saying, “Secondhand – one unlucky owner.” The next has a note saying, “Packed by the Scouts to raise funds.” The third is in the hands of your highly experienced instructor – he packed it himself and has double-checked everything.

Which one are you wearing? I thought so. Because it is what our faith is in that matters – not how much faith we have or even that we have some at all. A small amount of faith in the right parachute is never worth trading for an overwhelming faith in the wrong one. To put it another way, the fact that you believe the train you are on will take you to your hometown is of no value if it’s intended destination is a different location altogether. Your belief, however sincere or how many others may share it with you, is not going to change anything, for you or the train.

It’s not the fact that we may have a belief, however sincere, but what that belief is in that is the real issue. So assuming you want your belief/faith to lead to you a close relationship with the God who made you, what or who does that faith need to be in?

The answer has to be, “In the one who will get me there.” And that must be Jesus. That’s the reason He died on the cross – to offer you forgiveness with God and His companionship forever, if you’ll trust/believe in Him. But, of course, to believe ‘about’ and to ‘believe in (trust in)’ are two very different things.

It’s like someone with their hands and face caked with dirt and grime saying, “I believe in soap.” Ask what they mean and they say, “Well, I believe soap is a good thing and to be much admired. I believe soap has made a great difference in world history. I believe soap has a lot to offer. I believe soap would get me clean if I were to use it.”

In the same way, so far as Jesus is concerned, He does not ask us merely to admire the excellence of His life or the quality of His words. Rather He asks us to actively believe by trusting in His death on the cross to work in our lives – by faith.

Peter Meadows is the co-author with Joseph Steinberg of *The Book of Y*, the basis for the eight week Y Course that explores life’s biggest questions.

The habit that heals

● From page 1

Sin is anything we think, say, or do that goes against God’s way. It separates us from Him and damages our relationships with others and ourselves. And Jesus’ death on the cross means we can be forgiven of it all when we turn to Him in faith and repent [turn away from sin]. As it says in 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

And that’s the kind of freedom we can’t manufacture on our own.

Starting the year right

Maybe there’s someone you need to forgive this year. Mark 11:25 says, “If you have anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your wrongdoing.”

Maybe there is someone you need to ask forgiveness from. Or maybe the person you need to forgive is yourself. How would it feel to begin the year with a clean slate? Jesus’ act of forgiveness isn’t just a historical moment – it’s a personal invitation. A chance to receive a clean slate that goes deeper than resolutions or habit trackers.

An invitation

If you’re ready to start afresh on a deeper level – not just with new routines, but with a new heart – this New Year is the time to turn toward Jesus and receive the forgiveness He offers for your sins.

For more information on how to do that turn to page 11 and see the box entitled, *How do I Become a Christian*.

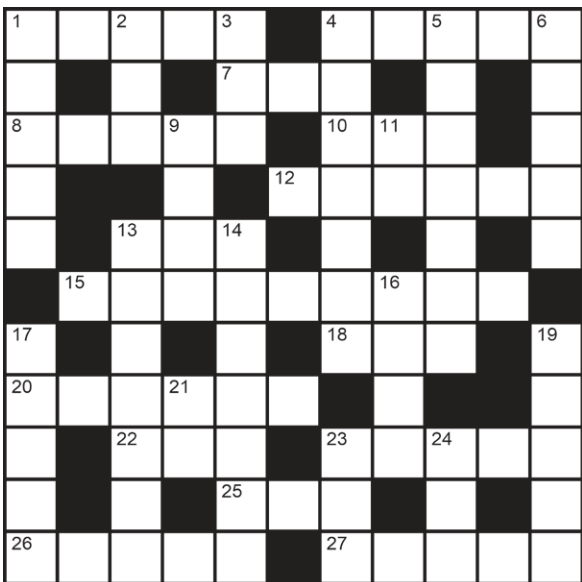
Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

ACROSS

- 1 Plumbing
- 4 Blacksmith’s block
- 7 Ashes holder
- 8 Daughter of a sister
- 10 Racket
- 12 Glass container with a neck
- 13 Bro’s sibling
- 15 City in Alaska
- 18 Terrific tennis serve
- 20 Opposite of days
- 22 Pain (slang)
- 23 To disprove a point
- 25 University, abbr.
- 26 Military trainee
- 27 Wash oneself

DOWN

- 1 Comic-strip frame
- 2 Chart type
- 3 Seek damages
- 4 Pyrenean country
- 5 Classic, antique
- 6 Flax fabric
- 9 Stylish
- 11 Easy does ___!
- 13 Caught
- 14 Athletic throwing event
- 16 Adolescent skin concern
- 17 Bit of high jinks
- 19 Wood shaping tool
- 21 A casual hello
- 23 Tease in a
- 24 Cave dweller

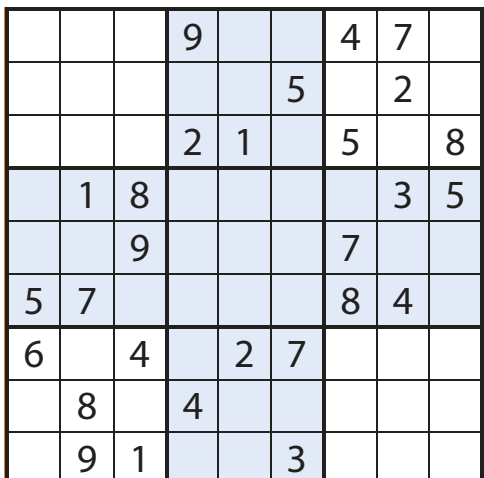


[SOLUTIONS PAGE 7](#)

Smile files...



gettyimages



RESCUED FROM THE EDGE

The deep trauma in Johannes C. Wolfaardt's life began before he was even born.

