

# NOUVOU messenger

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## Your Brain Supercharged!



**S**cience has recently begun to unlock the wonders of the human brain. Can you imagine a car that could fix itself, or automatically remaps and rewires itself to go faster and be more efficient? What about a machine that is constantly changing and always adding new features to itself for improved performance? We have just such a machine inside our heads, running circuits so fast it makes a Formula One racecar look like a snail. Understanding this amazing machine will help you to unlock the real potential of your mind.

You are what you think! This principle is actually found in Scripture “as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). This is an amazing proverb spoken by a very wise man, but could it really be that you become what you think? Is it possible that we limit our own potential, locking it up because we refuse to believe we can really excel? Check out this verse: “Keep thy

heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23). From your mind comes the springs that are the very source of the kind of life you live. It may seem to you that circumstances create your life. To some extent this is true, but then how do you explain that there are happy people in concentration camps and miserable people living in mansions? Actually, happiness has nearly everything to do with your state of mind. There are miserable people all around us that say, “If I could only have that person’s job, or that house, or that car, then I would be really happy.” Then, if they get the job they are still not happy, because they don’t like their coworkers, or they become discontent for some other reason. Happiness and contentment actually spring forth from the attitudes that we cherish in our mind.

### **A LESSON FROM THE SEA SLUG**

The nervous system of the California sea slug has been

studied to better understand the workings of our own body. In the study the slugs were conditioned to withdraw from squirts of water by applying electric shocks as a stimulus. The slugs' neural connections were observed before and after they were conditioned, and it was discovered that the connections between the nerves doubled in size and the number of transmitters increased, making a new neural circuit that increased until it was well developed and strong. After this takes place the connection is already so strong and sensitive that only a squirt of water and no electric shock is required for the slug to remember and instantly withdraw.

That is great, but we are not slugs, so what does it mean for us? It means that everything you are exposed to or that you expose yourself to is creating neural pathways that will be triggered later. You are creating memories for life. The next stimulus that is similar to the previous memory will trigger it and may either give you a pleasant feeling, or maybe a fearful or angry reaction. Many people have pleasant feelings of nostalgia when they walk by a bakery and smell bread or hot apple pie. How often has it happened that someone you know got really upset over some little thing that you did or said, and for a long time you were left wondering why? It was probably a learned reaction to something which happened in

## *Happiness and contentment actually spring forth from the attitudes that we cherish in the mind.*

their past that was in some way similar and caused a specific neural pathway to fire in response. So, in reality the anger response could have been actually unrelated to what you said or did, but you triggered a memory that the other person may or may not have been consciously aware of.

### **HIGHWAY TO HOPE**

Now before you go blaming all your emotional responses on your past, and saying you "can't help" overreacting when certain annoying things happen, think about this: If a reaction is learned it can also be diminished and a new response learned. People with phobias have had their fear responses retrained to a neutral or positive response by a therapist using exposure treatments. The mind has an amazing ability to change and rewire itself. This is known as neuroplasticity.

For hundreds of years people believed the brain was fixed after childhood and could not change, and now science is proving this wrong. More and more research is showing the brain to be extremely adaptable, flexible, and able to rewire itself in amazing ways.

In his book, *The Brain That Changes Itself*, Norman Doidge,

M.D., describes some amazing feats of the brain in adapting, modifying, and rewiring itself. He describes how researchers in the realm of neuroplasticity, working on the premise that the brain can rewire itself, helped people blind from birth be able to see in three dimensions using a camera, a computer, and a pad with hundreds of little stimulators that vibrated or tingled the surface of the skin. The computer took the image from the camera and converted it to a kind of fuzzy-black-and-white image that could be sent to the stimulation pad. The stimulators would then vibrate at different levels of intensity or not vibrate at all to show black, white, and shades of gray. After a short time, the patients' brains began processing this information in much the same way we process the two-dimensional electrical signals sent from the eyes to our brain. Converting the signals from the stimulator pad into a three-dimensional picture, the blind patients were able to distinguish details enough to recognize people and "dodge" a ball thrown at the camera. The absolutely amazing thing is not so much that the blind could "see," but that the brain began "seeing" by using the area for processing the sense of "touch."

Also described in the book is the experience of one of the pioneers in neuroplasticity, Paul Bach-y-Rita, whose father suffered a major stroke and was paralyzed. The case was said to be hopeless

for rehabilitation. However, using some odd techniques of rehabilitation—like learning to crawl first before walking—his father slowly began to regain his functions. He learned to talk, walk, and eat all over again. In the seven years from the stroke till he died of a heart attack, he was teaching college, working, walking, traveling, and climbing mountains. The autopsy after his death revealed the seven-year-old lesion from the stroke, and showed it had destroyed ninety-seven percent of the nerves running from his brain-stem to his spinal cord!

Early scientists discovered that certain areas of our brains are connected to certain functions. When people have damage in the area of the brain responsible for that particular function they often lose the use of it. This led scientists to conclude that the brain was hard-wired and once an area was damaged or destroyed the function lost could not be regained. However, other evidence over the years has showed the brain's ability to compensate for its losses, and even process functions in other areas when the "hard-wired" area was destroyed, damaged, or removed.

### **WHY DOES THIS WORK?**

It really makes sense that our Creator would design our nervous system this way, especially when you look at how the blood supply to the brain is designed. Blood



*Is it possible that we limit our own potential, locking it up because we refuse to believe we can really excel?*

flow enters through different routes from the heart and flows together into a loop called the Circle of Willis. From this loop arteries branch off to supply the different parts of the brain. If a supply artery coming in or part of the loop becomes blocked, blood flow from another direction compensates to keep the brain's blood supply uninterrupted. A God who designed so many awesome features into our brains, apparently decided to enable our brain to rewire and remap itself in order to compensate for lost functions and develop new ones, even after it has stopped growing. It is not as easy to train an old brain new tricks, like a young one, but it is not impossible.

