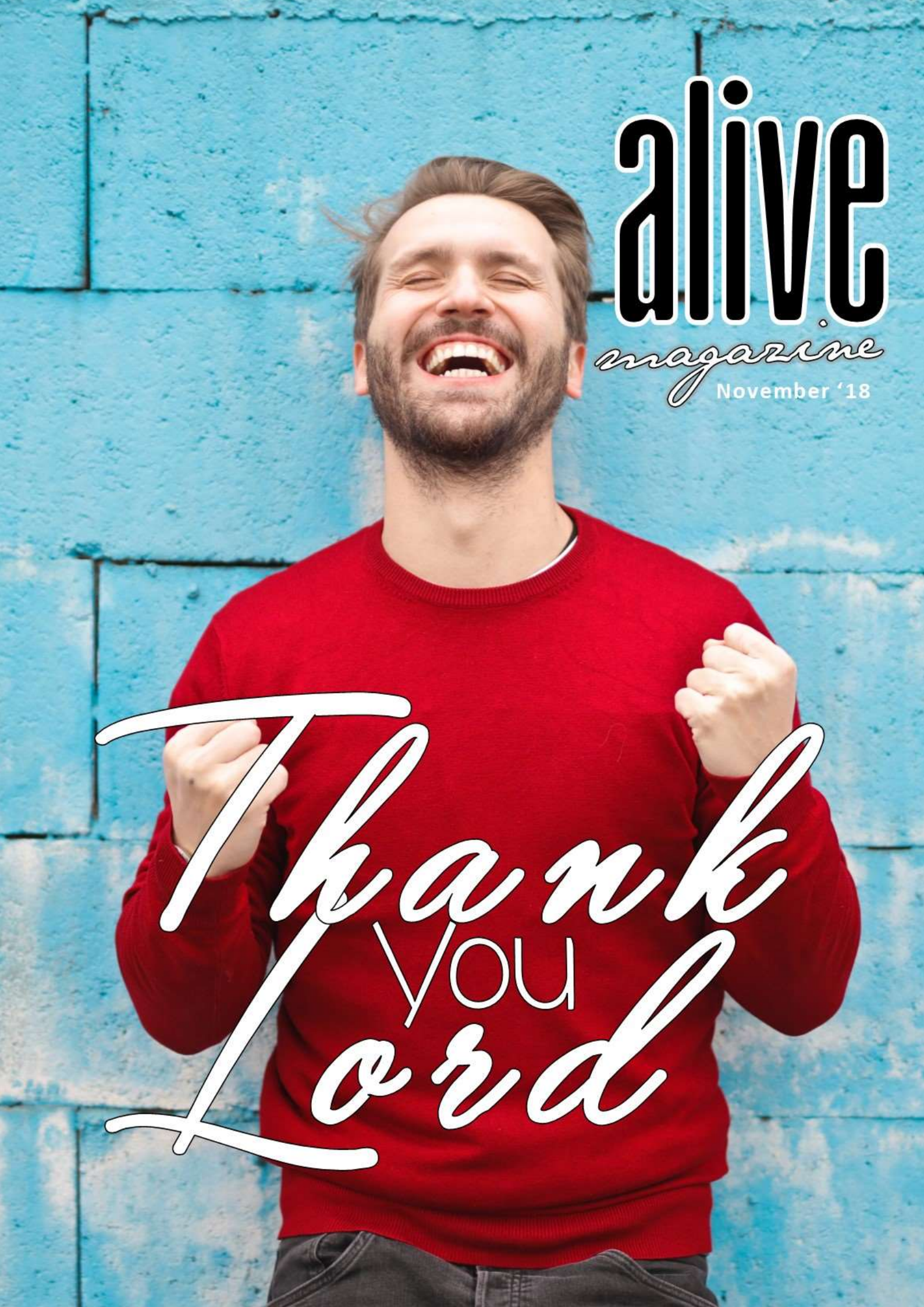




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November '18

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WHAT happens WHEN WE wait?

By: Andrew Roebert

We all need God. We all have areas in which we are trusting God. Sometimes we end up waiting for God to come through for us. These can be difficult and frustrating times. However, God seems to place a high regard on our ability to wait. What does it mean to wait? To live in a place of expectation. To remain stationary in readiness or expectation. To look forward expectantly. To hold back expectantly and be ready and available. It is this living in a place of expectation that excites me.

RENEWED STRENGTH

Many things can happen as and when we wait. Waiting is not always easy but there is ample reason to believe it will be worth it. God wants to give strength to those who wait.

ISAIAH 40:29-31 HE GIVES POWER TO THE TIRED AND WORN OUT, AND STRENGTH TO THE WEAK. EVEN THE YOUTHS SHALL BE EXHAUSTED, AND THE YOUNG MEN WILL ALL GIVE UP. BUT THEY THAT WAIT UPON THE LORD SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH. THEY SHALL MOUNT UP WITH WINGS LIKE EAGLES; THEY SHALL RUN AND NOT BE WEARY; THEY SHALL WALK AND NOT FAINT.

In the life we live we need this strengthening power that only God can give us.

INHERITING THE EARTH

This is an interesting point.

PSALM 37:9 FOR EVILDOERS SHALL BE CUT OFF: BUT THOSE THAT WAIT UPON THE LORD, THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH.

We live in a time frame when evildoers seem to have the upper hand. Here the scripture tells us that the evildoers will be cut off and then links it to those who wait upon the Lord. Perhaps those who will find it in their hearts to wait hold the key to overcoming and enjoying the reward of inheriting the earth. What a reward. Perhaps the key to receiving those things we are trusting for is found in our ability to wait?

