

YOUTH messenger

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BUILDING AN AMAZING LIFE

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A "SCHOOL DAYS" EXPERIENCE

Building an Amazing Life

Dear friends, God promises to supply all our needs when we ask in faith (Matthew 7:7). He guarantees that His faithful children will live life to its maximum potential—physically, mentally and spiritually. But far too often, we take His assurances for granted and expect to reach the desired destination while neglecting to take the necessary small steps that would get us there. To build a structure that won't get blown away in the first heavy wind requires a careful, step-by-step process. The same is true when building a Christlike character that will stand through life's storms—strong enough to endure even to eternity.

Sometimes we fear that an authentic Christian life would require too much self sacrifice, that Biblical principles are too restrictive or that living with Jesus would be boring. So, we take shortcuts in our everyday walk, only to end up lost and confused. We too often doubt God's promises instead of distrusting self.

So we may need to start all over again—this time the right way, which is the only way to fulfill our God-given destiny. Don't be afraid or ashamed to face that reality. Go forward with it. Remember that without Christ, we can do nothing, while we can do everything through Him who strengthens us.

In this magazine, you'll learn about simple steps in daily living and the impact these can have in your own life and in the lives of others. Enjoy—and make it amazing!

—ADRIAN FINARU

NO FEAR?

by Barbara Montrose

"IF THOU, LORD, SHOULDEST MARK INIQUITIES,
O LORD, WHO SHALL STAND?
BUT THERE IS FORGIVENESS WITH THEE,
THAT THOU MAYEST BE FEARED"
(PSALM 130:3, 4).

There's a popular expression that's been going around in recent years: "No fear". It means different things to different people. But while it's true that courage is to be commended, there's a certain fear that we should not avoid. Actually, it is an extremely healthy—and wise—fear for us to cultivate.

The fear of God. Often we try to explain away that the fear of God simply means reverence and respect. There may be some validity to that—but actually, to fear God is something much greater than we realize. It seems that the farther away we get from the actual creation of the world—that is, the more history unfolds—the farther we seem to be from actually understanding what it is to have a pure, genuine fear of God.

FEAR INTRODUCED

Where should we go to get a clearer picture of this important quality? Your school textbook explains concepts in the beginning of the book. Later in the book it is assumed that you already know those things, so the author builds upon them. Likewise with God's textbook, the Bible.

So, in order to understand the fear of God, let's start in Genesis. That's where this fear is first described by Jacob while he was alone in the wilderness.

"Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the

Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (Genesis 28:16, 17).

Dreadful! That's no light description. Jacob was overtaken with wonder and astonishment. When Jacob's father Abraham encountered the Almighty, he fell on his face (Genesis 17:3). So did Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:3, 4).

What should we learn from the depiction of Moses in the mount? "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:" (Hebrews 12:18-21).

WHY SHOULD WE FEAR GOD, ANYWAY?

1 For Who He is.
"Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and

to be had in reverence of all [them that are] about him. O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them" (Psalm 89:6-9). "Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee" (Jeremiah 10:6, 7).

2 For what He has done.
"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:6-9). "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3). God made the universe out of nothing! All He has to

do is speak and it happens! There is a scientific law that matter cannot be created nor destroyed—it can simply change form. Yes, that's true—it cannot be created by human power. But, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord" (Genesis 18:14)?


3 For what He is doing.
"Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men" (Psalm 66:5). "Has not God given you every evidence of His love? Did He not allow Jesus to come to this world as our pattern? Men could not endure the perfection of Christ's character, and they took and crucified Him. There is a crucifixion that must go on in our lives, a constant dying to self and sin. We must walk circumspectly, that our lives may preach the gospel of Christ to those with whom we associate. If we will speak and walk circumspectly, the light of Christ will be revealed in our lives." —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, p. 25. This light of Christ being revealed in our lives is evidence of His activity right now. The Holy Spirit is working in your life. That's why you decided to read this article in this magazine. God is drawing you with cords of love. Perhaps the

biggest thing He wants you to know about is His forgiveness! "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared" (Psalm 130:3, 4). Because this forgiveness is so great, so vast, so unsearchable, we fear Him. We fear Him because we love Him. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

WHAT IS THE RESULT OF THIS FEAR?

"Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." (Psalm 34:11-18).

"The youth will not become weak-minded or inefficient by consecrating themselves to the service of God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The youngest child that loves and fears God is greater in His sight than the most talented and learned man who neglects the great salvation. The youth who consecrate their hearts and lives to God have, in so doing, placed themselves in connection with the Fountain of all wisdom and excellence."—*Messages to Young People*, p. 329. [Emphasis supplied.]

"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:25-29). 

IMPACT!

By Joan Sureshkumar

We are all familiar with historical social figures such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela and various others. What about others such as John Bunyan, John Wesley, Martin Luther, and so forth? Similarly, in the biblical world, we have heard endless iterations about the life of those such as Joshua, Daniel and his friends, Joseph—and the list could be quite extensive. What exactly do these groups of people have in common? They were obviously from different time periods and have different relevance to our history. But, did you notice the key word in the previous sentence, “relevance”? All those mentioned above have made a difference that permeated into society, tussled with the way society functioned, and made a lasting impact that still affects us today.