**YES, PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE!**

So what does all this mean and how does it apply to my life? I am glad you asked. Basically, it means that although we find some things easy and others very difficult, it does not mean we can only do those things for which we seem well adapted. We often feel that if we try hard at something and we just don't get it, then there is no use trying anymore because "I just can't do it." In reality, our brains develop

just as we continually train them, building new circuits as necessary.

**WHAT IS HOLDING MANY YOUNG PEOPLE BACK?**

Rock music causes the nerve cells and their connections to become disordered, chaotic, jumbled, and look shockingly out of control. You probably remember classical music being suggested as a learning aid for study, because the order and symmetry of the music helps in creating strong orderly neural circuits in the brain, which are essential to learning and recalling information. Television, movies, video games shut down the reason center or frontal lobe and lower the attention span, making learning and brain culture very difficult. Our mind and our intelligence develop according to the training methods that we use on a daily basis. So many things, including thoughts and attitudes, affect brain function.

**HOW CAN THIS INFORMATION MAKE ME MORE SUCCESSFUL IN LIFE?**

It is true that for some things it takes longer, requires more persistence, different techniques or angles of approach, but ultimately we become what we feed and train our mind to be. The verse we learned earlier, "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" reveals this very principle. Hint: The Bible is the best book for training your mind and improving your intelligence! ●

# Architects of Destiny

## Liliane Balbach

### Part 2

In our previous issue of the *Youth Messenger*, we learned about how our habits make literal pathways in our nervous system. Natural chemical entities called “boutons” are actually formed along our neural pathways when we are developing a new habit.

### Watch out!


Can boutons ever disappear? At this time, there is no evidence that boutons go away if they are not used. It appears that old habits form such permanent pathways in the brain that they can never be erased. This principle is illustrated in the life of Bible characters. Remember how Moses, after killing the Egyptian in a rash moment (Exodus 2:11, 12), lived a spotless life for many years afterwards? Yet when he was at the border of Canaan, after 80 years, one of his bad habits rose up again. Because Moses lost his temper, he could never enter the Promised Land. Yes, habits and character do determine our destiny. (Thankfully, Moses’ deep repentance for that action and his faith in Christ—also a habit—was able to provide the patriarch with reassurance of his entrance into

that greater land, the heavenly Canaan.)

Yet what can cause a new habit pathway not to operate? When we break a law of health given by our Creator, the new GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid) or breaking pathway may not operate. Getting inadequate sleep or becoming fatigued by overwork paralyzes the new GABA pathway even before acetylcholine or “action” pathway. How does diet affect the delicate neuron fibers? “The brain nerve energy is benumbed and almost paralyzed by overeating” (*Healthful Living*, p. 168). Spices, animal foods, rich cakes, pastries, and foods high in fat and sugar excite our delicate nerve cells. To protect us from weakening the delicate nerve fibers, our Creator gave us the ideal diet almost 6,000 years ago: Fruits, nuts, grains, legumes, and vegetables (Genesis 1:29). We must follow His health laws if we would have habit control.

### Conflicting Messages

In struggling to form a new habit, have you ever been tempted to fall back into the old behavior—maybe, for example, as you were trying to lose weight and stop



snacking? Suppose a friend runs into you in the hallway at 10:00 a.m. and offers you some doughnuts. Immediately these thoughts pass through your mind: “They look so good; I will eat only one.” Just at that moment, another thought zooms by: “I had better not. I want to lose weight and establish healthful eating habits.” Your brain has an important decision to make: To snack or not to snack. Your action cell needs 10 millivolts of

***Like the architect, we must have a vision of what our character building will look like at completion.***

energy to fire. It does some quick algebra; the snacking decision will take 30 millivolts of energy; the decision not to snack takes 40 millivolts of energy.

Don't snack = 40 millivolts = Fire.  
Snack = 30 millivolts = Don't fire.  
Difference = 10 millivolts = Don't fire.

Yes, you made the right choice, but by barely 10 millivolts of energy. While you were making

these choices, our enemy was walking around “as a roaring lion” (1 Peter 5:8) trying to influence you to make a wrong choice. When he sees you gain the victory over a bad habit, he thinks: “I lost this time, but I will lay better plans next time.” Although Satan cannot read our mind, he does notice our indecision.

While you were deciding to snack on junk food, the Holy Spirit and the heavenly angels were by your side, influencing you to make the right choice. The great controversy between Christ and Satan is real. The battle is waged many times a day and involves you and me. Whether we become victorious or are defeated depends on whose voice we obey. You have probably experienced that bad habits are more easily formed than good ones, and are given up with more difficulty. Once habits are formed, they are like an iron net. They are very difficult to break unless a Power outside of us comes to our aid. “We shall be individually, for time and eternity, what our habits make us” (*Child Guidance*, p. 202). Habits build character and character determines destiny.

*Yes, habits and character do determine our destiny. . . . When tempted to repeat an old habit, we must say energetically: "No, I cannot dishonor my Redeemer. I will not do it."*

What kind of character are you designing for heaven?

## Remember The Architect

An architect draws a plan for a house. With trained mind and skillful hand, he places on paper the vision he has of the building. His plan is specific in every detail. He notes the type of material to be used in the building and estimates the time and cost of the project. The completed house plan with all these details drawn on paper is called a blueprint. The builder follows the blueprint in every particular, for he must build the house that the architect envisioned.