WE CAN BE SAVED AND HELPED

PSALM 27:14 DON'T BE IMPATIENT. WAIT FOR THE LORD, AND HE WILL COME AND SAVE YOU! BE BRAVE, STOUTHEARTED, AND COURAGEOUS. YES, WAIT AND HE WILL HELP YOU.

Note the following: Wait for the Lord, and He will come and save you! Yes, wait and He will help you. God wants to save and help those that are waiting for Him. If we become impatient or rush out and do our own thing, we can miss what God wants to do for us.



WE CAN BE DELIVERED

PROVERBS 20:22 DO NOT SAY, "I'LL PAY YOU BACK FOR THIS WRONG!" WAIT FOR THE LORD, AND HE WILL DELIVER YOU.

God is the one who ultimately settles scores. Many people find themselves in situations that are difficult and unfair. But God wants to be our deliverer. Here again we see this concept of waiting and the resultant reward of being delivered. Do you need the Deliverer to deliver you today? Keep on waiting in constant expectation. Wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.

WE CAN BE BLESSED

ISAIAH 30:18 YET THE LORD STILL WAITS FOR YOU TO COME TO HIM SO HE CAN SHOW YOU HIS LOVE; HE WILL CONQUER YOU TO BLESS YOU, JUST AS HE SAID. FOR THE LORD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISES. BLESSED ARE ALL THOSE WHO WAIT FOR HIM TO HELP THEM.

There is a blessing for those who will wait for God in constant expectation that He will help them. God wants to be good to us. God wants to show us His love. God wants to bless us. God wants to be faithful to His promises. God wants to help us. Sometimes it involves waiting and this scripture tells us that those who are living in this time frame can know His blessing.

WE WILL NOT BE ASHAMED

Here is another reward for waiting. We will not be ashamed. Those that will wait for him, in a dependence upon his promise and a resignation to his will, will not be ashamed of their hope. If we can get to this point in our waiting and constant expectation, we can be confident that God will come through for us and we can be sure that we will not be ashamed.

ISAIAH 49:23 THOSE WHO WAIT FOR ME SHALL NEVER BE ASHAMED.

The danger is when we want to rush out in our own strength. Let God be your strength today. Let's wait in patient expectation for Him to come through for us.

GOD WANTS TO WORK FOR US

This one is an interesting one. That the Creator of the universe would work on behalf of those who are waiting for Him.

ISAIAH 64:4 FOR SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN NO ONE HAS SEEN OR HEARD OF SUCH A GOD AS OURS, WHO WORKS FOR THOSE WHO WAIT FOR HIM!

If you are waiting for God in some situation or circumstance, you can expect that He is working on the matter. Perhaps He is moving mountains that you cannot see, so that He can bring about what you are trusting Him for. No one has seen or heard of such a God as ours, who works for us and in our favour. What a joy!

GOD WANTS TO BE GOOD TO US

LAMENTATIONS 3:25-26 THE LORD IS WONDERFULLY GOOD TO THOSE WHO WAIT FOR HIM, TO THOSE WHO SEEK FOR HIM. IT IS GOOD BOTH TO HOPE AND WAIT QUIETLY FOR THE SALVATION OF THE LORD.

Note firstly that it is good to hope (be expectant) and wait for God. Waiting is good thing. It may not feel like it and we humans like to make things happen and we often feel that waiting is a waste of time. But God sees things differently. God wants to be wonderfully good to those who wait. What a promise and what a reward.

GOD WILL HEAR US

MICAH 7:7 AS FOR ME, I LOOK TO THE LORD FOR HIS HELP; I WAIT FOR GOD TO SAVE ME; HE WILL HEAR ME.

Here we see that those who wait have the guarantee that God will hear them. Sometimes we think, while we are waiting, that God does not hear us. It is right here that we are wrong. God listens and hears those who are waiting. It is for this reason that we can look to the Lord for help. Where are you looking for your help today? Have you stopped waiting? Let's keep on holding on to God in constant expectation that He will help us in our unique circumstances and situations.

Thank You Lord!

By: Andrew Roebert

We have so much to be thankful for. Sometimes it takes a tragedy before we realise what we have and how much it means to us. My father once said to me that at the end of the day the most important thing in our lives is our relationships and especially those with our family. Materialism has taken a knock all around the world and suddenly these vital aspects are becoming more of a reality. Our family and the relationships we have are a valuable treasure to us and we need to be thankful. God has also been so good to us and that is another reason that we can be thankful. Find something to be thankful about and let's begin to be thankful today!

WE CAN BE THANKFUL

There is so much that we can be thankful for. Sometimes we may feel that life has dealt us a raw deal and we have to carry an unfair load. But I have come to realise that we all have things that we can be thankful for and it comes down to what we focus on. If we focus on the need, lack or difficulty, it robs us of appreciating the good, the wonderful and the special things, that we can be thankful for. There is an old song with the following words: 'Count your blessing, name them one by one and it will surprise you what the Lord has done'. Let's start today by counting our blessings. What have you got to be thankful for? Respond by allowing appreciation and thankfulness to well up from within you. We have so much to be thankful for.

THANKFUL TO GOD

We can direct our thankfulness to the One Who is the source of all good gifts. We can speak out our thankfulness to God, by simply telling Him how thankful we are.

Psalms 105:1-2 Thank the Lord for all the glorious things he does; proclaim them to the nations. Sing his praises and tell everyone about his miracles.