So what about you? Have you thought about the kind of impact that you could make or are making? At this vital time in your lives the world could seem vast and daunting, yet it is filled

with endless opportunities. Now you may ask: “How could I make such an earth shattering change when I am so young?” Let’s take a look at youth in the Bible that God has used.

DANIEL

George Washington wisely stated, “Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.” This rings true in the case of Daniel, the young Hebrew. We are all quite familiar with the story of Daniel and his friends, who were taken from their homeland and sent to Babylon. Unlike the other young men who were also taken, Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, refused to indulge themselves by partaking of the same food as the rest of the members of the royal court. In doing so, these young men stood up for their principles and captured the attention of the king.

“What if Daniel and his companions had made a compromise with those heathen officers, and had yielded to the pressure of the occasion by eating and drinking as was customary with the Babylonians? That single instance of departure from principle would have weakened their sense of right and their abhorrence of wrong.” (*Councils on Health*, p. 65, 66.) Thus, a simple act of practicing temperance in appetite had a great impact on even the rulers of the land. (Daniel 1:1-21.)

DAVID

David, the son of Jesse, had his humble beginnings as a shepherd before he went on to become the second king of Israel. He is also known for his various talents; he is known to have been a skilled musician, an experienced warrior, a prominent psalmist, and a loyal friend. Though he possessed various talents and was an excellent king, David faced a plethora of temptations and succumbed to many of them. While David's life is blemished with transgressions, it is evident that he loved God and truly longed to serve Him to his fullest ability. It is also evident through his properly chronicled life that through earnest self-examination and fervent prayer we all can attain forgiveness. He is also known to be the ancestor of Jesus. Acts 13:22 states, “I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which

shall fulfil all my will.” Looking at David's life, today's society might consider him to be a flawed individual. Yet, David's name is mentioned Hebrew 11:32-34 among the faithful: “And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to fight the armies of the aliens.”

JOSEPH

Imagine growing up in a house with ten other siblings who were older, stronger, and more experienced. Joseph was the eleventh son of Jacob, but the first son of Rachel. Much to his brothers' discontent, Jacob's love for Rachel earned Joseph a special place in his father's heart. This quickly triggered envy and animosity, due to Joseph's dreams depicting his older brothers' bowing down to him in subservience. Being sold into captivity to Egyptians by one's own brothers would prove to be a tragedy in anyone's life, but Joseph chose instead to follow in the footsteps of his forefathers. “Joseph's checkered life was not an accident; it was ordered of Providence.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 174.

“FAVOUR IS DECEITFUL, AND BEAUTY IS VAIN: BUT A WOMAN THAT FEARETH THE LORD, SHE SHALL BE PRAISED” (PROVERBS 31:30).

In Potiphar's house, in prison, in the presence of the Pharaoh, and finally his reacceptance of his brothers prove that through trust in God and abstaining from erroneous behavior Joseph was a shining light and an instrument in the saving of a nation.

“Joseph's real character shines out, even in the darkness of the dungeon. He held fast his faith and patience.”—Ibid.

WOMEN

We are all familiar with stories about young men in the Bible and the great things they have done that impacted history, but what about women? “Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised” (Proverbs 31:30).

ESTHER

Esther is considered by many to be the epitome of Biblical heroines—she was young, beautiful, loyal, kind, faithful, powerful, and a princess who saved the lives of her people. Orphaned at a young age, she was raised by her cousin Mordecai. She was eventually taken, along with other eligible young women in the kingdom, to be presented to the king to choose

a new queen. Among the hundreds of other women, Esther clearly made an impression on the King's mind and soon became the queen. Through the help of Mordecai, she even saved the life of the king by revealing news of an attempted assassination. When Haman, a high ranking advisor to the king, plotted to exterminate the Jews, an alarmed Esther requested the aid of her friends and people to pray and fast with her for three days before appearing before the king uninvited. Bravely proclaiming, “And if I perish, I perish” she went before the king and by cleverly requesting his presence at a banquet, she was able to disclose Haman's secret plans and save the Jews.

“A study of women's work in connection with the cause of God in Old Testament times will teach us lessons that will enable us to meet emergencies in the work today. We may not be brought into such a critical and prominent place as were the people of God in the time of Esther; but often converted women can act an important part in more humble positions. This many have been doing, and are still ready to do.”

—*Special Testimonies*, Series B, p. 15.

ABIGAIL

There are quite a few prominent women in the Bible that stand out for various reasons. Very little is known about Abigail, yet she is one such woman who, through her clever thinking and piety, saved the life of her husband and others. While encamped, David and his men provided protection to Nabal's flocks of sheep and cattle. When provisions were requested by David's men during a celebration, Nabal not only refused but also mocked them. Enraged, David set out with his men to destroy Nabal. Abigail's servant went to her with this new information and with her quick thinking she was able to gather together food and other offerings to appease David's wrath and save the life of her husband.