Each of us is an architect and builder of our character. Each repeated thought and action makes a deeper groove in our brain, just like repeated walking on the lawn makes a deeper path in the sod. We can form new habits, by firmly and consistently resisting the old ones. How can we use God's laws and power to form new habits? We cannot be haphazard builders, for our

character building must meet the approval of the Master Architect.

## Catch a Vision of Christ

Like the architect, we must have a vision of what our character building will look like at completion. Instead of focusing on our bad habits, the Bible tells us to look to Christ: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; . . . For consider him . . . , lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Hebrews 12:2, 3). God knew that some of us would get discouraged with our bad habits. This is why He said, "Consider him." "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Since Christ was tempted on every point, He understands us and knows how to help us.

For morning devotions, we can read a Bible chapter or even a few verses on the life of Christ. We can ask the Holy Spirit to fix His life in our mind. While we are brushing our teeth, making the beds, or driving to work, we can think about Jesus. Think of His character, His words, and actions. As we face trying situations throughout the day, we can choose to respond in Christ's way, not ours. One author recommends that we spend a thoughtful hour each day meditating on the life of Christ,





especially the closing scenes of His life (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 83).

## Changed by the law of beholding

How do I know that I will change as I study and meditate on the life of Christ? “It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed” (*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 418). The apostle Paul states that “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18). As we daily look to Christ and try to imitate His habits, thoughts, and actions,

by law, we will be changed from glory to glory.

## Act decisively!

When tempted to repeat an old habit, we must say energetically: “No, I cannot dishonor my Redeemer. I will not do it.” Solomon says: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might” (Ecclesiastes 9:10). With Christ’s power, we must deny those old habits with all our might. We can never allow any exceptions. It is the exceptions that weaken the habit pathways. 🍎



# The Youthful Life of Joseph

*A compilation from the Bible  
and the Spirit of Prophecy, with  
commentary by*

**Pam Stemmler**

**T**he proverb, “The curse causeless shall not come” (Proverbs 26:2) is true. But so is the opposite: “A noble, all-round manhood does not come by chance. It is the result of character-building in the early years of youth, a practice of the law of God in the home” (*The Youth’s Instructor*, May 5, 1898).

As we study the life of Joseph and gain the lessons that Scripture seeks to teach through his life, let us take special notice of what helped to form his character.

The things that happened in the life of God’s people in ancient times “are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Corinthians 10:11).



## Early seeds sown

Because we have divine inspiration available to us, we have the benefit of finding pieces of the puzzle that—when fitted together—give the grander picture of Joseph’s upbringing. We find that there was very

early seed sowing of a spiritual nature when Joseph was a young child, and this was carried on throughout his life.

“The seed sown in infancy by the careful, God-fearing mother will become trees of righteousness, which will blossom and bear fruit; and the lessons given by a God-fearing father by precept and example will, as in the case of Joseph, yield an abundant harvest by and by.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 116.

Was this seed sown only in the heart of Joseph and not in the heart of his brothers? I don’t believe so. Just remember the parable of the soils and realize that as individuals allow wrong seeds to grow in their hearts, the weeds choke out the good ones.

Joseph was not only given good seed, but his physical surroundings, also appointed by God, were the best for his development. He was, as many other patriarchs were, raised in the country and partook of its disciplines and lessons. Is the country just a place



outside of a city? Is there more relevance to this type of living and its relation to the character that is developed within an individual? Yes, there is. But please note, living in the country and partaking of its lifestyle and duties does not guarantee that our characters will be noble, pure, and ready for eternity. There is more to the equation, and this we will study through our examination of Joseph's life. What were the physical surroundings provided for Joseph and other patriarchs—as well as for Jesus and John the Baptist?

### The rigor and vigor of rural life

“What were the conditions chosen by the infinite Father for His Son? A secluded home in the Galilean hills; a household sustained by honest, self-respecting labor; a life of simplicity; daily conflict with difficulty and hardship; self-sacrifice, economy, and patient, gladsome service; the hour of study at His mother's side, with the open scroll of Scripture; the quiet of dawn or twilight in the green valley; the holy ministries

of nature; the study of creation and providence; and the soul's communion with God—these were the conditions and opportunities of the early life of Jesus.

“So with the great majority of the best and noblest men of all ages. Read the history of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph, of Moses, David, and Elisha. Study the lives of men of later times who have most worthily filled positions of trust and responsibility, the men whose influence has been most effective for the world's uplifting. “How many of these were reared in country homes. They knew little of luxury. They did not spend their youth in amusement. Many were forced to struggle with poverty and hardship. They early learned to work, and their active life in the open air gave vigor and elasticity to all their faculties. Forced to depend upon their own resources, they learned to combat difficulties and to surmount obstacles, and they gained courage and perseverance. They learned the lessons of self-reliance and self-control. Sheltered in a great degree from evil associations, they were satisfied with natural pleasures and



wholesome companionships. They were simple in their tastes and temperate in their habits. They were governed by principle, and they grew up pure and strong and true. When called to their lifework, they brought to it physical and mental power, buoyancy of spirit, ability to plan and execute, and steadfastness in resisting evil, that made them a positive power for good in the world.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 365, 366.

## Integrity in little things

“How was Joseph enabled to make such a record of firmness of character, uprightness, and wisdom?—In his early years he had consulted duty rather than inclination; and the integrity, the simple trust, the noble nature, of the youth bore fruit in the deeds of the man. A pure and simple life had favored the vigorous development of both physical and intellectual powers. Communion with God through His works and the contemplation of the grand truths entrusted to the inheritors of faith had elevated and ennobled his spiritual nature, broadening and strengthening the mind as no other study could do. Faithful attention to duty in every station, from the lowliest to the most exalted, had been training every power for its highest service. He who lives in accordance with the Creator’s will is securing to himself the truest and noblest development of character. ‘The

fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding’ (Job 28:28).”

