

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

activated

Vol 10 • Issue 11

REAL LOVE

How to find it
How to keep it

Going Broke?

The answer could be here!

Testing the “God Factor”

Does it really pay to give?





PERSONALLY SPEAKING

A popular song that made a big impression on me as a teenager seemed to be a prayer. I say “seemed” because the song didn’t mention God or prayer. It also didn’t sound like any religious music I’d ever heard. The lyrics were deceptively simple—big truths about character and success in life expressed humbly and winsomely. I wanted to be like that, I remember thinking. It was the best sermon I’d ever heard.

Let Me Be a Little Kinder

Let me be a little kinder,
Let me be a little blinder
To the faults of those about me;
Let me praise a little more.

Let me be when I am weary
Just a little bit more cheery,
Think a little more of others
And a little less of me.

Let me be a little braver
When temptation bids me waver;
Let me strive a little harder
To be all that I should be.

Let me be a little meeker
With the brother that is weaker;
Let me think more of my neighbor
And a little less of me.

Let me be when I am weary,
Just a little bit more cheery;
Let me serve a little better
Those that I am striving for.

Let me be a little meeker
With the brother that is weaker,
Think a little more of others
And a little less of me.
—Glen Campbell

If that was what religion was all about, I also remember thinking, it wasn’t so bad. It would be a few more years before I read from the Bible for the first time, but when I did I was pleasantly surprised to learn that was what true Christianity was all about—loving God and others. I was also pleasantly surprised that I didn’t have to muster that love from within myself. It is a gift from God, freely available to anyone who asks for it. All it takes is a simple, sincere prayer. Like that song.

Keith Phillips
For *Activated*

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walk a mile in his shoes

BY CURTIS PETER VAN GORDER

“NEVER JUDGE A MAN UNTIL YOU’VE WALKED A MILE IN HIS SHOES.” If there was anyone who knew all about that, it was probably Mother Teresa. After having lived among the poorest of the poor in India for nearly 30 years (and she would continue to do so for nearly 20 more), she was awarded the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize. She began her acceptance speech with the words, “Life is life.” She went on to explain that all human beings are special and of great worth, no matter who they are, and that only when we have learned to respect that fact can we begin to help them improve their lives.

Most people would be happy to walk a mile in a pair of plush designer shoes or top-of-the-line athletic shoes, but how many would want to step into a poor laborer’s shoes? When I was living in Uganda, East Africa, I found a discarded pair of shoes that became to me a symbol of Africa and its sweet-spirited but struggling people. It was apparent from the cement splatters that their last owner had been a construction worker. Like many others I observed there, he no doubt worked long days in sweltering heat with no protection against the sun and had only a couple of sticks of raw sugar cane for lunch. He had worn those shoes until the holes in the soles had gotten so big that the shoes no longer served their purpose. When there was no point in wearing them one more day, he left them for me to find. It wasn’t his intention, of course, but those shoes put my own petty problems into perspective.



There wasn’t any question in my mind when, some time later, a young man knocked at my door, asking for help. He had won a scholarship to a boarding school, but there was one requirement he couldn’t fulfill—he didn’t have any shoes. He asked if I had an extra pair I could give him. The ones I was wearing at the time fit him quite nicely, and that was that.

No, one simple act of kindness didn’t make me a saint on the level of Mother Teresa, but I do believe that in that moment I experienced a touch of what motivated her all those years: “The love of Christ compels us.”¹

CURTIS PETER VAN GORDER
IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY
INTERNATIONAL IN THE MIDDLE
EAST. ✂

¹2 Corinthians 5:14



How to find real Love

BY DAVID BRANDT BERG



TO BE GENUINE AND LASTING, ROMANTIC LOVE MUST BE BASED ON A MORE ENDURING FOUNDATION THAN MERE PHYSICAL ATTRACTION OR FLESHLY GRATIFICATION.

It must include an unselfish desire to protect and help and make someone else happy. It must also involve admiration for the other person's finer qualities. A person can be in love with their partner's mind, spirit, sentiments, and bearing—all of which have little or nothing to do with physical beauty. Real love is a spiritual thing; it's not merely physical. It's mostly manifested in spiritual and mental companionship and compatibility, the likes and dislikes and habits that the two people have in common.