When his mother became pregnant with him, his father forced her to undergo two abortions. She went through with them – but Johannes survived.

"When my father found that out, he tried again. He hit my mom in the stomach in a rage. She told me I didn't move for three days. Then I started moving again – she knew I was still alive."

Johannes was born on 19 November 1984 in what was then the Transvaal. When he was two, his mother left – unable to endure the abuse any longer. By the age of four, he was being beaten regularly by his father. "The only day he didn't hit me was Sunday. He said it was God's day. A day of rest." Living in a miner's house in Virginia, Free State, Johannes walked seven kilometres to school each day. At six, things escalated further.

One day, after failing to greet a woman in their home, his father became enraged. He threw a

hammer at Johannes, hitting his shoulder.

"He kicked me, grabbed me by the neck, and choked me. Said he'd teach me manners."

Johannes sustained broken ribs and extensive bruising. He returned to school the next day in long clothes to cover his injuries, but a teacher noticed.

"My hand was swollen. I couldn't move it. When the teacher touched my shoulder, I flinched. She asked what happened – I told her."

Police were called, and a team of officers took him home to gather his things. "My dad cried when they took me. I still don't know why."

He was placed into the foster care system, but what followed was more suffering.

At one foster home, when he was just seven years old, he was called into the living room on a cold winter night. "They said animals aren't allowed in their house. I was confused – they had a dog. But she slept outside. That's when the woman said, 'You're the animal.'"

Johannes was chained outside

and forced to live as an "animal" for three months.

"You'll live here. You're not human. You're an animal and you will live like one."

A social worker eventually discovered the abuse, and he was moved again – and again. Some places were safer, others not. Johannes was raped, molested, and abused repeatedly throughout his childhood.

By age 10, living in Reddersburg, Johannes attempted suicide for the first time.

Though he had heard of Jesus, he did not believe. "Too many people who claimed to follow Christ had hurt me," he said.

He began using drugs and smoking early in life and eventually became addicted. At 18, he reconnected with his mother, a strained reunion that led to him living at her house again years later.

In 2015, she told him something unexpected. "Son, I need to talk to

you," she said. She admitted to having five seizures, confessed that she had not been a good mother, and asked for his forgiveness.

"God gave me the strength to forgive her. I told her to shower, then we'd talk more."

While he was cooking, Johannes heard a loud thud. His mother was unresponsive behind the door. A family member broke the door down.

"She was lying there. Face blue. She's not breathing."

Johannes and his half-brother performed CPR. For a brief moment, he heard her whisper, "I love you." Then she passed away. Her death pushed him

into deeper darkness. He spiralled into depression, alcoholism, and drug use. He lived on the streets for six months and attempted suicide 36 times.

"On 15 July 2021, I'd had enough. My leg was broken. My boss was corrupt. I felt invisible. I took a handful of pills and vodka." He was found unconscious and rushed to the hospital. There, his heart stopped.

"I didn't see light. I saw darkness. Thick, heavy darkness. I felt it on my skin. I saw gates – but not heaven's gates. Hell's. I heard screaming, torture. I knew I was going there."

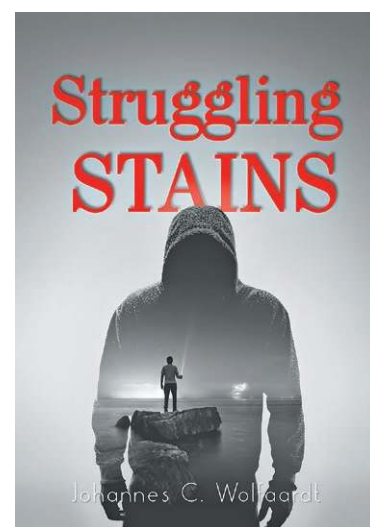
In that moment, Johannes – an atheist until then – called out to Jesus. "Three times I called Him. He came."

He survived. After waking in the hospital, Johannes contacted his spiritual mentor and asked to stay on his farm. There, everything began to change.

It was on that farm that he encountered Jesus Christ through the process of self-forgiveness and healing.

He also met Annelle, who became his wife on 23 January 2022. "Annelle prays constantly. She's walked with me through every step of healing. I've had counselling. The scars are still there – but they don't hurt to talk about anymore."

Johannes believes that the Holy Spirit used Annelle to encourage him to share his story. Together, they co-authored *Struggling Stains*, a raw and redemptive memoir



Struggling Stains, the book Johannes has written about his life.

of survival and grace.

"God is using my story to show others – no matter how hopeless it seems, there's always hope. Nothing on earth can stop God's plan for your life. Every day is a step closer to healing."

Today Johannes is a motivational speaker and author, and offers advice for anyone who's experienced trauma:

- Don't hold it in.
- Talk about what you feel.
- Write it down if no one's around.
- Stay close to people who lift you up.
- Be around people who listen – and who lead you to Jesus.

Johannes' book is available from nskrywer-shuis.co.za/product/struggling-stains. The book is now being adapted for the stage and will see its debut in Bloemfontein. •

Johannes C. Wolfaardt



New direction for Nicole

Nicole Meyer grew up in Middleburg as the youngest of four sisters, in a home she describes with warmth and gratitude. "I had a good childhood. I grew up in a very loving home and all of us are really close," she said. Her older sisters had lost their father when they were young and her mother later remarried and had Nicole.

Yet even in that loving childhood, something happened that she carried quietly for years. When she was six, she was molested by a boy who came to her house after school.

"I can't really remember how it started," she said, "but all I remember is at a stage I let it happen. For a long time I blamed myself for not fighting him off."

It took her years to realise the truth: "[It's only now] that I am dealing with it and realised that it is not my fault."

When boys started to notice her in her teenage years, she felt drawn to the validation.