Isaiah 12:4-5 "Thank the Lord! Praise his name! Tell the world about his wondrous love. How mighty he is!" Sing to the Lord, for he has done wonderful things. Make known his praise around the world.



Our thankfulness needs to be directed towards God. When we fill our hearts and minds with the negative that we are exposed to, we begin to question God. But when we allow thankfulness to arise in our hearts we open the way to receive even more from Him, even if it is in our difficulty and distress. Direct your thankfulness towards God.

Psalm 118:1 Oh, thank the Lord, for he's so good! His loving-kindness is forever.

Psalm 7:17 Oh, how grateful and thankful I am to the Lord because he is so good. I will sing praise to the name of the Lord who is above all lords.

THANKFULNESS IS A HEART ATTITUDE

Thankfulness is something that begins in our hearts. It is an attitude that says, God has been good and I am so grateful. If we think that we are self-made and have found success for ourselves, we only fool ourselves. For God is the one who makes these things possible. When we come to the realization that we are dependent on God, that dependence brings us to the point of thankfulness. Thankfulness is the human response to God's love, kindness and favour. Thankfulness is a sign of a tender heart. A tender heart is an important aspect in the eyes of God. God works with those who have tender and teachable hearts. Is your heart full of thankfulness to God today?

AN ALTERNATIVE WAY OF LIFE

Thankfulness offers us an alternative way of life. You may be used to grumbling and moaning or perhaps you are a source of constant negativity. There is an alternative.

Ephesians 5:4 Dirty stories, foul talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, remind each other of God's goodness, and be thankful.

Dirty stories, foul talk, and coarse jokes seem to be the order of the day in our society and around the world. But here in this scripture we see an alternative: 'remind each other of God's goodness, and be thankful'.

THANKFULNESS NEEDS TO BE A LIFESTYLE

I once heard someone say that a diet is not a short-term program, but it needs to become a way of life.

We need certain lifestyles in our lives if we are going to maintain the standard that God has given us. These lifestyles are not ritual or forced things that we do. It is really only a shift in focus.

Colossians 3:15 Let the peace of heart that comes from Christ be always present in your hearts and lives, for this is your responsibility and privilege as members of his body. And always be thankful.

We need to allow thankfulness always to be present in our hearts. We need to always be thankful, not just when things are going well.

Psalm 95:2-8 Come before him with thankful hearts. Let us sing him psalms of praise. For the Lord is a great God, the great King of all gods. He controls the formation of the depths of the earth and the mightiest mountains; all are his. He made the sea and formed the land; they too are his. Come, kneel before the Lord our Maker, for he is our God. We are his sheep, and he is our Shepherd. Oh, that you would hear him calling you today and come to him! Don't harden your hearts.

BEING THANKFUL HELPS US TO BE ABLE TO CARRY ON

If we are thankful, it is as if we have a new source of strength, which enables us to carry on. Whereas negativity and complaining make us weak, thankfulness brings us strength.

Colossians 1:11-14 We are praying, too, that you will be filled with his mighty, glorious strength so that you can keep going no matter what happens—always full of the joy of the Lord, and always thankful to the Father who has made us fit to share all the wonderful things that belong to those who live in the Kingdom of light. For he has rescued us out of the darkness and gloom of Satan's kingdom and brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who bought our freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins.

THANKFULNESS IS AN ELEMENT OF OUR FAITH

Colossians 4:2 Don't be weary in prayer; keep at it; watch for God's answers, and remember to be thankful when they come.

In those areas where you are trusting God, thankfulness plays an important role. Thankfulness is one of the ways in which we express our faith, trust and confidence in God. Thankfulness enriches our lives.

Colossians 3:16 Remember what Christ taught, and let his words enrich your lives and make you wise; teach them to each other and sing them out in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing to the Lord with thankful hearts.

GOD IS PLEASED WITH OUR THANKFULNESS

Thankfulness pleases God. In Biblical history, whenever the people of Israel began to moan and grumble God became displeased. On the other hand thankfulness pleases God.

Hebrews 12:28 Since we have a Kingdom nothing can destroy, let us please God by serving him with thankful hearts and with holy fear and awe.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

James 5:13 those who have reason to be thankful should continually be singing praises to the Lord.

Psalm 100:4-5 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endures to all generations.

Encouraging Yourself In the Lord

By: Pal Roebert

David the Psalmist spoke about encouraging himself in the Lord

1 Sam 30:6 ...But David encouraged and strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

DAVID WAS IN DISTRESS

1 Sam 30:1-6 David was greatly distressed, for the men had taken David's wives and spoke of stoning him

He was facing a difficult situation
Definition of distress: pressure of want, mental pain, danger or fatigue. To make anxious or to be unhappy.

WE ALL FACE DISTRESS AT SOME TIME OR ANOTHER

Many of us today are facing difficult situations - in fact we too are in distress.

1Corinthians 10:13 There has no temptation – trial, distress, mental pain, pressure of want- taken you but such as is common to man. BUT GOD is faithful Who will not suffer – allow – you to be tempted/tried above that you are able but will with the temptation make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it.

Don't think that the trials are only happening to you and your family. The Bible says: They are common to all.