It is clear that Abigail was a clever woman of virtue who

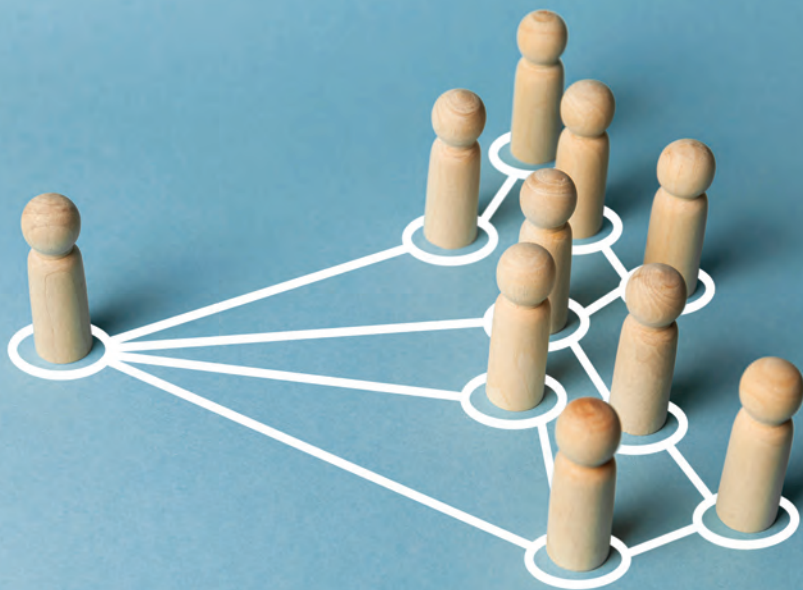
was trusted and beloved by her servants that they trusted her to have the wisdom to take quick actions with such tragic news. She was courageous, prudent, resourceful, and quick to action. In that moment, when her husband's selfishness created a need for her to flee for her life, she remained behind and saved the life of not only her husband, but also the whole household. "With nothing of ostentation or pride, but full of the wisdom and love of God, Abigail revealed the strength of her devotion to her household [...] Abigail did not take to herself the credit of this reasoning to turn David from his hasty purpose, but gave to God the honor and the praise [...] In the character of Abigail, the wife of Nabal, we have an illustration of womanhood after the order of Christ."—*Daughters of God*, p. 42.



THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

While on their way from Jerusalem to Galilee, a very exhausted Jesus rested at Jacob's well while His disciples went to the village of Sychar to buy food. A Samaritan woman came at midday to draw water at the well. This was quite peculiar, as it was uncommon for women to come to draw water at the hottest time of day. Much to the woman's dismay and against all local customs, this Jewish man decided to talk to her; even more shockingly he asked her for water. This startling introduction paved the way for a life-changing conversation. Upon realizing the immensity of the truth she had just heard, she rushed back to the village

to enthusiastically inform the town's people and bring them the source of all truth. Jesus remained with them for two days—"And many more believed because of his own word; And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (John 4:41, 42). "She proved herself a more effective missionary than His own disciples [...] But through the woman whom they despised a whole city full were brought to hear Jesus. She carried the light at once to her countrymen. This woman represents the working of a practical faith in Christ." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 102. 



by Joan
Sureshkumar



How Can You MAKE AN IMPACT?

We've read about the number of youth in the Bible that have made an impact in someone's life or to society. While many of us yearn to make a difference, it can be quite daunting and it becomes quite easy to compare ourselves to great people in history and think it is impossible for someone like me to do that. In moments like those, you only have to look and see that they are so many examples of both young men and women who have all been in difficult situations and have been pushed to the brink but stood firm and came out triumphant. What about you and me? How do we go about doing something like that? "These people have all saved nations and done things

that impacted history. I can't do that" you may say, but the key is, all these youth didn't get to that point in life at a moment's notice. It is all due to a strong foundation.

THE FOUNDATION

Growing up we've all sung the song about the wise man and the foolish man. What was the main difference between the two men? While one decided to build his house on sandy ground the other decided to build his house on solid rock to ensure a strong foundation. Like any strong building needs a strong foundation, a strong character also needs a strong foundation.

"That is all well and good, but how do you form a strong foundation? I am no longer an

infant learning and forming habits” you may inquire. “It is by small things that our characters are formed to habits of integrity. It is only by exercising principle in small transactions of ordinary life that we are tested and our characters formed.” *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 23).

As seen by the examples of the above-mentioned youth, we see that while they were faithful in little things in their early life they, through the help of the Holy Spirit, were preparing for the greater test that lay ahead waiting for them.

A good character must be built up brick by brick. Those characteristics which will enable the youth to labor successfully in God’s cause must be obtained by the diligent exercise of their faculties, by improving every advantage Providence gives them, and by connecting with the Source of all wisdom”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 59.