"To be honest I liked the attention," she admitted. By the end of grade 11 and throughout grade 12, she slipped into a cycle of drinking and kissing boys. One New Year's Eve became a defining moment. She went home with a guy she barely knew.

"We made out but I remember how unsafe I felt."

That walk home the next morning became a turning point. "I realised that this is not who I am," she said. Something in her knew she needed change. She cut ties with guys who weren't serious and stopped drinking with the intention of getting drunk.

But she didn't just want to stop something. She wanted to rebuild.

She searched online for a *vind jouself kamp* – a find-yourself camp – and stumbled across the Target Life website.

"I didn't do a lot of research about it, I just felt that that was what I wanted to do." So she registered and embarked on a year of reset.

Target Life gave her something she didn't expect: clarity on faith and identity.

"It was the first time someone explained to me what a relationship with God looks like. I always knew Jesus, but I never knew I could have a relationship with Him. Christianity was more a religion than a relationship." As the months went by, she began to pursue that relationship for herself.

On 29 September 2024, something shifted inside her. Nicole described surrendering her life to God with simple but profound words: "After giving my heart to the Lord I felt free." The guilt, shame, and confusion she



Nicole Meyer

had carried since childhood began to loosen their grip.

Initially it was hard for Nicole to accept Jesus' sacrifice. "It was quite difficult for me to believe that no matter how badly I have messed up, God still loves and accepts me."

However she said, "I know my sins are forgiven because Jesus died on the cross for me. Every day I try to be a little more like Jesus."

Choosing a new direction didn't come without cost.

"One of the biggest challenges was losing all my friends," she said. When she no longer wanted to party or drink, invitations stopped coming. It hurt – but it also opened the door to something healthier.

"A big challenge for me was really believing there are people out there who really care and love you, people who would do anything to help you."

Slowly, she found those people. "With godly friends and a good community of people that pushes you to the Lord... you can overcome any challenge."

She also discovered acceptance she had long doubted.

"It was quite difficult for me to believe that no matter how badly I have messed up, God still loves and accepts me." Today, Nicole is 20, living in Pretoria, serving as a Target Life leader, and walking out her faith with growing confidence. Her favourite verse, Psalm 56:3 – "When I am afraid I put my trust in You" – captures her journey from fear to trust, from brokenness to healing. •

"I realised this is not who I am."

If you are blessed by this paper, please consider getting involved in this ministry by:

- Telling us what this paper meant to you.
- Sending us your testimony of salvation. Email sachallengenews@gmail.com for more details.
- Paying it forward by sponsoring and distributing this paper to help reach others. Please send an email to: sachallengenews@gmail.com or donate at www.challenge.news/donate/

English translation

PURPOSE AT ROCK BOTTOM

Abraham Mbuthi's life was filled with drugs, alcohol, smoking and sex. As a young boy growing up in Nairobi, Kenya, Abraham was shy and quiet, and he struggled to express himself.

"When I was in school, I faced challenges due to the fact that I wasn't a bright student," he tells Challenge News.

"In primary school and high school, I began smoking and abusing drugs like marijuana."

By the time he entered college, drugs and alcohol became a lifestyle. He was even abusing miraa, a type of medicinal drug.

In 2006, Abraham moved to South Africa after years of addiction, depression and hopelessness to start a new life.

"I began to live with Christian men from the same country. I liked the way they were living and so I attended their church on a Sunday morning and heard the pastor preach about salvation."

Abraham heard the Gospel – that that Jesus Christ, through His death and resurrection, paid for our sins, offering forgiveness and eternal life.

"When I went home, his sermon remained in my head. One particular day I began to cry and I prayed for forgiveness. The following Sunday, I responded to the call to receive Jesus in my life. But I fell back into my former lifestyle and continued to drink and abuse drugs," he admits. Abraham continued struggling for many years until he hit rock bottom.

"In 2017, I decided to give my life back to Jesus Christ.

"It hasn't been easy, but I thank God that He has been gracious, merciful and forgiving and

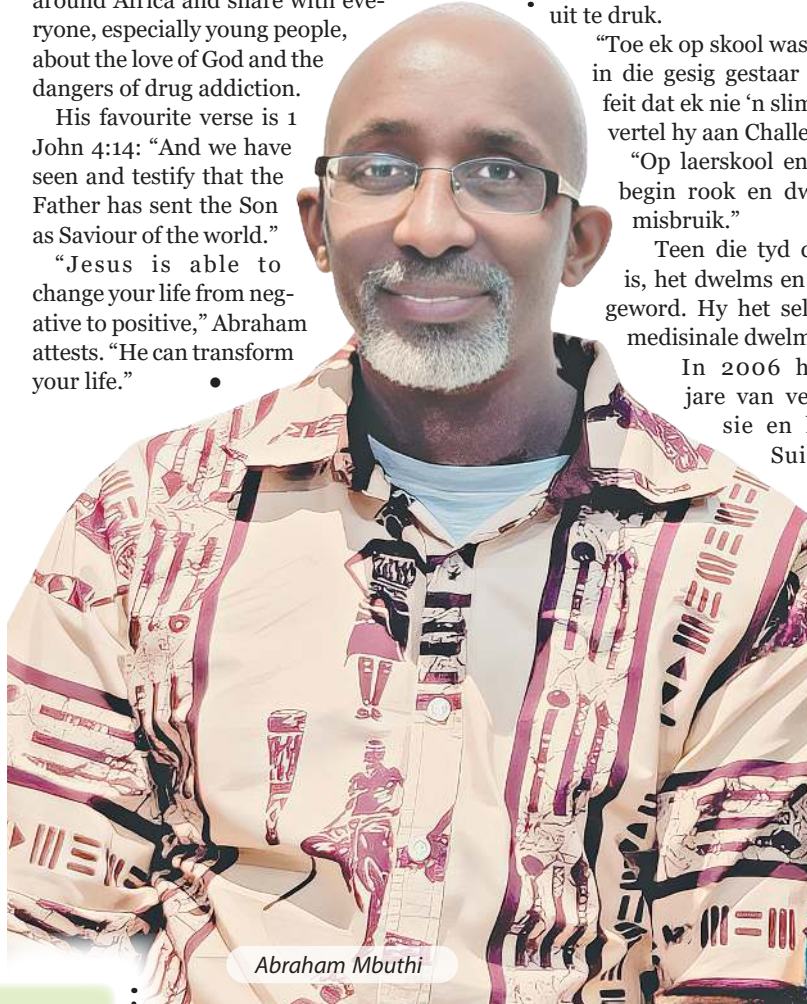
gave me a peace of mind.