“There are few who realize the influence of the little things of life upon the development of character. Nothing with which we have to do is really small. The varied circumstances that we meet day by day are designed to test our faithfulness and to qualify us for greater trusts. By adherence to principle in the transactions of ordinary life, the mind becomes accustomed to hold the claims of duty above those of pleasure and inclination. Minds thus disciplined are not wavering between right and wrong, like the reed trembling in the wind; they are loyal to duty because they have trained themselves to habits of fidelity and truth. By faithfulness in that which is least they acquire strength to be faithful in greater matters.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 222, 223.

Joseph understood the principle of being faithful in that which is least. May his victory be an inspiration to the youth in every age! 🍎







# The Joy That Is Set Before Us

Ellen G. White

**G**od asks the youth to serve Him with consecrated minds. The call that He gave to the humble fishermen on the shores of Galilee He gives to each soul. "Follow me," He says, "and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

The men of the world are ambitious for fame. They desire houses and lands and plenty of money, that they may be great according to the measure of the world. It is the height of their ambition to reach a place where they can look down with a sense of superiority upon those who are poor. These souls are building on the sand, and their house will fall suddenly. Superiority of position is not true greatness. That which does not increase the value of the soul is of no real value in itself.

The qualities which shine the brightest in the world have no place in the kingdom of God. Birth, position, wealth, and high-sounding titles find no special favor with Him. Today, as when He walked among men, Christ passes these by and accepts the men and women in the humble walks of life, who have His glory in view. The words He uttered on the mount are truth for all time. "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19). Whatever his learning, his wealth and position, heaven estimates the transgressor as the least of all God's creatures;



and the humble and obedient are regarded as of more value than the most exalted and wealthy and honored of earth.

Christ invites the youth to wear His yoke and lift His burdens. "Come unto me," He says, "take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). The reason we do so little in winning souls to Christ is that we have so little of Christ in us. The usefulness of the Christians will depend upon the measure of the grace [they have] received; and the measure of grace [they] receive will be proportionate to the use [they] make of the blessings that God gives [them].

You will have some estimate of your own worth when you become a laborer together with Christ, to fill the world with His righteousness. The Lord expects you to proclaim the message, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). You are to

work to bless those who have no sense of their need of a new heart, a new life and purpose. Someone must tell sinners of their great need; and those whom God has accepted as His sons and daughters must work as Christ worked. "If any man will come after me," the Saviour said, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Those who heed this call will study the meekness and lowliness of Christ, and will join with Him in His efforts to make the world better.

The commission Christ gave to the disciples He gives to all connected with Him. We are to make any and every sacrifice for the joy of seeing souls saved. Whatever work is done in the name of Jesus, to bless and elevate and restore human beings to the image of God, is as acceptable to the Lord as was the work of Moses or Joseph or Daniel. You who are the elect and chosen ones are to receive the divine commission to yoke up with Christ. You must never grow



weariness in well-doing. The highest honor that can be conferred upon human beings, be they young or old, rich or poor, is to be permitted to lift up the oppressed, comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak. The world is full of suffering; go, heal the sick, pray for the hopeless, preach the gospel to the poor.

The message of mercy that Christ brought from the Father to man was meant for the ears of the world: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). [ . . . ]

That Christ should take human nature and by a life of humiliation elevate man in the scale of moral worth with God; that He should carry His adopted nature to the throne of God, and there present His children to the Father, to have conferred upon them an honor exceeding that bestowed upon the angels—this is love that melts the sinner's heart. It is too much for the human mind to grasp, that God, having gathered together all the riches of the universe, and

laid open all the resources of His power, should place them in the hand of His Son, saying, All these I give to you for man. These are my gifts to him. Confer them upon him, that he may know that there is no love like Mine, and that his eternal happiness consists in giving Me his love in return. As the sinner contemplates this love, it broadens and deepens into infinitude, passing beyond his comprehension.

Colaborers with God are to fill the space they occupy in the world with the love of Jesus. The world needs spiritual workers, who will plant the seeds of truth in every heart. Christ calls upon us to be "instant in prayer" (Romans 12:12). By this He means that the heart is constantly to go out after God, while we watch for opportunities to do good to the souls that are ready to die.

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1:22). God has chosen you




to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth. Therefore stand fast. Your hardest conflict will be in keeping the straight and narrow path that leads to eternal life. In order to do this, you must die daily. If you serve God faithfully, you will meet with prejudice and opposition; but do not become provoked when you suffer wrongfully. Do not retaliate. Hold fast your integrity in Jesus

Christ. Set your face as a flint heavenward. Let others speak their own words and pursue their own course of action; it is for you to press on in the meekness and lowliness of Christ. Do your work with steadfast purpose, with purity of heart, with all your might and strength, leaning on the arm of God. The true and exalted nature of your work you may never know.

The value of your being you can measure only by the life given to save you. [ . . . ]

For every soul who is growing up into Christ there will be times of earnest and long-continued struggle; for the powers of darkness are determined to oppose the way of advance. But when we look to the cross of Christ for grace, we cannot fail. The promise of the Redeemer is, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20).—*The Youth's*

*Instructor*, November 2 and 9, 1899. 