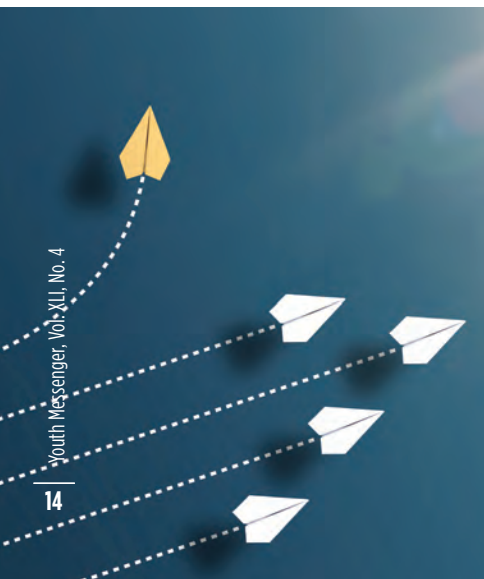
“Strength of character consists of two things—power of will and power of self-control. Many youth

mistake strong, uncontrolled passion for strength of character; but the truth is that he who is mastered by his passions is a weak man. The real greatness and nobility of the man is measured by his powers to subdue his feelings, not by the power of his feelings to subdue him. The strongest man is he who, while sensitive to abuse, will yet restrain passion and forgive his enemies.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 413.

HOW MUCH IS AN UPRIGHT CHARACTER WORTH?

Our character qualities distinguish us and set us apart from the billions of others on this planet. We know that people with good character are held in high regard, but how much is a good character worth? Is it worth your reputation? Wealth? Or fame? In fact, it is stated that “an upright character is of greater worth than the gold of Ophir.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 223.

“Young men and women should regard a good character as a capital of more value than gold or silver or stocks. It will be unaffected by panics and failures, and will bring rich returns when earthly possessions shall be swept away”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 656. Our characters are the only things we can take to heaven and “Without it none can rise to an honorable eminence”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 223. It is the only quality that can distinguish us as His own people. “Ye are a chosen generation, a



royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

ACQUIRING AN UPRIGHT CHARACTER

If a good character is essential for entrance into the eternal kingdom, how can you and I acquire this entry ticket? "Character is not inherited. It cannot be bought. Moral excellence and fine mental qualities are not the result of accident. The most precious gifts are of no value unless they are improved. The formation of a noble character is the work of a lifetime and must be the result of diligent and persevering effort. God gives opportunities; success depends upon the use made of them."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 223.

"A noble character is not the result of accident; it is not due to special favors or endowments of Providence. It is the result of self-discipline, of subjection of the lower to the higher nature, of the surrender of self to the service of God and man."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 488.

"The mental and moral powers which God has given us do not constitute character. They are talents, which we are to improve, and which, if properly improved, will form a right character. A man may have precious seed in

It Starts With You

his hand, but that seed is not an orchard. The seed must be planted before it can become a tree. The mind is the garden, the character is the fruit. God has given us our faculties to cultivate and develop. Our own course determines our character. In training these powers so that they shall harmonize and form a valuable character, we have a work which no one but ourselves can do."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 606.

CONCLUSION

As the pressure to stand out and make an impact on the world mounts, it is easy for us to look for inspiration from great leaders or social/historical figures, but let us be sure to look in the main source of inspiration. The Bible presents a plethora of examples of youth who have overcome insurmountable obstacles. "In perfecting a Christian character, it is essential to persevere in right doing"—*Messages to young People*, p. 46. By forming a strong character with a solid foundation based on Christ, we can surely make an impact on the world. 🌟

A man with brown hair and a beard, wearing a dark grey suit jacket over a white shirt, is looking off to the side. He is holding the lapel of his jacket with his right hand.

LESSONS FROM A LIFE

*A Bible and Spirit of
Prophecy compilation,
with comments by
Alex Gurduiala*

Part 1 of 2

"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 9:23, 24).

Several years ago, I heard the story of Larry Walters, a 33-year-old man who decided he wanted to see his neighborhood from a new perspective. He went down to the local army surplus store one morning and bought 45 used weather balloons. That afternoon he strapped himself into a lawn chair, to which several of his friends tied the now helium-filled balloons. He took along a six-pack of beer, a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich, and a BB gun, figuring he could shoot the balloons one at a time when he was ready to land. Walters, who assumed the balloons would lift him about 100 feet in the air, was caught off guard when the chair soared more than 11,000 feet into the sky—smack into the middle of the air traffic pattern at Los Angeles International Airport. Too frightened to shoot any of the balloons, he stayed airborne for more than two hours, forcing the airport to shut down its runways for much of the afternoon, causing long delays in flights from across the country. Soon after he was safely grounded and cited by the police, reporters asked him: "Larry, why did you do it?" To which Larry replied simply, "Because sometimes

you gotta do something—you can't just sit there."

Larry Walters was **tired of looking at life from the same old vantage point**—he wanted to see things from a new perspective. But does that always work out well?

In Bible history, when King David was approaching death, he expressed, "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain" (2 Samuel 23:3, 4).

Solomon, David's heir, had every opportunity to make that happen. He was predisposed to be a good king and ruler. His father's charge to him was that he be strong, to prove himself to be a man, and to keep the commandments of the Lord.

THE EARLY REIGN OF SOLOMON

We read that shortly after being crowned king, "Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father: only

he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places. And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the

midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" (1 Kings 3:3-9).

The Lord honored Solomon's wise yet humble request by freely granting him not only wisdom, but also fame and fortune. Why? He wanted to give Solomon a perfect heart, that he would keep God's law and build up His kingdom (1 Chronicles 22:12, 19). As a result of the king's obedience, the nation would be blessed and the world would declare, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people" (Deuteronomy 4:6).