"I have found purpose and meaning in life."

Abraham is now a student studying to be a missionary and serve God. He hopes to travel around Africa and share with everyone, especially young people, about the love of God and the dangers of drug addiction.

His favourite verse is 1 John 4:14: "And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world."

"Jesus is able to change your life from negative to positive," Abraham attests. "He can transform your life."



Abraham Mbuthi

Zulu translation

Wathola injongo yempilo ebangwa nezibi

Impilo ka Abraham Mbuthi yayigcwele izidakamizwa, utshwala kanye nocansi. Njengebhungu elalikhulela eNairobi, eKenya, uAbraham wayethule enamahloni, wayengakwazi nokuzikhulumela.

"Ngiseskoloni kwakunzima ngoba ngangiyena umfundi ohlabene," etshela abezindaba zeChallenge.

"Emabangeni aphantsi naphezulu, waqala ukubhema nokuzinikela kuzidakamizwa ezifana nensangu."

Ngesikhathi efika eCollege, izidakamizwa notshwala kwabe sekuyimpilo yakhe. Wayesebhema ne miraa okuwuhlobo lwesidakamizwa somtholampilo.

Ngo 2006, u Abraham wathuthela e South Africa emva kweminyaka egqilazwe izidakamizwa, ecindezelekile engenathemba lokuqala impilo entsha.

"Ngaqala ukuphila namadoda akholwayo akulelozwe. Ngangithanda indlela abaphila ngayo ngase ngiqala ukuya nabo esontweni labo ngeSonto ekuseni ngezwa umfundisi eshumayela ngensindiso."

U Abraham wezwa ivangeli ukuthi uJesus Kristu ngokufa nokuvuka kwakhe, wakhokhela izono zethu, usinikezela ukuthethelelwa nempilo engunaphakade.

"Uma ngiya ekhaya, lentshumayelo yahlala ekhanda lami. Ngelinye ilanga ngaqala ukukhala ngathandazela ukuthethelelwa. Ngesonto elilandelayo, ngaya phambili ukwamukela

uJesu empilweni yami. Kodwa ngabuyela empilweni yami yokuphuza nokuhlukumeza izidakamizwa," evuma. "Ngo 2017, wazinikela kabusha kuKristu. Akulula kodwa ngiyambonga uNkulunkulu ukuthi ube nomusa, nesihawu wangithethelela futhi wanginika nokuthula engqondweni. Ngithole injongo nokuthi impilo isho ukuthini."

U Abraham usengumfundi ofundela ukuba i Missionary ukuze akhonze uNkulunkulu. Unenhloso yokuhambela elase Africa eshumayela khona bonke abantu, ikakhulukazi intsha, ngothando lukaNkulunkulu nobungozi bezidakamizwa.

Ivesi alithandayo 1 Johane 4:14, "Sibonile futhi siyafakaza ukuthi ubaba uthumele iNdodana njengoMsindisi emhlabeni."

"U Jesu uyakwazi ukuguqula impilo yakho ingabi ize, efakaza u Abraham. "Angayiguqula impilo yakho."

Xhosa translation

Ukufumana injongo yakhe ezantsi

Ubomi buka-Abraham Mbuthi babuzaliswe ziziyobisi, utywala, ukutshaya kunye nesondo. Njengomfana oselula ekhula eNairobi, eKenya, u-Abraham wayeneentloni kwaye ethule, kwaye wayesokola ukuzichaza.

"Xa ndandisesikolweni, ndandijongene neningeni ngenxa yokuba ndandingengomfundi okrelekrele," uxelela i-Challenge News.

"Kwisikolo samabanga aphantsi nakwisikolo samabanga aphakamileyo, ndaqala ukutshaya nokusebenzisa iziyobisi ezifana ne-intsangu."

Ngexesha awangena ngalo ekholejini, iziyobisi kunye notywala zaba yindlelayokuphila. Wayesebenzisa kakubi i-qwaka, uhlobo lweyeza lonyango. Ngo-2006, u-Abraham wafudukela eMzantsi Afrika emva kweminyaka yobungedle, uxinizelelo kunye nokuphelelwa lithemba ukuqala ubomi obutsha.

"Ndaqala ukuhlala namadoda angamaKristu avela kwilizwe elinye. Ndayithanda indlela ababephila ngayo kwaye ke ndaya ecaweni yabo ngeCawa kusasa ndaza ndeva umfundisi eshumayela ngosindiso."

UAbraham weva iVangeli – ukuba uYesu Kristu, ngokufa nokuvuka kwakhe, wahlawulela izono zethu, esinika uxolelo nobomi obungunaphakade.

"Ndathi ndakubuyela ekhaya, intshumayelo yakhe yahlala engqondweni yam."

"Ngolunye usuku ndaqala ukulila ndaza ndathandazela ukuxolelwa. NgeCawa elandelayo, ndasabela kubizo lokwamkela uYesu ebomini bam.