*The greatest honor that can be conferred upon human beings, be they young or old, rich or poor, is to be permitted to lift up the oppressed, comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak.*



Sibiu, Romania

# A CALL TO PRAYER

for the 21st General Conference Session

**THIS IMPORTANT CONVOCATION  
WILL BE HELD AT:**

Sala Transilvania ([www.salatransilvania.ro](http://www.salatransilvania.ro))  
Str. Octavian Goga Nr. 1  
Sibiu, Romania

Young people, would you like to see God's work prosper? Would you like to see a powerful Young People's Department? Then pray earnestly for the 21st GC Delegation Session of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement scheduled for August 23 to September 8, 2011.

**YOUNG AND YOUNG-AT-HEART—ALL ARE INVITED**

to the spiritual meetings preceding the delegation session.

## EVENT

**SPIRITUAL MEETINGS**

## DATE

**AUGUST 18–21  
(THURSDAY–SUNDAY)**

## VENUE

**SIBIU, ROMANIA**

## THEME

**"HE IS COMING"**

The day after the meetings, on Monday, August 22, will be the dedication of the International Youth Convention and Family Retreat Center in Porumbacu, Romania.



For location, travel possibilities, access to Sibiu, hotels, contacts, and so forth:  
<http://gcsession.sdarm.org> or write to [gcsession@sdarm.org](mailto:gcsession@sdarm.org).

# Learning *Determination* From the Arctic Tern

Les Gibson



**T**he Bible says that “Daniel purposed [determined] in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself” (Daniel 1:8).

The word “determine” is defined as the act of determining or deciding, as the determination of a will.

With these terms in mind, we might think of determination as the breaking down of a seemingly impossible task, by concentrating on achievable goals. Biblical examples:

1. Moses, who led the children of Israel out of captivity.
2. Joshua, who led them into the Promised Land.

It is not only humans who have the determination to accomplish challenging tasks. God has endowed some of His lowlier creatures with this quality as well.

## *An Amazing Bird*

The Arctic tern is about 15 inches long. During the summer, the Arctic tern lives in the vicinity of the North Pole and enjoys 24 hours of summer sun for 4 months. In the autumn the bird begins to migrate south, ending up in the vicinity of the South Pole to enjoy another 4 months of 24-hour sunlight. This bird carries the world record of miles migrated. It seems that this bird has determined to stay in the light of the world. But at what a sacrifice!

## *Let's Add It All Up*

From the North Pole to the South Pole = 11,000 miles each way.

That makes 22,000 miles round trip every year for a lifetime of 20 years = 440,000 miles. All this so that the Arctic tern can stay in the light.

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). How determined are you to stay

in the light? How far will you go to avoid walking in darkness? What sacrifice will you make for Him?

Realistically, is the Arctic tern overwhelmed by those 440,000 miles? No! Would you be? Have you ever been overwhelmed by a seemingly impossible task? Were the children of Israel overwhelmed by a seemingly impossible task? Yes!

### ***Wandering in the Wilderness***

The children of Israel were told, “Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto us. Behold the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee: fear not, neither be discouraged. And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come” (Deuteronomy 1:20–22).

Twelve valiant men were selected, and they spent 40 days searching out the land and the cities (verses 19–46). Ten of them brought back a false report that the giants were too big and too many to conquer. The people were overwhelmed by the task and consequently were told “ye would not go up, but rebelled

against the commandment of the Lord your God” (verse 26).

Forty long, grueling years later, we find only two faithful spies still alive in all that vast multitude.

### ***In the Time of Joshua***

“Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. . . . Be strong and of a good courage: . . . Only be thou strong and very courageous. . . . Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” (Joshua 1:1, 2, 6, 7, 9).



*How determined are you to stay in the light? . . . What sacrifice will you make for Jesus?*

Notice how many times the Lord urged that Joshua be strong and of good courage.

These verses applied directly to Joshua at that time, but they also apply to the little Arctic terns as they make 20 round trips around the world in their lifetime, totaling 440,000 miles, plus all the little side trips to eat, mate, and so forth. How do these little birds manage this incredible feat? It's pretty simple, really. They break it all down to simple daily duties. In other words, they are strong and of a good courage. So let us learn to take life in stride, one day at a time.

In migration, the Arctic terns average 150 miles a day, they normally migrate close to shore on 1 of 2 routes, southward along the western coast of the U.S.A. and on down the coast of South America, or they follow the western coast of Europe and Africa in their route south. Either

way, in 10 short weeks they have reached their goal, the other end of the earth. After 4 months of summer sun down south, they return. So in the process of time, they have traveled completely around the world in a year.

*What about Joshua?*

Did Joshua follow this principle? Joshua was told, "Be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper [do wisely] whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (verses 7, 8).

How was Joshua able to do wisely and succeed? By simple daily duties:

"Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, Pass through the host, and command the people, saying,



Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it” (verses 10, 11). In other words, in three days they were to see the mission accomplished. Then in the conquest of Jericho, by following God’s instructions, they saw another victory within six days. Joshua “left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses. So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same” (Joshua 11:15, 16).

### *Pressing Through the Fog*

One more tidbit about the Arctic tern: Even though this incredible bird travels many thousands of miles over water, it doesn’t stop when it gets foggy. And it never gets lost or goes off its course. It somehow stays on its original course. Amazing.

People should be as wise as that. “Notwithstanding the repeated urgent warnings God has given, many have been turned away from their original faith and are lost in

the fog of error. They have refused to follow the light that God has given to point out the true path.”—*The Paulson Collection*, p. 201.

“So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war” (verse 23). Do we want to rest from our war? Do we long for the heavenly Canaan? Are there any overwhelming tasks in my life? Do I desire the walls to come tumbling down? Do I walk in the light? Do I get caught in the fog? We have our marching orders: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Does it sound overwhelming?