SOME DISTRESS IS CAUSED BY OUR CIRCUMSTANCES

Lack of health, finances, breakdown in relationships, fatigue, depression

OTHER DISTRESS IS CAUSED BY THE DEVIL

1 Peter 5:8 *Be vigilant and cautious at all times, for that enemy of yours, the devil roams around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour*

The devil tries to put on us a heavy and burdened spirit - a crippling spirit. A spirit of condemnation - "I'm not good enough." God can't forgive me

RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU ARE UNDER ATTACK

The devil's tactics are to plague you with distress and worry. This in turn causes fear. MOST TIMES these attacks are LIES of the devil and he cleverly makes out as if the lies are true. We make the mistake of believing the lies. If we do not recognize where the attack is coming from, he will rob us of our joy and peace.

RESIST THE DEVIL

1 Peter 5:9 *Withstand him. Be firm in your faith (against his onset – rooted, Established, strong, immovable and determined).*

James 4:7 *Resist the devil and he will flee from you*

The moment we recognize Satan's attack on us we must immediately RESIST him. Say: "Satan in the mighty name of Jesus, I resist you. Go, in Jesus name. Keep on resisting him and tell him that Jesus Christ is Lord of your life."

BEGIN TO ENCOURAGE YOURSELF IN THE LORD

How?

1. Turn your eyes on to Jesus.

Think about:

His love for you; His faithfulness towards you; His loving arms reaching out towards you

Ps 16:8 *I have set the Lord continually before me, because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved*

Ps 16:8 *I have set the Lord continually before me, because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved*

Hebrews 12:2 *Looking away from all that will distract, to Jesus, Who is the Leader and the Source of our faith.*

Take your eyes off the situation that you may be facing. Don't look at the distractions but tune in to God's presence.

2. By remembering His WORD

You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. Is 43:1 Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name – you are MINE. He knows us personally – We are valuable and precious to Him. Speak out His Word:

1 John 4:4 *Greater is He that is in me, than he that is in the world.*

3. Begin to thank and praise the Lord because HE is in control.

HE IS LORD! Thank Him that He loves you - His banner over me is love

4. Rest in His grace, His faithfulness.

Hand the problem over to Him. Stop striving – He is able to work on your behalf. Allow God to be your hiding place

5. Enjoy His Presence - Simply embrace His presence

Imagine the Lord before you for a moment. Picture the Lord Jesus walking towards you. See yourself alone with Him. As you look into His eyes, begin to enjoy His presence. You do not need to say anything, except focus the eyes of your heart on to Him. Picture Him looking directly into your eyes. Endeavour to hold your heart in His presence. After a while gently tell Him that you love Him. Try and stay in His presence for as long as possible

DO AS DAVID DID - ENCOURAGE YOURSELF IN THE LORD

Thank you dear Lord that You are my Friend – "You are my Friend that sticks closer than a brother. Thank you that you will never leave me or forsake me. You are with me during this hour of trial. Thank you that I need not fear, for you are holding me by my right hand."

Isaiah 41:10 *Thank you Lord that you are my Helper and I trust in You.*

Cactus Points PROTECT. Marriage

MarriageMissions.com

We know a lot about cactus points living here in the desert southwest! We've been poked, stabbed and have come away bleeding. We've also helped others who have been injured after they brushed up to or have fallen into those pointy barbs. OUCH! As a result, we, and they have learned some painful lessons on how to better protect ourselves. One of them is to keep a safe distance away from Cactus. We see them when we're out walking or we're out taking a drive, but we've learned to no longer get too close, and we definitely do not touch them.

It can be tempting though. We're tempted sometimes to get closer than we should—especially when a cactus is flowering. They can be so alluring to step closer “just to see.” And then there's the cute “Teddy Bear” cactus and other fuzzy ones that look so “innocent” to touch. There is also the “Jumping Cholla” cactus, which isn't always easy to spot along the walking trails. These cacti appear to jump out and the barbs attach themselves to anyone who even gets near. After some painful lessons, we've learned to watch, keep our distance, and be more respectful and careful.

Cactus Points in Marriage

Please know, though, that all of these cactus points can apply to marriage as well. We need to be aware of the “dangers” and be more respectful in how we deal with them. If we aren't careful we can hurt each other. Sometimes we do this on purpose. We want to hurt our spouse who has hurt us. (Hopefully we learn better afterward.) There are other times when temptation just seems to jump at out us and we “fall” into the situation that can damage our relationship.

Here's an example of a sticking point you need to stay away from in your marriage:





— Just because you are married, it doesn't give you a license to be mean-spirited and disrespectful in the way in which you speak to your spouse. That applies, no matter how he or she speaks to you. We're told in God's word, "Put away perversity from your mouth. Keep corrupt talk far from your lips." (Proverbs 4:24) Treat your spouse "as unto the Lord" and you will do well. Keep in mind: "The tongue has the power of life and death." (Proverbs 18:21)

"If you have played the fool and exalted yourself, or if you have planned evil, clap your hand over your mouth! For as churning the milk produces butter, and as twisting the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife." (Proverbs 30:32-33)

Here's something constructive you can do, when you are tempted to stick it to your spouse:

"Practice the pause. When in doubt, pause. When angry, pause. Plus, when you're tired, pause. When you're stressed, pause. And when you pause, pray." (Toby Mac)
"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." (James 1:19)

Make sure you:

"Utilize your teeth as gates that prevent ugly speech 'creatures' from getting out and gnawing on your spouse (or anyone else). Worse than having poor communication skills is having the ability to clearly articulate your thoughts if all you want to do is say something mean or demeaning. Never say anything that will confuse or hurt anyone and start being good by practicing on your spouse. Think of mean speech as a verbal dagger aimed for the heart. Never is there an acceptable reason to be mean." (Paul Friedman, from "Lessons For a Happy Marriage")

Another Cautionary Cactus Point in Marriage:

—Sometimes we can use sarcastic "humor" in such a way that it throws barbs at our spouse.