"Kodwa ndabuyela kwindlela endandiphila ngayo ngaphambili ndaza ndaqhubeka disela kwaye ndisebenzisa iziyobisi," uyavuma.

UAbraham waqhubeka esokola iminyaka emininzi de wafika ekuncameni.

"Ngo-2017, ndagqiba ekubeni ndibuyisele ubomi bam kuYesu Kristu. "Bekungekho lula, kodwa ndiyambulela uThixo ngokuba ebenobubele, inceba kwaye exolela kwaye wandinika ukuphumla engqondwemi."

"Ndifumene injongo nentsingiselo ebomini."

UAbraham ngoku ungumfundi ofundela ukuba ngumvangeli aze akhonze uThixo.

Unethemba lokuhambahamba eAfrika aze abelane naye wonke umntu, ingakumbi ulutsha, ngothando lukaThixo kunye neengozi zokulutha iziyobisi. Ivesi ayithandayo yi-1 kaYohane 4:14: "Sibonile kwaye siyangqina ukuba uYise umthumile uNyana njengoMsindisi wehlabathi."

"UYesu unako ukutshintsha ubomi bakho ukusuka kokubi ukuya kokulungileyo," uqinisekisa uAbraham. "Ungaguqula ubomi bakho nawg."

Afrikaans translation

Lewensdoel by 'n laagtepunt ontdek

Abraham Mbuthi se lewe was gevul met dwelms, alkohol, rook en rondslaap.

As 'n jong seun wat in Nairobi, Kenia, grootgeword het, was Abraham skaam en stil, en hy het gesukkel om homself uit te druk.

"Toe ek op skool was, het ek uitdagings in die gesig gestaar as gevolg van die feit dat ek nie 'n slim student was nie," vertel hy aan Challenge News.

"Op laerskool en hoërskool het ek begin rook en dwelms soos dagga misbruik."

Teen die tyd dat hy kollege toe is, het dwelms en alkohol 'n leefstyl geword. Hy het selfs miraa, 'n soort medisinale dwelm, misbruik.

In 2006 het Abraham na jare van verslawing, depressie en hopeloosheid na Suid-Afrika verhuis om 'n nuwe lewe te begin. "Ek het saam met Christenmans van dieselfde land begin woon. Ek het gehou van die manier waarop hulle geleef het en het dus hul kerk op 'n Sondagoggend

bygewoon en gehoor hoe die pastoor oor verlossing preek."

Abraham het die Evangelie gehoor – dat Jesus Christus, deur Sy dood en opstanding, vir ons sondes betaal het, vergifnis vir ons sonde en die ewige lewe bied. "Toe ek huis toe gaan, het sy preek in my kop gebly. Op 'n spesifieke dag het ek begin huil en om vergifnis gebid. Die volgende Sondag het ek gereageer op die oproep om Jesus in my lewe te ontvang. Maar ek het teruggeval in my vorige leefstyl en voortgegaan om te drink en dwelms te misbruik," erken hy.

Abraham het vir baie jare aangehou sukkel totdat hy 'n laagtepunt bereik het.

"In 2017 het ek besluit om my lewe weer terug te gee aan Jesus Christus.

"Dit was nie maklik nie, maar ek dank God dat Hy genadig, barmhartig en vergewensgesind was en vir my gemoedsrus gegee het. Ek het die doel en betekenis van die lewe gevind." Abraham is nou 'n student wat studeer om 'n sendeling te wees en God te dien.

Hy hoop om in Afrika rond te reis en met almal, veral jongmense, die blye boodskap van God se liefde te vertel en die gevare van dwelmverslawing te beklemtoon.

Sy gunstelingvers is 1 Johannes 4:14: "En ons het gesien en ons getuig dat die Vader die Seun gestuur het as Verlosser van die wêreld."

"Jesus is in staat om jou lewe van negatief na positief te verander," getuig Abraham. "Hy kan jou lewe verander."

Sesotho translation

Ho fumana morero wa hae o le tlase

Bophelo ba Abraham Mbuthi bo ne bo tletse dithefatsi, jwala, ho tsuba le thobalano. Ha e sa le moshanyana a hola Nairobi, Kenya, Abraham o ne a thatafalla ke ho itlhalosa.

Ha ke ne ke le sekolong, ke ile ka tobana le diphephetso ka se seithuti se bohla, o bolella Challenge News.

Sekolong sa mathomo le sekolong se phahameng, ke ile ka qala ho tsuba le ho sebedisa dithethefatsi hampe jwalo ka matekoane. Ha a kena kolecheng, dithethefatsi le jwala di ile tsa fetoha mokgwa wa bophelo.

O ne a bile a sebedisa miraa hampe, mofuta wa sethefatsi sa meriana. Ka 2006, Abraham o ile a fallela Afrika Borwa ka mora dilemo tse ngata tsa bokhoba, kगतello ya maikutlo le ho hloka tshepo ho qala bophelo bo botjha. Ke ile ka qala ho dula le banna ba Bakreste ba tswang naheng e le nngwe. Ke ne ke rata tsela eo ba neng ba phela ka yona mme ka ya kerekeng ya bona hoseng ka Sontaha mme ka utlwa moruti a ruta ka pholoho.

Abraham o ile a utlwa Evangedi - hore Jesu Kreste, ka lefu la hae le tsoho ya Hae, o ile a lefella dibe tsa rona, a fana ka tshwarelo le bophelo bo sa feleng.

Ha ke eya hae, thero ya hae eile ya dula kelellong ya ka.

Ka letsatsi le leng ke ile ka qala ho lla mme ka rapella tshwarelo. Sontaha se latelang, ke ile ka arabela pitsong ya ho amohela Jesu bophelong ba ka.

Empa ke ile ka kgutlela mokgweng wa ka wa pele wa bophelo mme ka tswela pele ho nwa le ho sebedisa dithethefatsi hsmpe, o a dumela.

