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A “New Man”

Dave Branon



Continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. [Colossians 1:23](#)

Read: [Colossians 1:3–14](#)

Bible in a Year: [Psalms 54–56](#); [Romans 3](#)

As a group of teenagers visited a home for the elderly in Montego Bay, Jamaica, one young woman noticed a lonely looking man at the end of the room. He appeared to have little left in this world but a bed to sleep on—a bed from which he could not move because of his disability.

The teen began right away to share the story of God’s love for us and read some Bible passages to him. “As I shared with him,” she would say later, “I started to feel his eagerness to hear more.” Responding to his interest, she explained the wonder of Jesus’s sacrificial death for us. “It was hard for this man, who had no hope and no family,” she recalled, “to understand that Someone he’s never met would love him enough to die on the cross for his sins.”

She told him more about Jesus—and then about the promise of heaven (including a new body) for all who believe. He asked her, “Will you dance with me up there?” She saw him begin to imagine himself free of his worn-out body and crippling limitations.

When he said he wanted to trust Jesus as his Savior, she helped him pray a prayer of forgiveness and faith. When she asked him if she could get a picture with him, he replied, “If you help me sit up. I’m a new man.”

Praise God for the life-changing, hope-giving, available-to-all gospel of Jesus Christ! It offers new life for all who trust Him (Col. 1:5, 23).

Lord, thank You for the new life we have in Jesus Christ. Help us to share the hope of that new life with others so they can be made new as well.

Jesus offers new life.



◀ July

August 1

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Nozomi Hope

Elisa Morgan



We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. [2 Corinthians 4:7](#)

Read: [2 Corinthians 4:7–18](#)

Bible in a Year: [Psalms 57–59](#); [Romans 4](#)

In 2011, a magnitude 9 earthquake and a resulting tsunami took nearly 19,000 lives and destroyed 230,000 homes in the region northeast of Tokyo. In its aftermath, The Nozomi Project, named for the Japanese word for “hope,” was born to provide sustainable income, community, dignity, and hope in a God who provides.

Nozomi women sift through the rubble of homes and furnishings to discover broken china shards that they sand and insert into fittings to form jewelry. The jewelry is sold around the world, providing a livelihood for the women while sharing symbols of their faith in Christ.

In New Testament times, it was customary to hide valuables in the unlikely vessels of simple clay pots. Paul describes how the treasure of the gospel is contained in the human frailty of followers of Christ: jars of clay (2 Cor. 4:7). He suggests that the meager—and even at times broken—vessels of our lives actually can reveal God’s power in contrast to our imperfections.

When God inhabits the imperfect and broken pieces in our lives, the healing hope of His power is often more visible to others. Yes, His repair work in our hearts often leaves the scars of cracks. But perhaps those lines from our learning are the etchings in our beings that make His character more visible to others.

Dear God, please show others Your power as I share the treasure of Your gospel in my broken, but beautiful life.

Welcome to Elisa Morgan! Meet all our authors at odb.org/all-authors.

Brokenness can lead to wholeness.



August 2



The Professor's Confession

Tim Gustafson



This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. [1 John 3:16](#)

Read: [1 John 3:11–18](#)

Bible in a Year: [Psalms 60–62](#); [Romans 5](#)

Horrified by his students' poor writing habits, renowned author and college professor David Foster Wallace considered how he might improve their skills. That's when a startling question confronted him. The professor had to ask himself why a student would listen to someone "as smug, narrow, self-righteous, [and] condescending" as he was. He knew he had a problem with pride.

That professor could and did change, but he could never become one of his students. Yet when Jesus came to Earth, He showed us what humility looks like by *becoming one of us*. Stepping across all kinds of boundaries, Jesus made Himself at home everywhere by serving, teaching, and doing the will of His Father.

Even as He was being crucified, Jesus prayed for forgiveness for His executioners (Luke 23:34). Straining for every anguished breath, He still granted eternal life to a criminal dying with Him (vv. 42–43).

Why would Jesus do that? Why would He serve people like us to the very end? The apostle John gets to the point. Out of love! He writes, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us." Then he drives that point home. "And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters" (1 John 3:16).

Jesus showed us that His love eradicates our pride, our smugness, our condescension. And He did it in the most powerful way possible. He gave His life.

Father, we are so prone to look down on each other. Please forgive us. Give us the heart of love Your Son showed to us.

Jesus loved us by serving.



August 3



Peace and Trust

James Banks



Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. [John 14:27](#)

Read: [Isaiah 26:1–9](#)

Bible in a Year: [Psalms 63–65](#); [Romans 6](#)

When I was six years old I rode a roller coaster for the first time with my older brothers. As soon as we hit a turn at a high speed I started to yell: “Stop this thing *right now!* I want to get off!” Of course the roller coaster didn’t stop, and I had to “white knuckle” it, hanging on tight for the rest of the ride.

Sometimes life can feel like an unwanted roller coaster ride, with “downhill” drops and hairpin curves we never see coming. When unexpected difficulties occur, the Bible reminds us that our best recourse is to place our trust in God. It was in a tumultuous time when invasion threatened his country that the prophet Isaiah, inspired by the Spirit, discerned this powerful promise from the Lord: “You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you” (Isa. 26:3).

The peace our Savior gives us as we turn to Him “transcends all understanding” (Phil. 4:7). I will never forget the words of a woman who was struggling with breast cancer. After a group from our church prayed for her one evening, she said, “I don’t know what will happen, but I know that I’ll be okay, because the Lord was here with us tonight.”

Life will have its difficulties, but our Savior, who loves us more than life, is greater than them all.

Lord, help me to trust in You so that I may live in peace.

For help, read *Navigating the Storms of Life* at discoveryseries.org/hp061.

Jesus is our peace.



August 4



Training for Life

Leslie Koh



For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver. [Psalm 66:10](#)

Read: [Psalm 66:8–12](#)

Bible in a Year: [Psalms 66–67](#); [Romans 7](#)

My training for the long-distance race was going badly, and the latest run was particularly disappointing. I walked half the time and even had to sit down at one point. It felt like I had failed a mini-test.

Then I remembered that this was the whole point of training. It was not a test to pass, nor was there a grade I had to achieve. Rather, it was something I simply had to go through, again and again, to improve my endurance.

Perhaps you feel bad about a trial you are facing. God allows us to undergo these times of testing to toughen our spiritual muscles and endurance. He teaches us to rely on Him, and purifies us to be holy, so that we become more like Christ.

No wonder the psalmist could praise God for refining the Israelites through fire and water (Ps. 66:10–12) as they suffered in slavery and exile. God not only preserved them and brought them to a place of great abundance, but also purified them in the process.

As we go through testing, we can rely on God for strength and perseverance. He is refining us through our toughest moments.

Lord, I know that You allow me to go through trials so that I will be strengthened and purified. Teach me to keep relying on You for Your strength to endure.

Faith-testing times can be faith-strengthening times.