#### **Let’s learn from the Arctic tern:**

1. We must trust our Creator.
2. We must stay in the sun (the Son of righteousness).
3. We must not get lost in the fog.
4. We must break down everything into doable daily duties.
5. We must not leave anything undone that the Lord has commanded. 🕒



# The Golden Rule

A. Balbach

**P**ractically all disputes about personal rights can be settled with justice and truth on both sides, on the basis of the principle—Treat others as you would like them to treat you. This is the golden rule of Christ's religion (Matthew 7:12). Here is one example showing how the Master Himself refused to meddle in quarrels.

One man had a problem with his brother concerning the division of their father's property. So he came to Jesus and said: "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me" (Luke 12:13). He apparently thought his brother might be induced to yield if his greed would be denounced by the Lord.

The real difficulty behind the dispute was selfishness. Even the man who was now complaining about the unrighteousness of his brother had a selfish disposition. He asked help from Christ—not for the salvation of his soul—but to advance his worldly interests. He just wanted to secure the earthly inheritance, of which he said he had been defrauded.

## What was Jesus trying to teach?

The King of kings was opening the heavenly treasures to those He had come to save. He warned: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (verse 15).



“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,” He said, “and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). An “inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 1:4) was placed within the reach of the man who believed he had been wronged, yet his eyes were fixed on the things that belong to this world. He had no time for “some better thing” that God has provided for those that love Him (Hebrews 11:40). What a warning to us all! Christ’s answer to the worldly-minded man was, “Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you” (Luke 12:14)? The Master was not to be diverted from His important mission in order to split a disputed property. Had He consented to waste His precious time settling such disputes, the devil would have induced so many people to bring their quarrels to Him that He would have been hindered from doing the work He had come to do. In Christ’s answer there is a lesson for us: We should beware of getting involved in worldly problems to the extent of endangering our eternal interests.

## What does greed do?

The selfish state of mind has filled the world with arguments and bloodshed. But the teachings of Christ offer a prescription which, if accepted, would blot out this evil characteristic of fallen human nature and cut off the root of all

the miseries in the world. The Lord said, “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (Matthew 7:12). Selfishness and the golden rule do not go together, for they are directly opposed to each other.

## A modern example

Two brothers began to quarrel with each other about how to divide their father’s farm. In his will the father had written that his two sons should split the property equally, but still they were not able to come to an agreement. Each one wanted to have the better part for himself. Finally, they went to court. Their case was handled by Paul Kruger, a judge who was reputed to be very fair in settling such matters. (Later he became president of Transvaal.) After having listened to their arguments carefully, the judge said, “The matter is very simple. One of you will divide the land as he deems it best; the other will choose whichever of the two parts he prefers.”

Kruger used the golden rule (Matthew 7:12). That was the end of the disagreement.

There should be no room for contentions over material things among Christians, not only because they should know and apply the principle of equal rights and duties, but also because they should set their

spiritual interests far above their material projects.

## When tempted . . .

Christ questions the wisdom of anyone who prefers the short-lived, deceptive, temporal advantages offered by Satan rather than the eternal life attended with the blessings of God.


Worldly-mindedness is a serious threat to the professed followers of Christ. “Love not the world,” says the apostle, “neither the things that are in the world. . . . The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15, 17).

The love of the world is a very effective tool in the hands of Satan to turn professed Christians away from the kingdom of heaven. The enemy of souls comes to us with the same temptations he tried on Christ. He whispers into our ears: “Come to me all of you who are unhappy with your situation. I can give you riches, fame, and sensual pleasures. You will enjoy the good things of this world and forget all your troubles. Yes, you will be able to live your

own life.” This is how people fall into the snare of the deceiver. By turning their hearts to the world, they become slaves of the power of darkness and end up living not their own lives, but actually the life of Satan.

Unless our minds are directed upward in the heaven-bound channel, we are lost. But how can we gain victory over selfishness and covetousness? By submitting our thoughts to Christ. Turn away all evil imaginations and proud pretensions and bring every thought into obedience to Christ. Our thoughts can be delivered from the control of Satan and brought under the Lord’s protection.

## Safe in His palm


Suppose you are standing by a tree and see a baby bird fall out of its nest. And there comes the cat, ready to pounce on this poor little thing. What do you do? You dash toward the little bird, pick it up from the ground and ensure its safety. The bird is now safe from the claws of the cat. If the bird could speak, it would say, “Thank you for giving me shelter!” In the same way, we are to let Christ get hold of our mind—for protection. Whoever has gone through this experience has all his or her thoughts, abilities, and actions channeled into the pursuit of that better inheritance (1 Peter 1:4) which is actually worth striving for. 





## ***When you feel overwhelmed with the guilt of sin, say . . .***

“Jesus is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Will you not repent of your sins and let Him take away your guilt? Will you not say ‘Lord, You come to take away my sins, and I will let You do it’? Will you let Him take them away? Will you let Him take them upon His divine soul and impute to you His righteousness?”—*The Review and Herald*, September 20, 1892.

“Looking unto Jesus, who is the Author and Finisher of our faith, with perfect assurance we may commit the keeping of our souls unto Him, while we cooperate with divine agencies. Every soul may say: ‘Lord, without Thee I can do nothing in saving or keeping my soul from sinning against Thee; but Thou art able to keep me from falling, and to present me faultless before the presence of Thy glory with exceeding joy. To Thee I commit the keeping of my soul as unto a faithful guardian, and I leave all in Thy hands, knowing that Thou doest all things well.’ ”—*The Signs of the Times*, May 15, 1893. 