Abraham o ile a tswela pele ho thatafalla ka dilemo tse ngata ho fihlela a fihla sehlohlolong.

Ka 2017, ke ile ka etsa qeto ya ho kgutlisa bophelo ba ka ho Jesu Kreste. Ha ho a ka ha e ba bonolo, empa ke leboha Modimo hore ebe o bile mosa, o mohau le ho tshwarela mme o mphile kgotso ya kelello.

Ke fumane morero le morero le moelelo bophelong.

Abraham jwale ke seithuti se ithutelang ho ba moromuwa le ho sebeletsa Modimo. O tsepha ho tsamaya ho potoloha Afrika le ho arolelana le bohle, haholo -holo batjha, ka lerato la Modimo le dikotsi tsa bokgoba ba dithethefatsi. Temana eo a e ratang haholo ke 1 Johanne 4:14 Mme re bone, mme re paka hore Ntate o romile Mora e le Mopholosi wa lefatshe.

Jesu o kgona ho fetola bophelo ba hao ho tloha bobeng ho isa ho bo botle, ho tiisa Abraham. A ka fetola bophelo ba hao.

A LIFE RESTORED

Lisa Liebenberg describes her childhood growing up in Pretoria as “normal” and “happy” – from the outside.

“In reality I was emotionally bullied by my mom and my brothers,” she tells *Challenge News*. “My mom was very manipulative and always body shamed me. She never let me eat. My brothers did the same and my older brother sometimes physically abused me.”

While she lived with both her parents, her father told her he didn’t want to be her dad anymore.

“It was weird to not have a dad but he still lived in the same house,” Lisa shares.

“When I went to high school it didn’t feel like I belonged there so I started to starve myself. I began to feel normal and started to drink and do drugs so that guys would think I was cool. I got more and more attention from guys and I would jump from one to the other.”

Lisa attributes this behaviour to a traumatic event which took place when she was a teenager.

“I was raped by one of my best friends when I was 16 and he was 18,” she shares. “I felt like I had to get all the guys back for what just that one boy did to me. I then tried to get as much attention from guys as possible so I could use them before they used me to hurt them.”

Lisa’s parents believed in God and she heard the gospel [the good news that Jesus came to Earth to die for our sin] many times over the years. But hearing and believing are not the same things.

It was early last year that Lisa really listened and understood the gospel.

“I went to a Christian gap year at Target Life,” she explains. “I started to slowly realise that what I was doing was wrong and wanted to live a better life.”

Lisa had a friend that had consistently tried to talk to her about God. She told her friend she was finally ready and surrendered her life to Jesus.

“The Lord helped me to get rid of my alcohol and drug addictions. I thought I would struggle and I asked God to help me but He didn’t just help me, He took it away completely.”

Now 19, Lisa admits sometimes it can be a struggle to not go back to her old way of life when things go wrong but she says the best thing about being a Christian is always having Someone to talk to in Jesus.

“God is not just someone who sits on the clouds and judges your actions and will punish you for them, He is your father who forgives you for your sins and will always love you no matter what.”

More than a conqueror

Priscilla Magamha (pictured) recalls being forced to attend church when she was a child with her parents in Chikomba, Zimbabwe, where she was born.

When she grew older, she chose not to attend.

“I was an angry person and I was unforgiving,” she admits.

Then in her 20s, Priscilla stayed at her brother’s house and he encouraged her to come along to his church. She reluctantly agreed.

“At first I didn’t enjoy it,” she remembers. Then she started to enjoy the songs that were sung there.

“Later on I started enjoying everything in the church. I decided to become a Christian by the year 2000 by praying the sinner’s prayer [like the one on this page in the box entitled *How Do I Become a Christian*] and surrendering my life to Christ.”



Now 58, Priscilla says, “Before I was a Christian I had many problems, which I had no one to talk to about. But now I can share with others and read the Bible.”

She now tells others they can’t go wrong by putting their faith in Jesus.

Her favourite Bible verses come from Romans 8, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

What is Valentine’s Day all about?

ON FEBRUARY 14 every year, millions of people exchange roses, chocolates, and heart-shaped cards. It’s a day that celebrates love in all its forms – romantic, friendly, and familial. But few know that Valentine’s Day began not as a commercial holiday, but as a story of courage, compassion, and faith that still speaks to the heart today.

The origins of Valentine’s Day reach back to the third century in Rome. At that time, Emperor Claudius II banned marriage for young men, believing single soldiers fought better than married ones. It is said that a Christian priest named Valentine defied the emperor’s order, continuing to marry couples in secret.

When his actions were discovered, Valentine was imprisoned. Legend says he befriended his jailer’s blind daughter and prayed for her – and that she miraculously received her sight. Before his execution on February 14, he sent her a note signed “from your Valentine.”

Over time, Christians began to honour his faith and sacrifice.

Centuries later, medieval poets helped link Valentine’s Day to romantic love, and by the 18th century, handwritten notes and tokens had become common. Today, Valentine’s Day is celebrated across the world – sometimes with flowers and chocolate, sometimes with acts of kindness. But at its heart, it began with someone who believed that love was sacred, selfless, and divine.

That idea still matters. Real love – the kind that lasts beyond feelings or gifts – is rooted in something deeper than romance. The Bible describes it this way: “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13). Valentine risked his life to honour that kind of love, and his story reminds us that love is strongest when it gives rather than takes.

Whether you celebrate Valentine’s Day with a partner, family, or friends, it’s also an opportunity to think about the ultimate source of love. God Himself is love – not just a feeling, but a person who cares deeply for you. Jesus showed that love when He gave His life so we could be forgiven and restored to God.

You don’t have to earn that love or prove yourself worthy of it. It’s freely offered – the truest Valentine message ever written.