When I was a young man, my mother once told me not to put the physical features first in my quest for a soul mate, but to seek something more in a woman than that. "Most of all," she advised,

"seek that indefinable thing called personality. Seek the liveliness of the spirit, the fascination of the mind, the irresistibility of the heart, the magnanimity of the soul." The things of this earth can satisfy the body, but God has made us so that our spirit can only be satisfied by the things of the spirit.

God's Word tells us, "Do not love the world or the things in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."¹ "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."² "For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."³ God didn't say we wouldn't or shouldn't need or desire or enjoy the things of this life, but He admonishes us not to have an inordinate love for them to the point that we put these things before the even greater needs of our spirit.

If you put the desires of the flesh first, then you'll find that nothing ever satisfies, not even the most total indulgence. Those who seek only to gratify their flesh will never find complete satisfaction and happiness. The things of this earth can satisfy the body, but only God and His true love can ever fill that aching spiritual void in the heart, because He created that place for Himself alone.

True happiness comes not in your personal pursuit of selfish pleasure and satisfaction, but in finding God and giving His love and life to others, and bringing them happiness. Then happiness will pursue and overtake and overwhelm you, personally, without you even seeking it for yourself.

I once knew a woman who was always seeking the man of her dreams but never finding a relationship that satisfied or lasted because she was always seeking to get love, to receive love, to be loved. When I suggested to her that perhaps she needed to learn to give love and to love unselfishly



for the benefit of another, this struck her as an entirely new thought. It had never even occurred to her before! She went out and soon found what she had been looking for all the time—by finding a man she could make happy by giving him her love.

That's the secret: Look for someone to make happy, and then happiness will find you! "He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."⁴ Those are God's laws of the spirit and are just as definite as the laws of physics, such as the law of gravity. God's laws of the spirit never fail. They always work for you or against you, depending on your actions and motives. And the first law is the law of love—unselfish love for Him and others. If you will obey that law and give the love that is His and others' due, you will also receive love, "for with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."⁵

Life, liberty, and the giving of happiness to others—these are things that only God can give and the only things that will ever satisfy your spirit. So if you want to be happy and make someone else truly happy, seek the satisfaction of the spirit that can be found only in God and His love! ✨

¹John 2:15-17

²Corinthians 9:6

²Colossians 3:2, KJV

⁵Luke 6:38

³2 Corinthians 4:18

“Seek that indefinable thing called personality. Seek the liveliness of the spirit, the fascination of the mind, the irresistibility of the heart, the magnanimity of the soul.”



POP THE CORK!

Wine—even the finest—can't be appreciated as long as it's bottled up. Neither can love. Pop the cork. Put your love into words.

The most important words that any of us can learn to say are "I love you." Don't take it for granted that others know you love them. Tell them how special they are. Tell them how much you need them. Tell them how much you enjoy their company. Tell them how happy they make you.—And say it so often they can't forget it.

—Shannon Shayler

LIVE TO LOVE, LOVE TO GIVE

Do all the good you can, By all the means you can, In all the ways you can, In all the places you can, At all the times you can, To all the people you can, As long as ever you can.

—*Attributed to John Wesley (1703–1791)*

There is a wonderful law of nature that the three things we crave most in life—happiness, freedom, and peace of mind—are always attained by giving them to someone else.

—*Peyton Conway March (1864–1955)*

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

—*Winston Churchill (1874–1965)*

It is every man's obligation to put back into the world at least the equivalent of what he takes out of it.

—*Albert Einstein (1879–1955)*

No person was ever honored for what he received. He was honored for what he gave.

—*Calvin Coolidge (1872–1933)*

One word frees us of all the weight and pain of life: That word is “love.”

—*Sophocles (496?–406? BC)*

Do something for somebody every day for which you do not get paid.

—*Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965)*

We should apply love as God intended for it to be applied—“fervently with a pure heart.”¹ That means to be truly concerned. It's not saying, “I love you,” and then walking off and forgetting people in need. It's not saying, “Be warmed and filled,” but not giving them the things they need when it's in your power to help.² Love without physical application is like faith without works, which is dead.³

—*David Brandt Berg*

¹ Peter 1:22

² James 2:16;
Proverbs 3:27–28

³ James 2:26

Others

Lord, help me live from day to day
In such a self-forgetful way
That even when I kneel to pray
My prayer shall be for others.