# Test Your Reading!

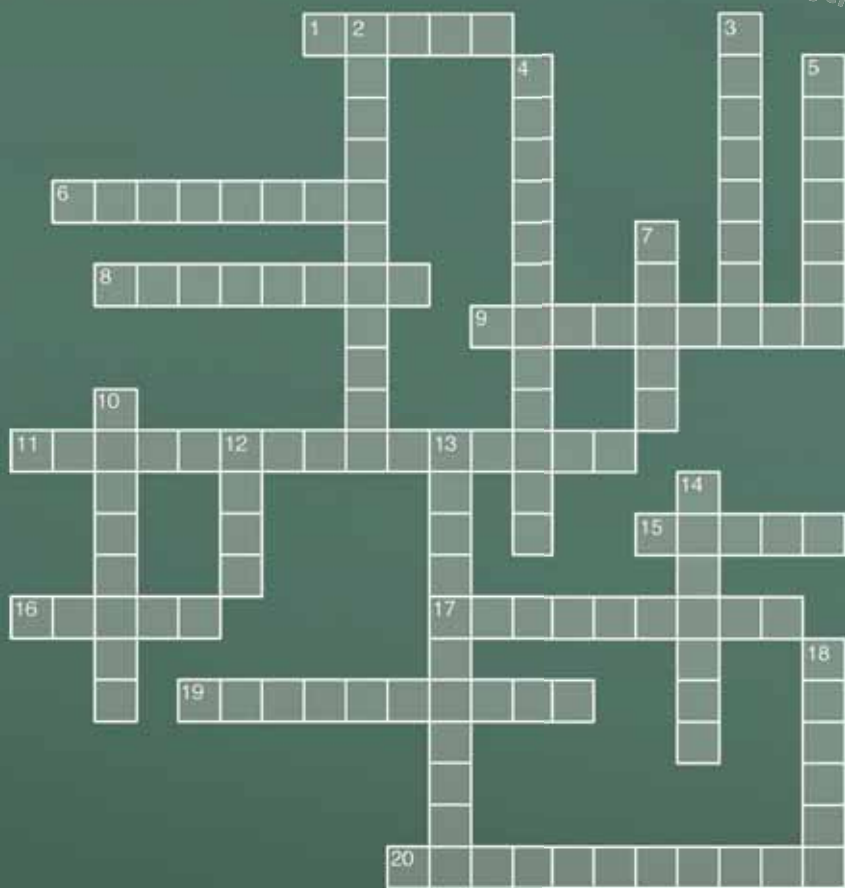
## ACROSS

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ lifestyle promoted the spirituality of Jesus, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Daniel, and others.
6. Minds that consider duty before pleasure are disciplined to not be \_\_\_\_\_ between right and wrong.
8. We can train our brains to build new \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Our eternal \_\_\_\_\_ consists in giving our love to God.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ is the brain's ability to change and rewire itself.
15. You will have some estimate of your own \_\_\_\_\_ when you become a laborer together with Christ.
16. The Arctic tern doesn't stop flying just because the sky is \_\_\_\_\_.
17. When you suffer wrongfully, do not \_\_\_\_\_.
19. Our thoughts can be delivered from the control of Satan.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ and the golden rule are directly opposed to one another.

## DOWN

2. Joseph had firmness of character, wisdom, and \_\_\_\_\_ in his youth by consulting duty rather than inclination.
3. The way we eat affects our \_\_\_\_\_ neuron fibers.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ when annoying things happen they can be replaced by a new response.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ are formed along our neural pathways as we develop new habits.
7. Our mind develops according to training methods we use on a \_\_\_\_\_ basis.
10. Just as the Arctic tern pursues continual \_\_\_\_\_, so should we constantly seek the light of Christ.
12. We as young people need to \_\_\_\_\_ for the upcoming General Conference Session.
13. Joshua gave the whole land as an \_\_\_\_\_ to Israel.
14. The 2011 GC Session will be held in \_\_\_\_\_.
18. The majority of the best and noblest men have been simple in their tastes and \_\_\_\_\_.







# A Tour of My Heart

Mark A. Hernandez

*"In the soothing radiance  
of the rising sun,  
I opened my heart and invited  
God's Only Begotten Son.  
His smile swept  
all anguish and sorrow,  
His face shined with warmth,  
love, and compassion.  
He can have all my tomorrows."*

**A**s I opened the door, Christ entered in as I allowed Him a tour of my heart. With keys to open every access of it, I welcomed Him to see all of my heart. All except one part!

During the tour, I escorted Him to the chamber of happiness and affection, then to the one of gratitude and thanks to Him that cared for me from the very start. Christ rejoiced! I even guided Him to the unpleasant chamber of rejection and heartache. As He looked, a tear came down His beautiful cheek because

*The purging and purification is part of dying to self. . . . I began to notice a change in my heart.*

He knows that part very well, because He died from a broken heart.

He also noticed that every chamber entry was opened for Him, except one. All the doors that were opened, He was welcome to stay and reign as the Chosen One.

He asked me about the one that was closed, not only closed—but locked, barred, and chained shut. With compassion and sympathy, He entreated me to unfasten the closed door and let Him in. He reminded me of the scriptures of giving God our whole heart and surrendering all to Him. I cautioned Him and cried, because He would be very disappointed. This particular corridor is not anointed. This passage had things that I cherish. A chamber filled with darkness. He responded, “I AM the Light.”

With a calm and soft voice, He asked me to open and unchain the door. As I obeyed, my whole face had guilt written all over it because of what this shadowy chamber had in store. Up to that point of the tour of my heart, I only showed and gave to Christ the parts of my heart that

I wanted Him to notice and have, nothing more. The good and sad chambers weren’t that difficult to give up. For these do not constitute the core.

