

Coffs Encourager

Newsletter to the Coffs Coast area
Nambucca, Port Macquarie,
Sapphire Beach & Woolgoolga

Issue 9-05/11



Coffs Coast church of Christ - www.coffschurch.org.au

CWA Hall, 3 Dalley St. Coffs Harbour Worship-Sunday 10am, Study-Tuesday 7pm

This and back Issues are available from our website.

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PUTTING GOD FIRST

by Rachael Cornoch

Recently I fell extremely ill with glandular fever, causing me to have to take almost a month off school to recover. Though I have returned, the recovery is still in process. A month off in year 11 can set you so far behind, it'll take twice or three times that length to catch up. My school was completely inconsiderate over my situation. So I became really bitter and angry. Then at church that Sunday the sermon was about becoming bitter and its dangers. Here was God speaking directly at me.

Sometimes I feel like we all get so caught up in what we're doing, what we need to do or how much work we need to catch up on, that we lose sight of God. It can take a real slap in the face to be held back and shown the bigger picture. So, I forgave, forgot and moved on. Yet, I still continued to live my life catching up, doing my work and saying to myself that I'll find time to reconnect with God later. Ill fit Him in somehow, around my schedule. How ignorant was I!

Several Friday's ago my school surprised me with an upcoming test that I had missed. They told me I was sitting it on Monday (2 days)! On Monday I had a practise exam, an English oral presentation and now this huge important test. I was freaking out! I was turning back into the bitter Rachael from before. On that Friday night after hours of study and complete exhaustion, I laid in bed and just cried. Then I prayed. I prayed that whole weekend. As soon I started to feel overwhelmed again; I'd sit

back down and ask God for His guidance. Come 11pm Sunday night I still felt unprepared. That's when I realised. God has a plan for me, and whether it's to do well at school, get into uni and pursue my dream career or not, I don't know. But no matter what, He has a plan for me and I trust Him to take me down the right path. I went to sleep so content, God was and is with me and I took Him into every room on that Monday. He was in my exam, listening to my speech and beside me in my test.

I realise now that it's not about fitting God in, but rather fitting everything else around God. In the following weeks; when finally I put God first, everything else just fell into place. So maybe I'm just young and naive, but I don't think I'm the only one. God was trying to talk to me, through church and other things. I just didn't see it until I put God first and started listening. It was so much easier! He is in control, give Him your stresses and He'll take care of them. So whatever it is, whenever you need, wherever you are. He is there.

Do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 4:6-7 NIV

THOSE HEAVENS ABOVE US ALL by Marvin Ancell

I do not about you, but there are times when, I get discouraged and a bit blue. It is not really a state of depression as much as it is a sense of being a bit alone, and that can be heavy in its own right. It is in these times that I am beginning to learn to look up and see what David, the Shepherd King of Israel, saw. It compelled him to write in Psalm 19, "The heavens declare the glory of God...". It is so very true. It has taken me 60 years to do so, but I am finally beginning to learn this simple truth. So when I look up now, I look up to see the beauty of a design that is open for all to see and for all to draw courage from. I even try to see one new bit of design each time that I do so, and that is good for me. It is becoming for me an immediate "voice of glory", an

encouragement for me in the living of my life, today.

Now for most of us, drawing courage from the heavens above us, is not something that we are actually trained to do, -unfortunately. When I was younger, I was afraid of the dark and thought there were all sorts of demonic things out there in the bush just waiting to jump out and get me. Some were pure imaginary and yet some were real. In those days, I just did not stay in one place long enough to look up and see the glory in the heavens. I think that more of us than just me, have felt like there is someone, or something, watching us from the trees and so we run from light source to light source just to be safe. That is more the case with me; I ran out, did my chores and ran back. I liked being in the light. It was safe and secure.

cont. on back

A FOCUS ON DEPRESSION

D. Yealland - Counsellor, Coffs Harbour



Recently many people have found their lives beset by chaos. Earthquakes, tsunamis, fire and floods are affecting our planet and the leaving many without homes and shelter, bedding, clothing and food. Lack of confidence, low self esteem, hopelessness and helplessness overwhelm many and lead to bouts of depression.

When a person suffers from depression, his/her symptoms cause significant distress or impairment in family, social, and occupational relationships, as well as other important areas of functioning. Such symptoms are not the result of a chronic psychotic disorder, substance abuse, a general medical condition, or bereavement. Depression may include feelings of sadness but is not the same as sadness.

Depression lasts much longer and involves a loss of self-esteem, which sadness does not. People who are depressed function less productivity; people who are sad or disappointed continue to function.

Here are 10 Things You Can Do To Ease Depression

1. Get out now and walk fifteen minutes. It will get your feet moving and help you feel you are at least able to do something.
 2. Go immediately and be with someone who loves you. It will give you the feeling that you are wanted.
 3. Religious? Say a prayer. Ask God to help you get through this.
 4. Think of a situation, a place where you were very happy. Visualise yourself in that situation once more.
 5. Power of suggestion can do wonders. Say to yourself, "I think I can get better. I have to take it step by step. I will work my way out of this."
 6. Go out and buy a plant, or some flowers. Having something living in your house makes you feel more alive.
 7. If possible, get outside in the sunshine. If it's not possible, turn on some bright lights. Sunshine and bright light are known to make people happier.
 8. Watching something funny. The simple act of smiling for more than 20 seconds produces feel good endorphins. Laughter is even better.
 9. Do something for someone else. Practise random acts of altruistic kindness, like leaving flowers for the nurses at the local hospital.
 10. Remembering that this, too, will pass. Knowing, even if you have to write it on post-it notes and leave it everywhere, that even the darkest days will eventually pass, is a strange comfort when you can't imagine anything other than the current pain, but it is a comfort.
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In looking at the heavens, however, we have a constant light source that shines down on us, giving us just enough light to remind us that there is a beauty above that blesses us with all security and safety.

When my wife and I were moving some household to Melbourne, many years ago, we stopped out on the road, got out of the truck, and just looked up. We were a long way away from any light pollution and you could see the stars in all of their glory and it was awe inspiring. We felt like we had been touched by a divine hand in a way. The heavens, as seen from the city lights, is nothing really. It is when you get to see them in their pure element that you see the majesty of the heavens. It is at that time that you lose the depressive moments, you no longer feel alone, nor do you feel fearful. It is only when you do not have those lights to encourage you that you get morose and depressed and blue. In the face of the heavens you see one of the great beauties of all creation, and it lifts you up.

There are those of us who have burdens to bear. It maybe family burdens, it may be health burdens, but they are there

and we have to bear them. That is life. Trophimus in the first century, for an example, had a health burden to bear, and Paul did not choose to heal him of it, but left him in Miletus. I find that really odd, until I realized that there was a reason for this action, and God was in charge. This is what we have got to always believe. I may not know it, but there was some reason for it.

Given the nature of these men, Paul and Trophimus, I have to believe that they used this opportunity given to them to help others to look up and to see God and their help come, even from afar. The heavens were a real canopy of consolation in the first century. They helped by giving a light of majesty to those who travelled for the Lord and His cause. In your travels, be they for good things or for hard times, look up when you are free from the encroachments of our world and just see the glory of the Lord, as David saw it, as Paul saw it, as Trophimus saw it, as we can still see it, and take heart: **OUR GOD IS STILL ALIVE AND ACTIVE IN ALL THINGS.**

Do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