Help me in all the work I do
To ever be sincere and true
And know that all I'd do for You
Must needs be done for others.

Let self be crucified and slain
And buried deep, and all in vain
May efforts be to rise again,
Unless to live for others.

And when my work on earth is done,
And my new work in Heav'n's begun,
May I forget the crown I've won,
While thinking still of others.

Others, Lord, yes others,
Let this my motto be,
Help me to live for others,
That I may live like Thee.

—*Charles D. Meigs (1792–1869)*



Breaking the selfishness cycle

Q: I GET FRUSTRATED AND UPSET WHEN MY HUSBAND ACTS SELFISHLY, BUT I KNOW I AM SELFISH TOO SOMETIMES, AND THAT BOTHERS ME EVEN MORE. WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP US BOTH IN THIS AREA?

A: When such problems crop up between two people, whether they are married or not, honest, open, wise communication is very often the necessary first step toward solutions that will be good for both parties. Knowing how to tactfully bring up the subject and finding the humility to do so are often the hardest parts.

In your case, perhaps you could begin by giving your husband an example or two of how you yourself have acted selfishly, and then apologize for how that must have been difficult for him. By assuming rather than placing blame, you will be less likely to put your husband on the defensive. Instead, there is a good chance that he will respond by apologizing for times he has also acted selfishly. It's human nature to have a more positive attitude about overcoming personal weaknesses when it's our own idea than when they are pointed out by others, so don't be too quick to supply his examples or add to his list. Also, you may need to give what you've said time to sink in.

If this approach doesn't have the desired effect, you may need to be more direct when you try again later. Perhaps you could say something like, "It makes me feel unappreciated when you don't help around the house. Is it because you're too tired?" Giving the benefit of the doubt makes it clear that you are trying to fix the problem, not the blame. Also, explaining your feelings and needs could help him open up about his own, which is another important step in sorting out the problem.

Talking things out should help you better understand each other. You may find, for example, that a lot of the problem is not actual selfishness, but unrealistic expectations—trying to get more done than the two of you have time or energy for. When you better understand each other's situation, needs, and limits, it becomes easier to do more than your share when necessary, because you want to do it out of love for the other.

Breaking bad habits is rarely quick or easy, but it gets a whole lot easier when you ask God to help, so "seal the deal" by praying together for the desired change. There are few prayers that He would rather answer than prayers for more unselfish love. ✞



Going Broke?

The Answer Could Be Here



BY ABI F. MAY

For an increasing number of us, financial troubles are precariously close to home. With businesses and financial institutions failing daily, it's no wonder so many worry that their own livelihoods or homes are at risk.

In such times of trouble and uncertainty it's natural to worry about your own family foremost. If until recently you've been supporting your church or various charities, now, with gloomy future prospects, perhaps you question whether such giving makes sound financial sense.

The answer is that if you want God's blessing, then giving is still definitely in! "God loves a cheerful giver"¹ is one of the pillars of God's financial plan. In fact, God's way to plenty is to give it away. His Word says, "The generous soul will be made rich."² Of course, those

"riches" may not always be material. I heard a true account of a woman who gave \$10 a month to help support an impoverished child in India through the Save the Children charity until the boy reached 18. Over the years he sent her thank-you notes and they exchanged occasional letters. Thirty years later she received a phone call from him. He was overcome with emotion as he told her how, because of her, he had received an education and become a successful businessman. In turn, he was now helping to support 1,000 poor children—all because she'd helped him with that \$10 a month.



Then the King will say to those on His right hand, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the

foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me."

Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?"

And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."

—Jesus, *Matthew 25:34–40*

ABI F. MAY IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL AND AN *ACTIVATED* STAFF WRITER. ☞

¹2 Corinthians 9:7

²Proverbs 11:25

As it will be

BY PETER STORY

I LISTENED TO A SONG DEMO today. I'd heard plenty of them before, but this one sounded unusually rough. I tried not to let on that it grated on my nerves. My friend had warned me that it was a demo before he pressed the play button, but I still wasn't quite prepared. I hoped he hadn't noticed me cringe or squirm in my chair.