**What about that one room?**

But now He wants entry to the ugliest assembly room, the hall of cherished sins with its character defects, flaws, and devilish attributes. So, with fear and trembling, I surrendered the chamber of cherished sins and gave Him entrance. I couldn’t bear as He began to enter in, regretting giving Him the chance. As I saw a Holy God going into the darkest passage, the darkest component of my heart, I humbled my whole being and planted myself face down on the floor. With all bravery, I watched on as my tears ran down like a stream. Tears of woe! Jesus entered and the Light shone on everything I cherished—that is, love of self, money, and the things of the world. The chamber overflowed with ambitions for fame, glory, high position, and with lust of every type. I smelled the stench of Satan himself—of pride, unforgiveness, hate, and envy. In Christ’s light, the chamber of sinful nature was truly revealed; it was dreadful and filthy. It was a dark and dismal torment, an ocean of iniquity and transgression. I begged Him to take full reign of that hideous chamber and every other chamber. But I still held the keys



to the chamber door—especially that chamber door—that demon-occupied lobby of cherished sins. With my face and body planted on the floor, I shut my eyes and my tears flowed because of my guilt, and disgrace because of what that chamber harbored: Death.

I heard the door shut softly, not bearing to see His face. At that time, I desired more death than to glimpse upon the face of my Creator and Judge. I felt His nail-scarred hands lift me up. He embraced me and asked me to look on Him, to fix my eyes on Him, but I couldn't because I felt condemned. With a gentle touch of His hand, He wiped my tears away and slowly I opened my eyes. To my amazement, He still had a glorious smile. His face shined brighter with love, compassion, pity, and forgiveness. He spoke to me in a still and calm voice. He was interested in a deal, an exchange. He wanted every chamber of the heart and all the keys that opened every chamber door, including the chamber of cherished sins. He asked my permission to take possession of all the keys of every chamber, meaning the heart, the whole heart, so that He could remove some things restore some things, renew some things and recover some things. So, I consented

and gave Him permission and handed Him all the keys. I gave Him my entire heart for Him to do according to His will and good pleasure.

### What happened next?

At first it was painful; I was in agony during the renovation of the chambers of my mind and spirit. At times, I couldn't take it, but He stated that His grace was sufficient. During the process, I began to think that this exchange, this deal, didn't seem fair. Then He explained how the purging and purification is part of the process of dying to self.

I began to notice a change in my heart: A sense of peace, joy, forgiveness, and humbleness. Of course, I sensed this before, but not as strong or vibrant. Now, I'm content with all that God gives me. All my cherished sins are gone. The chamber of cherished sins has been removed by the blood that flowed from Christ's nail-marked hands molding and recreating my entire heart. Now, my heart beats: Life! As I thanked Him for what He has done in my heart, He says that the trade or exchange is over.

He seems to say, "My child, you gave me the keys of every chamber of your heart. Your heart is where I will dwell. In exchange, I'm giving you another set of keys that gives you free access to Me." 🌿

# The Seven Cities of Cibola


In 1540, the Spanish conquistadores were making claims in the New World and were fervently exploring Mexico. The Native Indians, however, were not happy about these foreigners taking their land and wealth. So perhaps to rid themselves of these adventurers, they distracted the Spaniards with the legend of the Seven Cities of Cibola.

Cibola was a “city of gold” full of treasures beyond imagination and far, far away from the Indians’ clay villages. The Spaniards had come to increase the riches of Spain. And now the promise of wealth lay just ahead in these golden cities! So, led by Francisco de Coronado, 300 Spaniards and hundreds of captive Indians went forward to search for these fictitious cities.

On and on they wandered for two years before Coronado and his army finally realized they had been fooled.

The devil tries to distract us with modern Cibolas, too. He makes things look fun that actually have very bad consequences. Sometimes he camouflages his Cibolas in good things, like buying a new car. Cars aren’t bad—a car is a useful invention. Yet, is it really a good thing when you have to work nights and skip prayer meetings to pay for a more expensive car? Is a new house really needed when it forces you to put in more hours at work, cramming your devotions into five minutes of hasty reading or one-breath prayers? Check your goals and see if maybe there aren’t among them some Cibolas, and if they’re not mere distractions.

Coronado dragged his men over 3,000 miles before he realized he had been tricked. Don’t wait until it’s too late to wake up and see you have been fooled! Don’t fall for the devil’s myths. Don’t waste 3,000 miles in the wrong direction. Rather, “be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

Stay focused, watch out for any Cibolas in your life. Don’t get distracted and lose sight of God so you won’t lose the chance to arrive at the true City of Gold, Heaven. 

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## "HEAR YE HIM"

*I will listen, let me know  
All Thy words, my Lord, below.  
Faithful record, pure and true,  
Let me look Thy pages through.*

*Thine own book! Thy Testament!  
Does it tell the Father sent  
His own Son to set us free  
From the law eternally?*

*Like His brethren He became;  
Flesh and blood, He took the same.  
Wondrous works of love He wrought,  
Wondrous words of truth He taught.*

*"Think not—ye who seek My aim—  
To destroy the law I came.  
I obey My Father's will,  
All His righteous law fulfill.*

*"Truly, truly, thus I say—  
Heaven and earth shall pass away,  
Ere one jot or tittle be  
Unfulfilled all perfectly.*

*"Whosoever breaketh, then,  
E'en the least, and teacheth men  
Thus to break commandments given,  
Shall be called the least in Heaven."*

*So agree the writings all,  
Mark, and Luke, and John, and Paul,  
Teaching us with solemn awe,  
To regard God's perfect law.*

*Jesus came on earth to win  
Straying souls from paths of sin.  
Those who follow Him in word and deed,  
Are by Him truly freed!*

— J. E. Lloyd



HOLY  
BIBLE