"While humor may appear to soften the blow, the unseen emotional damage of sarcasm can be devastating. I'm convinced many marriages die of a thousand emotional cuts instead of one deadly blow. A steady diet of sarcasm poisons a marriage. So it needs to be eliminated. No good comes from using it.

"Trust, a vital ingredient in a healthy marriage, won't be present when a husband or wife is always braced for the next public or private cutting remark from a spouse. And respect won't be found in the midst of ridicule. A sarcastic environment robs a marriage of peace and joy, two parts of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life. (See: Galatians 5:22-23.) In essence, sarcasm severely limits the intimacy between a husband and wife. There are plenty of healthy ways to fit humor into your marriage.

"Choose to break the sarcasm habit, and die daily to yourself. (See: 1 Corinthians 15:31.)" (Rodney A. Wilson) Always note: "Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." (Proverbs 12:18)

Additional Advice?

Again, "Practice the pause." When you're conflicting with your spouse and it starts to go in a bad direction follow this rule:

"Either spouse can raise a hand and call for a stop. When one of you asks for a stop, it must be honored. Usually, one spouse wants to stop and the other does not. The spouse who does not want to stop has to stop. Take a temporary break; get some space. When you both signal that you are ready, go back to your neutral conflict place and pick up where you left off. This Stop and Stop method will save you from doing damage and get you back on track in the conflict process." (Dr David Clarke)

Another Cactus Point in Marriage

On this same issue, here's another "cactus point" to ask yourself, remember, be aware of, and then act upon:

"Are your words controlled by a desire to seek peace and unity, or are they driven by your fleshly desire to sting, aggravate, retaliate, control, alienate, shame, and manipulate through sarcasm? The enemy is camping out at the gate of your marriage. He is lurking about, seeking to find that one open crevice where he can enter. If he has been entering in and camping out in your home through the use of sarcasm [or any other verbal barb], it is time to cast this verbal enemy out and lock the gate behind him. Die to yourself. Fill your heart and mind with the words of Christ, and allow His love, peace, and compassion to be the source of every word that proceeds from your mouth." (Dale and Jena Forehand)

Dr Gary Chapman gives this advice:

"Proverbs 18:21 tells us, 'Death and life are in the power of the tongue' (NKJV). Words are powerful. You can kill your spouse's spirit with negative words—words that belittle, disrespect, or embarrass. You can give life with positive words—words that encourage, affirm, or strengthen. Say something kind and life giving to your spouse today and see what happens." (From: The One Year Love Language Minute Devotional)

Make sure you are "life giving" in how you speak, but also in how well you listen to what your spouse is saying.

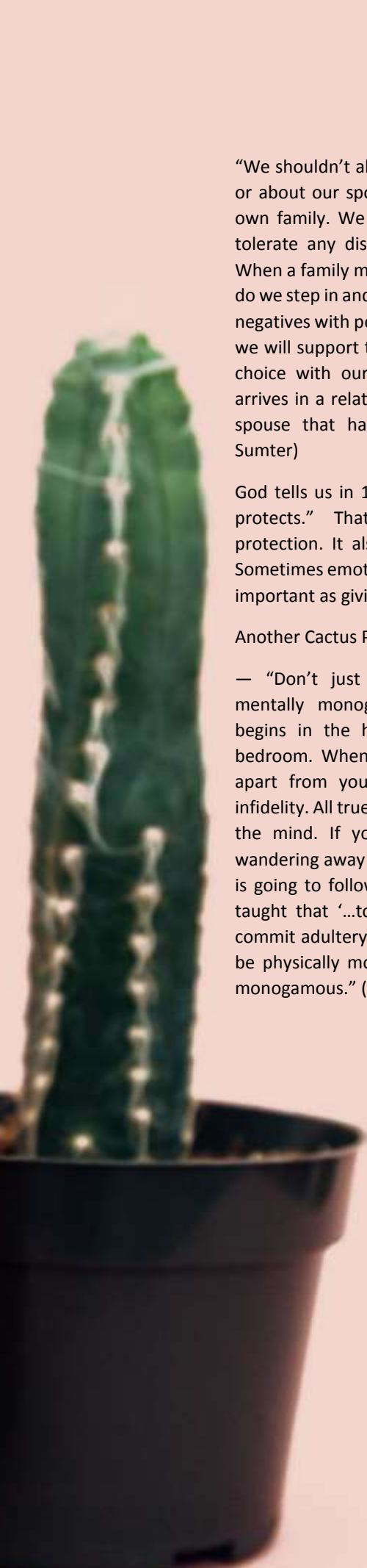
"Like most, I have some significant regrets in my marriage! They are mostly verbal regrets. I've said things to my wife in the last 30 years that I wish I could take back. Too often, I've used misguided words that stung and wounded her. I feel terrible about those moments and unfortunately I can't take them back.

"But I have no regrets in my marriage over listening! I've never thought, 'Why did I pay such good attention to her? Why was I so patient and empathetic in showing my wife the respect she deserves?' Why? Because listening does not lead to regret! Would your spouse say that you're a world-class listener or are you normally doing all the talking?" (Doug Fields) "A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel." (Proverbs 1:5)

Another Cactus Point to Heed

— Don't let others poke at your spouse either.