In answer to the prayer of the youthful king, "God gave Solomon



wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men" (1 Kings 4:29–31).

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS?

"Those who today occupy positions of trust should seek to learn the lesson taught by Solomon's prayer. The higher the position a man occupies, the greater the responsibility that he has to bear, the wider will be the influence that he exerts and the greater his need of dependence on God. **Ever should he remember that with the call to work comes the call to walk circumspectly before his fellow men.** He is to stand before God in the attitude of a learner. **Position does not give holiness of character.** It is by honoring God and obeying His commands that a man is made truly great." —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 30, 31. [Emphasis supplied.]

BUILDING THE TEMPLE

God is honored by excellence, and the temple to be built to His honor was to be magnificent because our God is greater than all other gods. (2 Chronicles 2:5.) Exact specifications were given to direct the construction of the temple, and both God and His people were honored by this beautiful place of worship.

DOWNFALL

In view of all that Solomon had going for him, how do we account for this wise and humble king falling away from God?

Problem #1: Promiscuity.

Unfortunately, "Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart" (1 Kings 11:1–3).

Solomon had become a degenerate immoralist. The foreign women whom he had married had turned his heart away from God. His large harem was a transgression beyond all conceivable bounds.

Problem #2: Business deals made without the fear of God.


"Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, which he placed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem. And the king made silver and gold at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycamore

trees that are in the vale for abundance. And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price. And they fetched up, and brought forth out of Egypt a chariot for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty: and so brought they out horses for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, by their means" (2 Chronicles 1:14-17).

The practice of a king to gather multiple horses, multiple wives—and even gold and silver to excess—was contrary to God's plain command that had been a requirement from the early days of the nation:

"When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt" (Deuteronomy 17:14-16). As a result, the trap that Satan had set for Solomon got worse:

"In seeking to strengthen his relations with the powerful kingdom lying to the southward of Israel, Solomon ventured upon forbidden ground. Satan knew the results that would attend obedience; and during the earlier years of Solomon's reign—years glorious because of the wisdom, the beneficence, and the uprightness of the king—he sought to bring in influences that would insidiously undermine Solomon's loyalty to principle and cause him to separate from God. That the enemy was successful in this effort, we know from the record: 'Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the City of David' (1 Kings 3:1).

"From a human point of view, this marriage, though contrary to the teachings of God's law, seemed to prove a blessing; for Solomon's heathen wife was converted and united with him in the worship of the true God. Furthermore, Pharaoh rendered signal service to Israel by taking Gezer. . . . But in forming an alliance with a heathen nation, and sealing the compact by marriage with an idolatrous princess, Solomon rashly disregarded the wise provision that God had made for maintaining the purity of His people. The hope that his Egyptian wife might be converted was but a feeble excuse for the sin." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 53. 

—Alex Gurduiala writes
from Maryland, U.S.A.





God *Answers* Prayers!

By Eunice Gessner

It was one of those days when the books felt heavier than usual, when the sun felt hotter than normal, and when the idea of simply sitting down anywhere to rest was almost irresistible. The second month of canvassing was going by quickly and the project in London would soon be coming to its close. Most of us were plain worn out by this time, and we felt its effect more acutely in the afternoon when our stomachs were full from lunch and the sun was highest in the sky. Indeed, one would have to admit that this was when it was the hardest to put all of one's heart into canvassing, especially if you had sold nothing all day and discouragement threatened to overtake you.

My canvassing partner had gone into the first house on his side of the street and was deeply engaged in conversation. Unsure of whether I should continue alone without telling him anything, I decided to stand at the corner of the street for a few minutes and wait to see if he would be finished soon while also take the opportunity to rest a bit. About fifteen minutes passed by before I realized that my partner wasn't going to be coming out of that house any time soon. I fought the urge to simply find a place to sit and continue waiting—it was a tempting proposition. However, after a few moments of slight hesitation, I decided with determination that I wouldn't let

It touched my heart in an inexplicable way to see how God indeed does listen to our pleas.

the Enemy prevail by giving in to my feeling of fatigue. I couldn't afford to sit around and waste time—time during which precious souls could receive truth! With a quick but fervent plea to God to give me renewed courage and energy to do His work, I firmly grasped the books and directed my steps towards the next house on my side of the street. It took effort, and I did have to force myself to take the first steps, but I knew I was doing the right thing. I had finished several houses but had either gotten no replies or people who weren't interested, but I kept on. I realized that my tiredness had gone away and I felt I was putting everything I had into my canvass. I smiled often and put all the enthusiasm I could muster into presenting the books while spewing out words that not even I could understand where they were coming from, especially considering my usual shyness! This realization that God was answering my prayer and was helping made me excited beyond words and I felt so happy and thankful despite still not having made any sales. It wasn't long, however, until it all paid off, and my joy climaxed when I finally sold my first book that day—a *God's Answers to*

Your Questions. It couldn't have been more than half an hour later when I sold my second book. I remember at that point I stopped to thank God over and over for hearing and answering my prayer in such a wonderful way. Not only had he given me the strength I needed but he had also rewarded me by allowing me to make those two sales when I was feeling almost hopeless. It was one of those moments when I could truly feel God's presence and power.