After about a minute of private anguish, Jesus managed to get through to me.

It's just a demo, He spoke to my mind.

I know, I replied, *but it's still difficult to listen to.*

You have to hear it as the composer hears it—as it will be, not as it is now.

That's an interesting way to look at it.

Yes, and also the best way. It's how I look at you, actually.

Ouch! Alright, I'll give it a try.

To my astonishment, it worked instantly. When I listened beyond the rough background noises, the missed beats, and the off-key notes, the song was actually quite good. The melody, it turned out, was beautiful and relaxing, and it fit the lyrics perfectly. I looked forward to the finished product, and I told my friend so.

Throughout life, people make mistakes; they say or do some things wrong, and sometimes repeatedly or with disastrous results. That's because we are all

rough demos in God's hands right now. There's a lot about each of us that He still needs to fix, and it's going to take time.

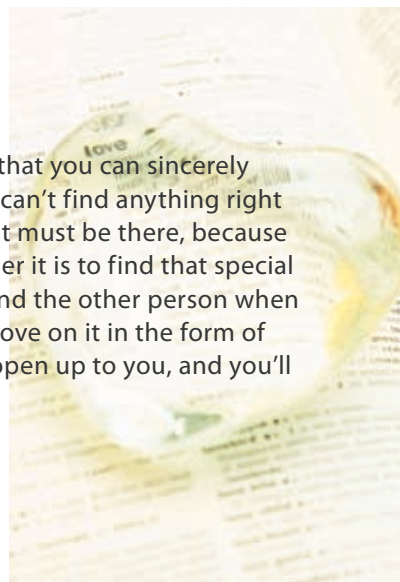
When we can look at others that way, when we try to see them not as they are, but as they will be, everyone wins. They have leeway to be less than perfect, learn by trial and error, and thus keep growing; and we can better appreciate the God-given beauty in those around us.

PETER STORY IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN MEXICO. ✂

THE LOVE CATALYST

By Shannon Shayler

Everyone has good qualities. Find specific things about others that you can sincerely compliment them on, and be generous with your praise. If you can't find anything right off, look deeper. Ask God to show you the positive qualities that must be there, because He sees things worth loving and praising in everyone. The harder it is to find that special something, the greater the reward is likely to be for both you and the other person when you do. If you can find even a threadlike vein and shine a little love on it in the form of praise, it can lead you straight to the mother lode. People will open up to you, and you'll discover lots of wonderful things about them.



TESTING THE “GOD FACTOR”

BY NEHEMIAH BERG

NEHEMIAH AND ESTHER,
BOARDING THE PLANE
TO UKRAINE, THANKS TO
FOLLOWING GOD’S PLAN



SOME TIME AGO, MY WIFE ESTHER AND I WENT THROUGH A DIFFICULT TIME FINANCIALLY. WE HAD BEEN IN THE U.S. FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, VISITING MY RELATIVES AND RAISING FUNDS FOR OUR CHRISTIAN VOLUNTEER WORK IN MY WIFE ESTHER’S HOME COUNTRY OF UKRAINE.

Just a few days before our scheduled return, we were involved in a traffic accident and were forced to postpone our departure. Because of injuries suffered in the accident, Esther needed to take a few months of physical therapy. Tests done after the accident also confirmed that she had developed a muscle and nerve disease called fibromyalgia that made it difficult for her to go through a day without pain.

With our former plans upended, we sought God’s guidance as to what to do next, and He showed us to do these three things: depend on Him to supply our needs through raising support for our volunteer work, dedicate one day each week to prayer, and give one quarter of whatever income He would provide for us to other needy volunteers and projects.

In the course of the next few weeks we made lots of friends among the local community, and every weekend we held a fundraiser for our work back in Ukraine. It was wonderful to see how, as we followed what the Lord had shown us, He used each event and occasion to bring us to the next step.

On our “prayer days” we prayed for our own needs, as well as for our co-workers, friends, relatives, and other specific people and situations that had come to our attention. At first it seemed like a sacrifice to dedicate a whole day every week to prayer when we had so many financial needs and our own situation was uncertain, but we discovered that our prayers went much further than our physical efforts could have.