“We shouldn’t allow anyone to speak negatively to or about our spouse, even if it happens to be our own family. We have to show others we will not tolerate any disrespect toward our life partners. When a family member does speak ill of our spouse do we step in and speak up for them? Do we combat negatives with positive? Does our spouse know that we will support them even when it’s not a popular choice with our family or friends? Real security arrives in a relationship when we know we have a spouse that has our back.” (Tiya Cunningham-Sumter)

God tells us in 1 Corinthians 13 that love “always protects.” That means more than physical protection. It also means emotional protection. Sometimes emotionally protecting your spouse is as important as giving physical protection.

Another Cactus Point to Protect Your Marriage

— “Don’t just be physically monogamous; be mentally monogamous, as well. True intimacy begins in the heart and the mind—not in the bedroom. When you’re acting out sexual fantasy apart from your spouse, it’s an act of mental infidelity. All true intimacy and all infidelity begins in the mind. If your eyes and your thoughts are wandering away from your spouse, then your heart is going to follow. Two thousand years ago, Jesus taught that ‘...to look at a woman lustfully is to commit adultery with her in your heart.’ Don’t just be physically monogamous. Strive to be mentally monogamous.” (Dave Willis)

Last Cactus Point We’re Making Here

And then here’s one last point we want to make within this Insight:

—There are some times in your marriage you are to be aware of, and to lean away from within marriage. (Abuse issues would be some of them.) But there is an important time when you should lean in. When we go through a really tough time in our marriage, like the death of a family member—it’s a time to lean in. It could also be the loss of a job, home, friend(s), or an illness. In the midst of tough times:

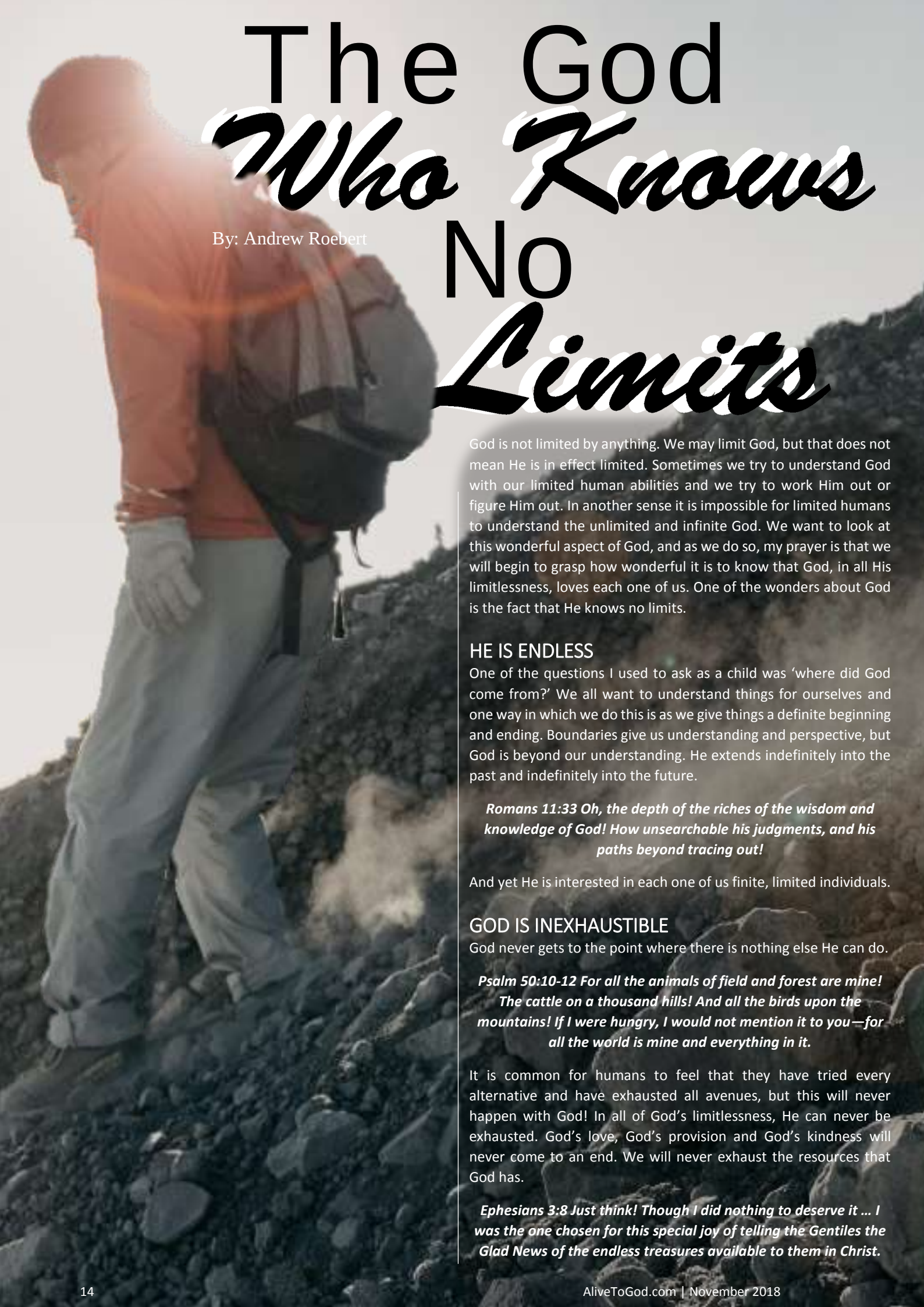
“Lean in. When it gets hard in a relationship, our tendency is to protect ourselves, to retreat, to ‘lean out.’ Leaning out when your spouse reaches out creates distance and dissonance. If instead you ‘lean in’ to the uncomfortable feelings, to the unknown and your own vulnerability, and meet your partner, you can actually strengthen your relationship through the struggles you face together.” (Christine Arylo)