It had been nearly two hours since my partner had gone into that house, but there was still no sign of him. I had finished my entire side of the street and had even completed his side. All of our assigned territory was done, except for a building of flats which was situated at the very end of the street. I had purposely left it for the end in hopes that my partner would be finished by then and would canvass it with me. For some strange reason, I always felt a sense of fear and panic when it came to canvassing flats—but even more so if I was alone. Something about them seemed foreboding, especially this one. However, I pushed those feelings aside and decided I would take a step of faith and face my fears. With decided steps I walked

towards it and paused to stare up at its looming form. It was about five or six stories high and seemed quite unwelcoming. It was a dark, plain cement structure with small windows and a littered yard. If truth must be told, it looked a place where only rough, poor people would live. I had no idea what to expect when I knocked on the doors, but I had already decided. I prayed another prayer—perhaps the most fervent one that day. I specifically asked the Lord to be merciful and give me someone kind at the door (something that didn't happen all that often) because He knew and understood that it wasn't easy for me. I repeated that prayer several times as I huffed and puffed up the stairs all the way to the fifth floor to begin from the top down. I reached my first door. I glanced around and felt a slight sense of fear and claustrophobia in that small and dark porch space that separated the two doors which faced each other. I took a deep breath and knocked firmly on one of the doors, momentarily freezing when I heard footsteps approaching the door. To my surprise and relief, a sweet, young African American woman with a friendly smile stood before me. Before I had said much, she glanced at the ID pinned to my shirt and exclaimed excitedly, "Are you an Adventist?! So am I!" To make a long story short, that led to a friendly chat in her living room, the sale of another



book, and her visit to our health seminar that weekend. This is one of my favorite experiences which is dearest to my heart because I have never felt my prayers answered so perfectly. It touched my heart in an inexplicable way to see how God indeed does listen to our pleas. I never would have expected to meet such a nice person at that door, and much less an Adventist! I know without a shadow of a doubt that God was rewarding me for trusting in Him in spite of my fears, unworthy though I am. May His name forever be praised!

"Verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me" (Psalm 66:19, 20). 🌿

Sacred Praise

BETHANY MURESAN

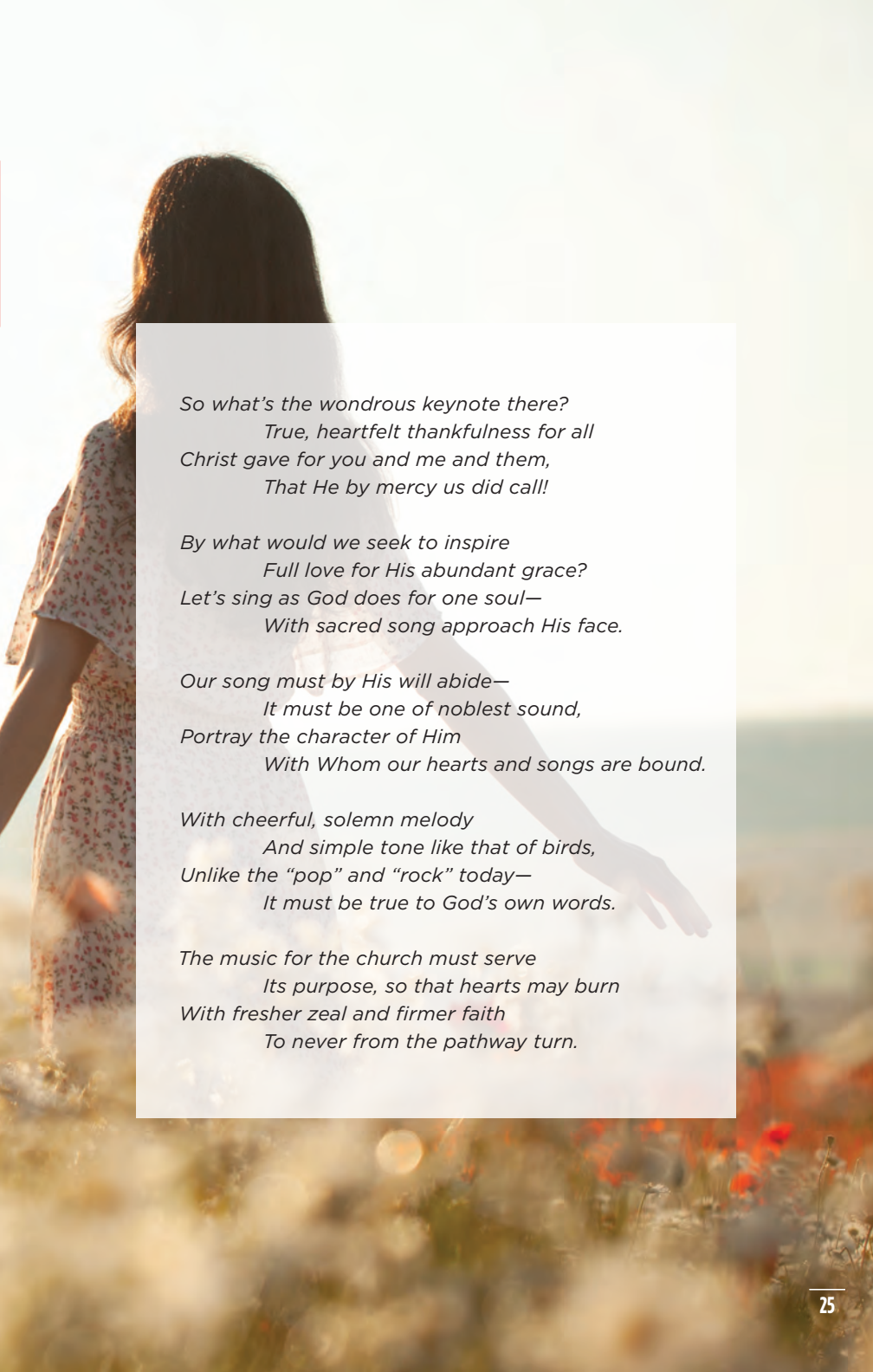
*The wondrous grace of love divine
That sent the perfect Son of God
To come to earth and suffer loss—
The press of sin alone He trod!*