We experienced miracle after miracle and clearly saw that as we were faithful to follow God’s instructions, He was faithful to do His part.

As we designated a sizable part of our income for gifts to fellow volunteers in addition to our regular 10% contribution to our church (the Family International), God surprised us time after time with amazing fundraising opportunities, unexpected donations, and special gifts. Even after giving away a quarter of our income, what we had left

for our own volunteer projects was much more than we would normally have had, and enough to get us back to Ukraine.

And as we spent time praying for others, He repaid in ways that money can't buy. He healed Esther and brought her fibromyalgia under control, and He inspired us to take our work in a new direction that promises to be more fruitful and fulfilling than anything we've done before.

He fully proved His promise, "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."¹

NEHEMIAH AND ESTHER BERG ARE MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN UKRAINE. ✚

WHAT IS THE "GOD FACTOR"?

When making plans, we must remember that God is in control of the situation, and He is able to change people and situations and make things happen that are far beyond our abilities. That's the "God factor." What seems logical to the human mind often takes on a different perspective when the God factor comes into play. The God factor is that extra factor in the equation that overrides even the laws of nature and makes the impossible possible—and it is activated by our faith.

SOMEONE IS WATCHING

By Miguel A. Sosa

While rushing to an appointment, I passed a scruffy beggar with a baby in her arms. It's a common sight in Caracas, Venezuela, where this took place.

Give her something. I recognized that inner voice as Jesus'.

But she looks like she would spend it on drugs, I protested as I kept walking.

Well then, buy her some food.

Just then I came to a hot dog stand. *Okay, I'll do it for You.*

I hurriedly ordered a hot dog and took it back to her. As I handed it to her, I told her that Jesus loved her and offered to pray for her. She accepted, and we bowed our heads and prayed right there on the street.

Several days later I stopped for a hot dog at the same stand, but the vendor wouldn't let me pay. "I saw what you did the other day," he said. "You not only bought a hot dog for that homeless woman, but you also prayed with her. I've been on this spot for 15 years. Thousands of people pass my stand every day, but I had never seen that! You never have to pay to eat here again."

Like that hot dog vendor, God is always watching, and "your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly."²

MIGUEL A. SOSA IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL BASED IN SOUTH AFRICA. ✚



¹Luke 6:38

²Matthew 6:4



Selfless Love



WHEN SOMEONE ASKED JESUS WHAT WAS GOD'S GREATEST COMMANDMENT, HE REPLIED, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."¹

As far as God is concerned, love is the supreme virtue. Love is the most important thing. God doesn't ask us to be perfect; He doesn't ask us to be free from mistakes; He doesn't ask us to do great things that the world will hear of. He just asks us to love others.

—Shannon Shayler

LOVE PREFERS THE HAPPINESS OF OTHERS TO YOUR OWN.—
DAVID BRANDT BERG

"HE EXPECTED IT OF ME"

There is a story about two brothers who enlisted in the Army during World War I and were assigned to the same unit.

They were soon sent to the front-line trenches. In WW1 trench warfare, each side dug a network of trenches along the frontline of their territory, then laid siege to the other side's trenches. From time to time, one side or the other launched an offensive to try to break through the enemy's lines. During one such attack, the younger brother was mortally wounded in no man's land—that exposed, deadly area between the opposing forces.

The older brother, still safe in the trench, saw it happen and knew instinctively what he must do. He worked his way through the trench, around other soldiers, until he came to his field commander. "I've got to go get him!" the older brother called out over the din of battle.

"That's impossible!" his commander yelled as he grabbed him. "You'll be killed the minute you stick your head out of this trench!"

But the older brother tore himself loose from the officer's grip, scrambled out of the trench, and plunged into no man's land to

find his brother, amid withering fire from the enemy.

When he did, the younger brother could only manage a whisper. "I knew you'd come!" By this time, the older



brother had also been seriously wounded. He barely managed to drag his brother back to their line, and they both fell into the trench, dying.

"Why did you do it?" demanded the commander. "I told you you'd get yourself killed too!"

"I had to," the older brother replied with a final smile. "He expected it of me. I couldn't let him down."