If you’ve never experienced that kind of love, you can begin today. Simply open your heart to God and tell Him you want to know Him. Believe that Jesus died and rose again for you, and ask Him to be part of your life.

Because the real story of Valentine’s Day isn’t just about cards or candles – it’s about a love so powerful it changed the world, and it’s still reaching out to you.

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 *

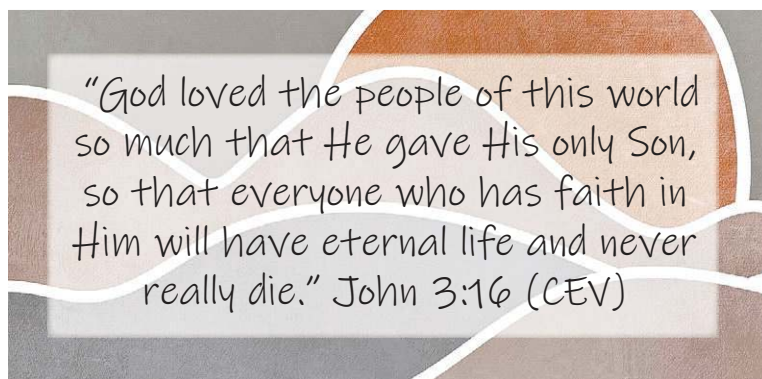
Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Email address _____

Email to: sachallengenews@gmail.com

Out of South Africa enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country



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 stations - CBN radio app, Trans World Radio and Radio Pulpit	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
Jesus Film project - 200+ videos in 2000+ languages jesusfilm.org/app youtube.com/@jesusfilm	Christian comics/manga - goodandevilbook.com and Manga Messiah app

YMI - Christian news outlet for young adults with devotionals and resources. **ymi.today**

NEED PRAYER ?

Let us pray for you!
Phone toll-free: 0801 229 015
WhatsApp: 079 375 3345
Visit: needprayer.co.za



UNBREAKABLE SPIRIT

Monty Williams is a big name in the NBA scene. Known for his time as the head coach of the Phoenix Suns, the team won the first two games of the 2021 NBA Finals – a first for the team since 2003. A year later, Monty was voted Coach of the Year for his work with the Phoenix Suns.

As a former NBA player himself, Monty played as a forward for teams such as the New York Knicks, San Antonio Spurs, Denver Nuggets, and Orlando Magic.

But he was forced to retire from playing in 2003 due to chronic knee problems.

Apart from his accolades as an NBA coach, Monty was also known for his faith and resilience.

In 2016, tragedy struck the Williams family when Monty's wife, Ingrid, died in a head-on collision. Three of their five children were in the car during the accident but they survived.

Ingrid had been driving on a four-lane road when a sedan approached from the opposite direction, going more than twice the speed limit.

The police would later find a substantial amount of methamphetamine in the driver's body, who was believed to be cradling her dog on her lap while she was driving. Both the dog and the driver died at the scene.

At the funeral, everyone expected Monty to grieve, to share about Ingrid's larger-than-life personality and heart for people, and he did. But at the end of his eulogy, Monty gave a speech that stunned the crowd into silence.

"Everybody is praying for me and my family, which is right. But let us not forget that there were two people in this situation. And that family needs prayer as well. And we have no ill will towards that family," he said.

"In my house, we have a sign that says, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord' [Joshua 24:15]. We cannot serve the Lord if we don't have a heart of forgiveness."

In the heaviness of surmountable



Head coach Monty Williams talks to Killian Hayes while playing the Toronto Raptors at Little Caesars Arena on December 30, 2023 in Detroit, Michigan. (Photo by Gregory Shamus/Getty Images)

loss at the hands of another, Monty decided to forgive. Eight years later, Monty's heart of forgiveness remains.

"I realised that the lady who was driving that car was going through a lot in her life for her to be a part of an act like that," he shared on the Sports Spectrum podcast.

"And I probably understood God's love more now than any other point in my life."

Monty grew up in a rough neighbourhood in Oxon Hill, just outside of DC.

It was a neighbourhood where "you could either hustle and sell drugs or just not have," he told *Sports Illustrated*.

He was raised by his single mother in a Christian household.

His grandparents on his father's side were Christian missionaries and his maternal grandfather was a pastor, which he said, "had a huge impact on [him]."

At 10 years old, Monty said a prayer to give his life to Jesus.

"[But] I didn't take [my faith] seriously until I was 18 and the doctors told me that I had a heart condition, and I was probably going to die if I kept playing basketball," he told *Andscape*.

As he grew, he learned to behave like a Christian but looking back, he admitted that he was mostly putting on an act. He'd cuss when the adults were not around and his prayers were mainly about getting rich and having fast cars.

Then in 1989, he met Ingrid at Notre Dame. Monty credited

Ingrid for encouraging him to take his faith in God seriously. He watched as Ingrid reflected the love of Jesus by volunteering two hours every week to bathe and talk to an elderly woman with Alzheimer's.

It went against what Monty was taught to do, which was to perform charitable acts for the purpose of strengthening his own public image.

"It was so real, and raw."

Through watching Ingrid live out her faith, Monty eventually recommitted his life to Jesus and started taking his faith seriously. However, trials would come soon to test his faith.

At 18, Monty was told that he had to stop playing basketball, or he'd die because of his heart condition. It was like a death sentence to him.

"My career was over at 18."