*Come celebrate God's gift to us
By being one with us in pain;
Eternal praise and golden crowns
Together we will strive to gain.*

*The apple of God's eye—the church—
Must never lose its high esteem
In human thought or word or act
Howe'er imperfect it may seem.*

*Be careful not to quench true zeal;
Press on although the path be rough;
The Lord has promised to His saints
That grace divine will be enough.*

*Now what is it which gives the aid
To sing angelic melody?
Developing in sacred song
The notes of Christian harmony.*



*So what's the wondrous keynote there?
True, heartfelt thankfulness for all
Christ gave for you and me and them,
That He by mercy us did call!*

*By what would we seek to inspire
Full love for His abundant grace?
Let's sing as God does for one soul—
With sacred song approach His face.*

*Our song must by His will abide—
It must be one of noblest sound,
Portray the character of Him
With Whom our hearts and songs are bound.*

*With cheerful, solemn melody
And simple tone like that of birds,
Unlike the "pop" and "rock" today—
It must be true to God's own words.*

*The music for the church must serve
Its purpose, so that hearts may burn
With fresher zeal and firmer faith
To never from the pathway turn.*

Architects of Destiny

Part 1

by Liliane Balbach

When designing a structure, an architect faces a challenging task. He must combine various conflicting elements into a beautiful design. The size and slope of the lot, its relation to the environment, the size and shape of the house, and the budget are some of these elements. Did you know that you are an architect? No, you are not a designer of homes or commercial buildings, but an architect of your own character. Every day the structure is going up. What kind of character are you designing? Is your character structure founded upon Christ, the eternal Rock?

As the architect, we also have conflicting elements in our life, inherited and cultivated habits and tendencies that must be put together to make a beautiful character structure. Christ, our Creator, presents us with the challenge of building a perfect character structure. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). How are we going to meet it?

The measuring rod

Clocks, thermometers, scales, speedometers, electric meters, glucometers for diabetics, and sphygmomanometers for people with high blood pressure: today, we have measuring devices for almost everything. If someone asked you to evaluate the character of a very close friend, what measurement would you use? The Bible gives us simple but accurate criteria for measuring character: The power of will and the power of self-control. "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). These criteria are based on the law of God.

In God's sight, character is measured by the power of the feelings we subdue, not by the power of the feelings that subdue us. The strongest man or woman is the one who, while sensitive to mistreatment, will restrain passion and forgive their enemies. According to heaven's measure, these are true heroes.

Character defined

Before we can build our character structure, we must understand what is character. It can be defined as the (inherited) tendencies or (cultivated) habits of a person, which distinguishes him or her from others. Character, therefore, is made up of inherited tendencies or cultivated habits which are repeated over and over again until they become part of us.

Great characters are formed by little acts and efforts well performed. Likewise, weak characters are developed by little neglects and inconsistencies, and wrong thoughts and actions often repeated. It is “the little foxes that spoil the vines” (Song of Solomon 2:15). We must guard our habits, if we are to develop strong characters.

Habits make character

Our society highly values good character. The Bible challenges us to choose a good character rather than wealth. “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold” (Proverbs 22:1). Yet, despite these inducements, humanity has been plagued with weak characters ever since our first parents disobeyed God. Is there any hope for people who are plagued with warped character and bad habits? What are some habits that you and your loved ones have been fighting against? Impatience, procrastination, poor health habits, tardiness, overspending, bossiness, impulsiveness, messiness, disorganization, overeating, intoxication of alcohol, caffeine, drugs, or nicotine?



Few people form bad habits deliberately. Have you ever heard someone say: I would like to become a procrastinator, I want to become addicted to caffeine, or I want to overspend on credit cards? We form bad habits by frequent but subconscious repetition of wrong thoughts and actions.

“Never forget that thoughts work out actions. Repeated actions form habits, and habits form character.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 89.

Once formed, habits become so firmly established that the most persistent effort is required to change them.

The apostle Paul understood the problem facing humanity. He describes it in Romans 7:14–23: “I am carnal, sold under sin. . . . For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do” (verses 14, 19).