—Retold by David Brandt Berg

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

—Jesus, John 15:13

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us.”— And the real test of any love is what it is prepared to “lay down.” How much is it ready to spend? [Real] love is always laying down its life for others.

—J.H. Jowett



NOBLE DISAGREEMENT

In the city of Weimar, Germany, there is a statue that was set up in 1857. It is of two of Germany's great writers, who were also good friends—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) and Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805).

While both men were still living, critics and the public often raised the question of which was the greater writer. If Goethe heard people say, “Sir, you are the master poet of the Germans,” he was quick to rejoin, “You must not forget Schiller!” And when they praised Schiller as the finest German poet, Schiller would say, “But there is my friend Goethe.”

The sculptor of the statue of Weimar expressed their mutual love and admiration beautifully. Goethe has a wreath of laurel leaves in his hand, which he is raising to place on Schiller's head. But Schiller does not want the crown. He thinks Goethe deserves it more, and is thrusting it back, as if to say, “No, it is more fitting for you to wear it than me.” Thus the two friends nobly disagree, each refusing to be crowned, for they appreciated each other's talent and valued their friendship more than acclaim.

—Retold by Keith Phillips

LOVE'S PREROGATIVE

Love ever gives—
Forgives—outlives—
And ever stands
With open hands.
And while it lives,
It gives.
For this is Love's prerogative—
To give—and give—and give.
—John Oxenham

Love never reasons, but profusely gives; gives, like a thoughtless prodigal, its all, and trembles then lest it has done too little.
—Hannah More

Jesus didn't go halfway to the cross for you, or almost all the way, but He went all the way and gave all His life for you.
—David Brandt Berg



Jesus loved you so much that He paid the ultimate price, giving His life freely so you could have eternal life. Experience His love now and forever by praying:

Dear Jesus, thank You for giving Your life for me. Please forgive me for the wrong things I've done, come into my heart, and give me Your gift of eternal life. Fill me with Your love, and help me get to know You better. Amen.

My Parenting Safari

BY LAILA ENARSON

While living in Gambia, West Africa, my five-year-old son Chris and I went on a trip to the village of Sintet, where our group of volunteers from the Family International was helping to build a school.

I had enjoyed the thrilling tales told by co-workers who had returned from there, so when I heard that a team needed to make a one-and-a-half-day trip to the village I jumped at the chance to go.

For most of the trip, all I could hear was Chris's excited voice saying things like, "What's this? Oh, Mommy—look! Can you take a photo of me on the termite hill?"

The rainy season was just beginning to transform the dry West African bush into gorgeous green. The country around us was full of enchanting beauty—a mix of low rolling hills, rice paddies, coconut trees, and ponds. Farmers peacefully tilled the land.

Along the way, we enjoyed delicious local food, explored a thick swamp full of towering termite hills and giant baobab trees with trunks often thicker than our car.

As we drove up the dirt road lined with cashew trees that led to Sintet, we could see a large crowd gathered at the school site straight

ahead. Two of our volunteers, Joe and Richard, had arrived ahead of us and were already at work directing the construction. Village children crowded around our jeep and flashed gorgeous, white-toothed smiles. As soon as Chris got down from his seat, the village kids surrounded him and helped him get acquainted with everything.

The other kids had been pushing around toy cars made of cut-up plastic bottles, the rubber soles of broken flip-flops, and sticks. With the children's help, Chris soon had his very own car and was pushing it over anthills and through puddles. A crowd of boys ran after him.

With no electricity in the village, most people go to bed when darkness falls, and so did we, in our small tent under the star-filled sky.

Day two at Sintet was just as much fun. I prepared my materials for the morning class I would be teaching the village's younger children, and Dad helped me find a nice quiet spot in front of a baobab tree to give the class. We sang some songs, and then I told the story of Creation, using movable flannel figures on a flannel-covered board. This

was high-tech to these children. Finally I reviewed some basic scholastics. Chris did a great job as my assistant teacher.

Then the children led us to fields where they showed us several large monkeys at play and a huge snake that hung from a tree branch high above us.

They also treated us to a yellow and red moon-shaped fruit we had never seen before, which they called tao. To "pick" the fruit, the children climbed the large tao tree and swung from its highest branches. As they were about to begin, one of the boys who had stayed earthbound said, "We must go! The fruit will hit us!" And he was so right! Fruit began raining down all around us.