Please note:

“Grief is an incredibly personal experience. It can draw you closer or create friction or tension between you. Don’t allow loss to separate you. Be patient and sensitive to each other as you process it together. ...Use this crisis as a catalyst for increasing your spiritual and emotional intimacy. Sharing grief can be a deeply spiritual process. As the Psalmist shares, ‘The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit’ (Psalms 34:18). Explore how this loss affects you both spiritually as well as emotionally.” (Dr David Hawkins)

In all of this remember:

“Marriage includes cacti as well as roses, rough times as well as good times, tears as well as laughter and shadows as well as sunshine. However, self-sacrificing love for one another will carry a husband and wife through every trial and reflect Christ’s love for His Bride, the Church.” (Marlene Bagnall)

A person wearing a red shirt, grey pants, and a backpack is walking away from the camera on a rocky, uneven path. The path leads towards a bright, hazy horizon, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall mood is one of journey and exploration.

The God Who Knows No Limits

By: Andrew Roebert

God is not limited by anything. We may limit God, but that does not mean He is in effect limited. Sometimes we try to understand God with our limited human abilities and we try to work Him out or figure Him out. In another sense it is impossible for limited humans to understand the unlimited and infinite God. We want to look at this wonderful aspect of God, and as we do so, my prayer is that we will begin to grasp how wonderful it is to know that God, in all His limitlessness, loves each one of us. One of the wonders about God is the fact that He knows no limits.

HE IS ENDLESS

One of the questions I used to ask as a child was ‘where did God come from?’ We all want to understand things for ourselves and one way in which we do this is as we give things a definite beginning and ending. Boundaries give us understanding and perspective, but God is beyond our understanding. He extends indefinitely into the past and indefinitely into the future.

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

And yet He is interested in each one of us finite, limited individuals.

GOD IS INEXHAUSTIBLE

God never gets to the point where there is nothing else He can do.

Psalms 50:10-12 For all the animals of field and forest are mine! The cattle on a thousand hills! And all the birds upon the mountains! If I were hungry, I would not mention it to you—for all the world is mine and everything in it.

It is common for humans to feel that they have tried every alternative and have exhausted all avenues, but this will never happen with God! In all of God’s limitlessness, He can never be exhausted. God’s love, God’s provision and God’s kindness will never come to an end. We will never exhaust the resources that God has.

Ephesians 3:8 Just think! Though I did nothing to deserve it ... I was the one chosen for this special joy of telling the Gentiles the Glad News of the endless treasures available to them in Christ.

GOD CANNOT BE MEASURED

Measurement is something that was created by humans in order to understand dimension. How can we take our limited abilities to try and measure the extent of God? Measurement describes limitations and God has no limitations.

Psalm 108:4-5 For your loving-kindness is great beyond measure, high as the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches the skies. His glory is far more vast than the heavens. It towers above the earth.

Don't try to measure God with your limits. He is far greater than our minds can conceive and in all His greatness He has a plan for each of us. What a wonderful concept!

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

THE BEGINNING AND THE END

God is both the beginning and the end at the same time. The future is His, He is already there. God is not limited by time. Everything begins and ends in God.

Revelation 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Revelation 22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Will you allow Him to be the first and the last in your life?

THE NATURE OF GOD

God is not subject to limitations or external determination. God exists all by Himself and has no need of outside advice. He extends beyond everything known to humanity.

He is greater than any preassigned finite value however large it may be. He is unlimited in extent, unlimited in time and space. He is boundless and vast. Here are some human words to try and explain how great God is: He is limitless, boundless, endless, immeasurable and indefinite. Because of this we should never limit God.

THE GOD WHO KNOWS NO LIMITS

God has limitless things in store for us. An example is the gift of eternal life.

1 Peter 1:4 And God has reserved for his children the priceless gift of eternal life; it is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.

Another limitless gift is God's mercy.

Romans 5:20 But the more we see our sinfulness, the more we see God's abounding grace forgiving us.

Another limitless gift is God's love.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

RECOVERING From what LIFE Throws at You!

By: Andrew Roebert

Life is not fair. Bill Gates said “Life is not fair – get used to it!” Life has a way of throwing curve balls at us. Things don’t work out like we had hoped or planned. Things go wrong! We often end up doing things we regret. But in all these things we can know the God has a plan and He wants us to recover from the things that life throws at us!

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome.

EXAMPLES FROM THE BIBLE.

The Bible is full of examples of people who went horribly wrong and were still used by God to bring about His purposes. People who failed themselves and God and God still used them. Think of Peter who denied Christ three times and went on to become THE ROCK and on this rock the church was built and established. Think of Moses. He was saved from a certain death as a child, well positioned as a Prince in Egypt. Surely this would have been the most influential position from which to negotiate freedom for the nation of Israel. But he messed up! He lost his cool and killed an Egyptian and ran away. He spent 40 years wondering in the wilderness. The great joy was that God had not forgotten about him, nor had God changed His plans to use Moses to liberate the nation of Israel. Another example is the example of Joseph. (Genesis 37 – 50)

JOSEPH – AN UNLIKELY CANDIDATE

One of the greatest figures on Old Testament history is Joseph. Joseph went from prison to throne in one day and became the ruler of the then known world, from where he influenced world affairs and saved a nation and his nation. There is no greater success story. It is a rags to riches tale. Along the road to the ultimate plan (blueprint) that God had for his life where many obstacles that each on their own were reason enough to ensure that Joseph would never amount to anything! As we look at these aspects, each of which had the possibility of destroying Joseph, perhaps you will identify one or more that could relate to your situation. As you look at them, remember God brought Joseph through all these things and caused him to be a great blessing to the then know world.

A DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY

Joseph came from a dysfunctional family. Dysfunctional families are a major cause of problems within people’s lives. In fact I have been told that you cannot escape your upbringing. Joseph managed to rise above all of these circumstances and to fulfill God’s plan and purpose. Let see just how dysfunctional Joseph’s family was. Joseph’s father Jacob was a deceiver. He was a schemer. He and his mother worked out a plan to rob his elder brother (Esau) of his inheritance. Jacob had been deceived himself. After working for seven years for his wife, they gave him the wrong wife and he had to work another seven years for the one he loved.

WHEN TROUBLE COMES

Joseph’s mother died during childbirth. This occurred during Benjamin’s birth. Joseph’s father Jacob never really got over her death. Joseph was the first born of the wife that Jacob loved and now she was dead! This included premature death and death of a well-loved family member.

REJECTION

Joseph experienced rejection – his brothers rejected him. God had given Joseph two dreams and as a result his brothers turned on him and rejected him. His father, who dearly loved him, had given him a coat of many colors. As a result of this favour, his brothers hated and rejected him. He was rejected for things that He had no control over.

ABANDONMENT

His brothers, who hated and rejected him, decided to get rid of him. They despised him to such a degree that they conceived a plan to get rid of him. They could find not good in Joseph, in fact between all 11 brothers they could not find enough reason to spare his life. So they came up with a plan to throw Joseph in a pit and leave him to die. Completely alone, abandoned and helpless. To make matter worse they then sold him into slavery.

INJUSTICE

Even in Joseph's time of slavery he had favour. Just think of the injustice of going from the son of a well known Jewish family to the slave of a foreigner. He was still a slave. He was not master of his own destiny. He belonged to someone else and could not do as he pleased. His freedom, his future, his destiny had all been stolen from him by those closest to him. But Joseph overcame injustice. He became Potifer's slave and eventually ran Potifer's entire household. Potifer was influential and a powerful man and this gave Joseph position and influence. Joseph ended up with great authority and responsibility.

TEMPTATIONS AND FALSE ACCUSATIONS

Things just seemed to get worse. Potifer's wife began to desire Joseph. She tried to seduce him and he was not prepared to give in to her advances. One day she called him into her room and began to tempt him again. He refused and she grabbed his robe as he ran out and screamed to the other servants to alert them and then began to falsely accuse Joseph of something he had specifically not done. As a result of these accusations he was removed from his responsible position and thrown into prison.

FORGOTTEN

Joseph was left to rot in prison. After all who cares for a slave prisoner who has violated the wife of one of the country's dignitaries?

Year after year in prison for something he is not guilty of. This is a breeding ground for hatred, bitterness, dismay, despair, depression and suicidal thoughts. Things even got worse. One day a fellow prisoner, who had once worked for the King, had a dream. Joseph was able to translate his dream and the translation showed that he would be released from prison and return to the palace in three days. Joseph asked this man to remember him and put in a good word for him when he got back to the palace. For whatever reason, when this man was released, he completely forgot about Joseph and he spent another two years waiting for nothing!





ONLY GOD!

It was during this time that Joseph began to understand that only God could help him. He could not rely on his family. They had betrayed him and they did not even know that he was alive let alone in prison. He could not rely on his influence and position because he had been stripped of those. He could rely on his contacts, because even though he had asked them to help, they simply forgot. He could not rely on his rights, because after all he was a slave and slaves had no rights. There was nothing else to turn to – but God. When we get to this point then God is able to do something in our lives. While we are still trying this or that in some desperate attempt to help ourselves, we have not yet reached the place of total dependence

IT IS TIME!

With Joseph at this point of total dependence and with the realization that **only** God could help him now, something great was about to happen. As it happened the King had a dream that **no one** could interpret. At this point the friend he had helped in prison remembered and everything changed. The King sent for Joseph and he gave the meaning of the dream and the King appointed him as second in charge to oversee the Kingdom and provides food for the nation.

As a result the Egyptian nation had food during one of the greatest famines and had enough to spare to provide food for other nations. In this way Joseph's family and the nation of Israel were provided for. Joseph at the end could forgive those who hurt him and said these famous words: **WHAT YOU INTENDED FOR EVIL, GOD INTENDED FOR GOOD!**

HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?

How could Joseph have overcome such insurmountable odds and come out the other side a success? I have given this much thought and here are a few of my suggestions:

- A. Joseph constantly chose the right attitude. There are times in our lives when we have no control, but there is one thing we always have control over – our attitude.
- B. Joseph chose to forgive.
- C. Joseph chose to make the best of a bad situation.
- D. Joseph lived one day at a time.
- E. Joseph did not 'camp' at any stage of his life.
- F. Joseph held onto God.
- G. Joseph hoped against hope.
- H. Joseph had a dream!

If we can apply these principles to our lives, I believe that we too can recover from the things that life throws at us. One last thought – REMEMBER seasons change. Whatever the season is that you are facing, season do not last forever.

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