Paul was constantly fighting against his bad habits, but he realized that because of human sinful nature, he needed help. As he reviewed his failures, he admitted: “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (verses 24).

Can you identify with the apostle? Have you been waging a battle over bad habits without much success? Do you feel

disheartened because you want to do what is right but don’t have the power? The apostle Paul found the solution and shares it with us in verse 25: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Yes, the One who created us in His image has the key to help us overcome every evil habit. He who formed every nerve cell of our brain and nervous system knows the pathways they take when we choose to do a bad habit. In fact, He specializes



in helping people like us turn our weaknesses into strengths. “And [the Lord] said unto [Paul], My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

How new habits are formed

The apostle Paul is not the only one who was interested in the formation of good habits. For decades, neurologists, biochemists, and psychologists have been studying the brain and trying to discover how habits are formed. What makes thoughts, words, and actions that are often repeated a permanent part of our brain?

Our brain is the central processing center for the whole body. It sends and receives messages from all parts of the body through nerve cells called neurons. Each neuron has a nucleus in the center which is surrounded by a jelly-like cytoplasm and a gatekeeper called the membrane. Branching fibers called dendrites extend from the membrane and receive incoming messages. A long fiber called an axon sends a message to neighboring cells. Between the sending fiber of one cell and the receiving fiber of another is a tiny gap called a synapse.

“While Sir John Eccles, of Australia, was examining this

synaptic junction under a powerful microscope, he noticed some tiny enlargements on the sending fiber that looked to him like miniature buttons. So he called them boutons—the French word for buttons.”—Chalmers, E. M., *Making the Most of Family Living*.

These boutons come in different shapes and sizes. They also secrete chemicals that can speed up or slow down the nerve impulse. One of these chemicals, acetylcholine, closes the tiny gap between nerve cells and causes the cell to send its message to a neighboring cell.

“Dr. Eccles noticed that some sending fibers had many boutons, while others had only a few. As a true scientist, he wondered why this was so. He theorized that boutons might be formed when that particular sending fiber is repeatedly stimulated. This repeated stimulation could cause more boutons to be formed, thus making it increasingly easier for messages to flow along that particular pathway.”—Ibid.

Recently, other researchers have found this to be true. We can then assume that any thought or action which is often repeated is actually building little boutons on the end of certain nerve fibers so that it becomes easier to repeat the same thought or action. This appears to be the way that habits are formed in the nervous system.

(To be continued.)



Test Your Reading!

ACROSS

4. Our song must be of _____ sound.
6. On the mountain with God, Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and _____."
9. To perfect a Christian character, it is essential to _____ in right doing.
11. Solomon's second problem was business deals without the _____ of God.
15. Esther and Mordecai saved the king from an _____ attempt.
18. The difficulties in Joseph's life were ordered by _____.
21. Young Daniel made an early impact by having temperance (self-control) in _____.

DOWN

1. The foolish man built his house on _____ ground.
2. The Lord honored Solomon's wise yet _____ request.
3. A good book for canvassing is God's _____ to Your Questions.
5. The wondrous keynote of angels is _____.
7. Our brain is the central _____ center of the whole body.
8. It touches our hearts in an _____ way to see How God listens to our pleas.
10. Solomon's first problem was _____.
12. By marrying an idolater, Solomon disregarded God's provision for _____ the purity of His people.
13. A good _____ must be built up brick by brick.
14. "Blessed be God which hath not turned away my _____."
16. We are to serve God acceptably with _____ and godly fear.
17. The fear of the Lord is the _____ of wisdom.
19. Great characters are formed by _____ acts and actions well performed.
20. _____ make character.





- DOWN**
1. HUMBLE
2. ANSWERS
3. NOBLEST
4. THANKFULNESS
5. SANDY
6. QUAKE
7. PROCESSING
8. INEXPLICABLE
9. PERSEVERE
10. PROMISCUITY
11. FEAR
12. MAINTAINING
13. CHARACTER
14. PRAYER
15. ASSASSINATION
16. REVERENCE
17. BEGINNING
18. PROVIDENCE
19. LITTLE
20. HABITS
21. APPETITE
- ACROSS**

Editor Adrian Finaru, **Layout** Bethany Muresan.

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A "School Days" Experience


There are many stories about Ellen G. White's childhood school days. Here is one. In those days at her school, they had long desks that two or three students would share. One day the girl that was sitting next to Ellen got the teacher angry. Without thinking, the teacher grabbed a ruler lying near by and hurled it at her. But instead of hitting his target, he accidentally aimed it at Ellen and the ruler hit her instead, giving her a deep cut. What can we learn from the way she ended up responding? Here is how she tells the story:

"I have sat in school with a pupil sitting by my side, when the master sent a ruler to hit that student upon the head, but it hit me, and gave me a wonderful wound. I rose from my seat and left the room. When I left the schoolhouse and was on the way home, he ran after me and said, 'Ellen, I made a mistake; won't you forgive me?'

"Said I, 'Certainly I will, but where is the mistake?'

"'I did not mean to hit you.'

"'But,' said I, 'it is a mistake that you should hit anybody. I would just as soon have this gash in my forehead as to have another injured.'" —

Manuscript Releases, vol. 9, p. 57. 

—Nikita Espinal