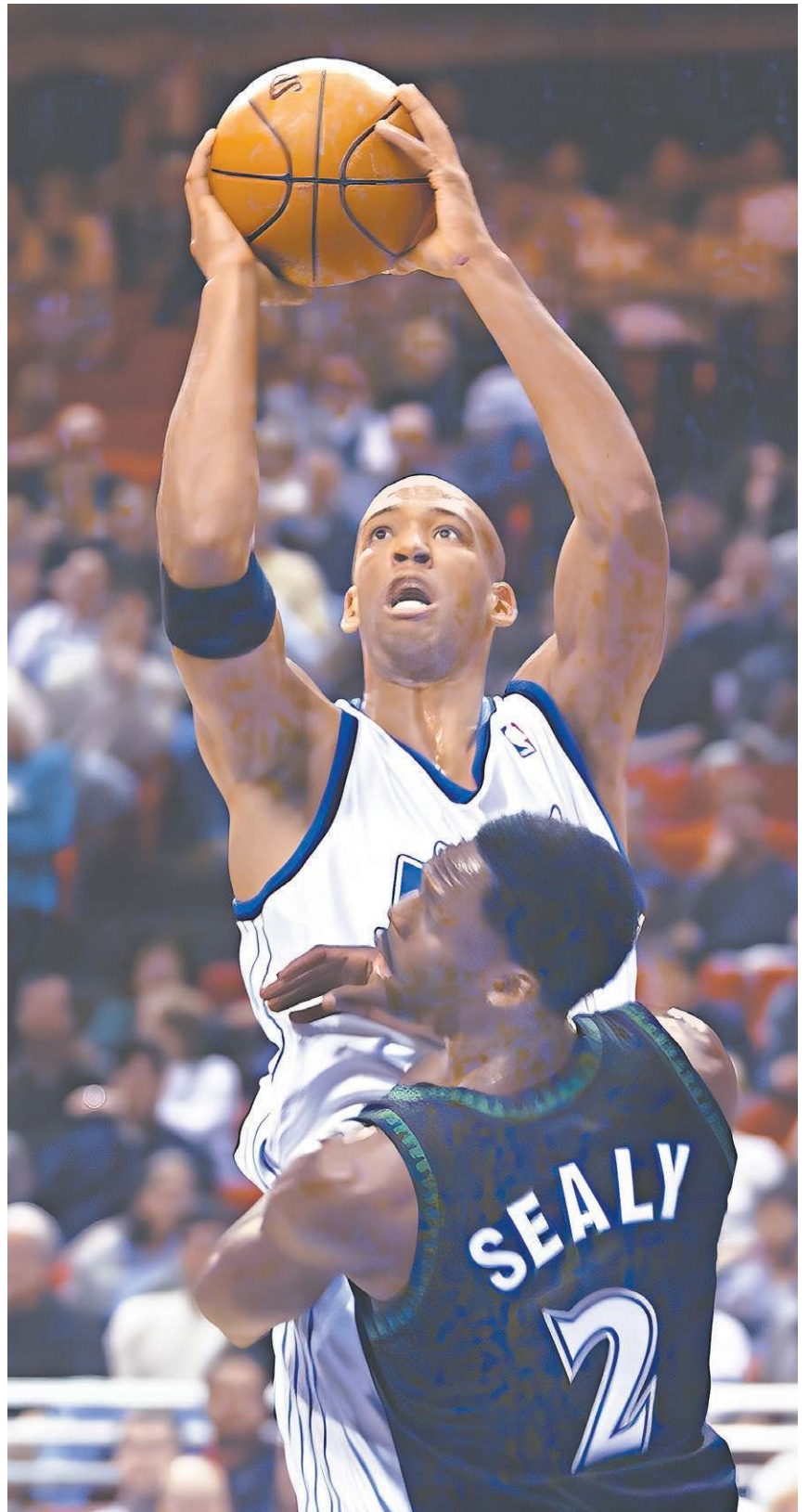
When he announced the news to Ingrid, she told him, "Honey, Jesus can heal your heart."

A coach told Monty about a risky experimental treatment that, if it failed, could stop his heart for good. But it was a chance he would take, if it meant he could go back to playing basketball. Hours after the treatment, he woke up. Not only that, but he could play basketball

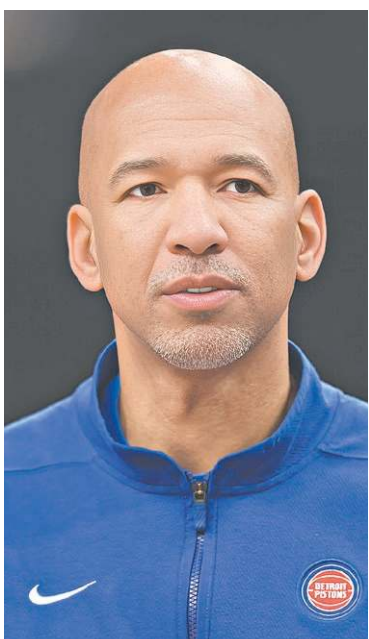
again. For Monty, it was a God-given miracle.

Referencing this incident in his eulogy at Ingrid's funeral, he says, "I'm evidence that God can work it out. This is hard for my family but this will work out."

Eight years later, Monty admitted



During his playing days: Orlando Magic forward Monty Williams is fouled by Minnesota Timberwolves forward Malik Sealy during the second quarter of the game at the Arena in Orlando in December, 1999. (Photo by TONY RANZE/AFP via Getty Images)



Head coach Monty Williams of the Detroit Pistons during the NBA game against the Phoenix Suns at Footprint Center in February 2024 in Phoenix, Arizona. (Photo by Christian Petersen/Getty Images)

“**I was probably going to die if I kept playing basketball.**”

DISTRIBUTED BY:

that forgiveness didn't come easy. "The reality is when it first happened, I really didn't care. I just wanted my wife back and I wanted my life back."

"As time went by, I understood how God uses all things together

for the good of those who love God and those who are called according to His purposes [Romans 8:28].

"She's in the best place possible and someday I will see her again."

"That gives me and my family a lot of hope." ●