A few of the kids stuck with Chris and me until the very end of our visit. Many of these dear children had at first seemed quite tough because of the hardships they face every day. As we got to know them, we saw that inside their tough exteriors were tender hearts, like sponges just waiting to soak up love. Chris and I gave them as much attention as we could. Some even began to call me "Mom," which said in their own special way how much they appreciated the love and attention

we were giving them. To me, this was just as fulfilling as seeing the progress that was being made on the school construction.

All too soon, it seemed, we were home again. My visit to Sintet with Chris had been an extraordinary cultural experience, like no other I've had (and I've traveled all but four of the countries of South America and extensively in North America). What made this trip so special is that I shared the experience with my son. We learned a lot together and lived what many people only read about in schoolbooks or see on TV.

You don't have to visit a village in the African bush to have a bona fide cultural experience or to reach out to those in need, of course. Today they're everywhere! Most modern cities are melting pots of various races, each with something special to offer. All it takes to make new friends is a little initiative. Add a little love and concern, and you truly bring your worlds together.

LAILA ENARSON IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN CANADA. ✨

AT THE END OF THE DAY

A Spiritual Exercise



The day is coming to a close. You're tired, perhaps even drained from all that you've needed to take care of through the long hours. Sit still for a moment or lie back in your bed. Read this message from Jesus, then close your eyes and reflect on it. Let Jesus soothe your nerves, relax your tired body, and fill your spirit with His love and peace.

"I am with you always."¹

I was with you today as you worked. I was right there pulling, pushing, lifting, and carrying right along with you. I was right there doing My part to make your day that much better, your load that much lighter, and your burdens more bearable. I was there propping you up and giving you the boost you needed toward the end of the day when weariness was about to overcome you.

I am still here with you, now when you are tired and worn from the day. Lie back and relax. Rest in My arms, like a little child falls asleep in the strong and comforting arms of her father. There is nothing to fear and nothing to worry about—only deep, sweet, peaceful rest when you are nestled here, close to My heart.

A PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Thank You, Jesus, for always being ready and willing to come to my aid. It's a special token of Your love that You help me throughout the day, in every situation I face. Whenever problems arise, You are always there to help me solve them. You are truly concerned about every little detail, and You always know best. With each passing day, I want You to be more a part of my life and thoughts and decisions. You're so good to me!

FEEDING READING

Giving at its best

Give cheerfully.

2 Corinthians 9:7
Deuteronomy 15:10a
Exodus 25:2
Exodus 35:21
1 Chronicles 29:9

Give generously.

2 Samuel 24:24
Proverbs 21:26b
Luke 21:4

Give with pure motives.

Matthew 6:1–3
Luke 6:34–35
1 Corinthians 13:3

Give according to ability.

Deuteronomy 16:17
Proverbs 3:27–28
Acts 11:29
1 Corinthians 16:2
Galatians 6:10

God blesses those who give.

Deuteronomy 15:10
Proverbs 22:9
Proverbs 28:27a
Ecclesiastes 11:1
Mark 10:21
Luke 6:38
Acts 20:35b
2 Corinthians 9:6b

¹Matthew 28:20



The Eternal Chain of FROM JESUS WITH LOVE *Love*

I came to earth because I love you.
I gave up the splendor of heaven
to come and make salvation and
eternal life available to you.

My gift of salvation is for anyone
who will receive it, and I long for
everyone to come to know Me
and My love. That message always
has and will always be passed on
through the words and deeds of My
friends and followers.

Throughout the ages, multitudes
of My followers have given of
themselves to continue this chain of
love. Some have given little, some
have given much, and some have
given all, but all were a part; all were
needed, and My great worldwide
chain of love would not have been
complete without each one playing
a part.

There have been times when I
looked back and thought about how
things might have been, had I not
chosen to come and live and die as
one of you—but never once have I
looked back with regret or wished
I had done anything differently!

I want My chain of love to grow
longer and stronger. I want it to
encompass the whole earth! I want
everyone to have a chance to be part
of it. I want My love to touch every
life. Will you do your part? Will
you receive My love and then share
it with others? Give them Me, give
them My words, give of yourself—
and above all, give love.