

Campus Connect

Volume I - Issue VI - Jan 2026

NEW BEGINNING

Changed Times... Unchanged Hope

In the journey of our lives, we often encounter twists, endings, and unexpected new beginnings without ever anticipating them. Even if yesterday's sunset left us in despair, every sun rise brings with it a fresh hope. However, for those of us who believe in Christ, a "new beginning" is not merely a change brought about by the passage of time; it is God's enduring grace and His magnificent promise.

As the scriptures say: "And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6-7). This verse instills in us an immense confidence regarding the future.

As believers, if there is any greatest new beginning, it is the second chance God has given us—which is salvation. Through the fall of the first man, Adam, the bond between man and God was severed. It was a bitter ending. Yet, our loving Father did not halt His plan. Establishing the Old Covenant through His prophets, He eventually sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, into this world, thereby granting humanity an extraordinary new beginning.

The resurrection of Jesus is not merely a historical event; it is a majestic prologue declaring that the old has passed away and marking the beginning of a new creation. This is why the Apostle Paul boldly proclaims:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

As believers, we face a constant battle within our hearts: the old nature versus the new nature. A true new beginning does not start outside the walls of our homes, but from within the depths of our hearts. When we confess our mistakes and sins with repentance and seek forgiveness in God's presence, He removes our transgressions "as far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12). That is a miraculous liberation.

Our goal in this new beginning is not merely to abandon sin, but to clothe ourselves in the new self, created to be like God. The Spirit of God dwells within us, transforming us every day and every moment.

"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." (Ephesians 4:22-24).

When we open our eyes each morning, we must realize that our God is giving us not just breath, but new life, new strength, and new grace. As the prophet said:

"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:22-23).

Today, let us embrace and enjoy these new beginnings that God provides! No matter how great a mistake we have made, or how far behind we have fallen, God's immense grace transcends it all. Let us take our old sorrows, past failures, and feelings of guilt and leave them at the foot of the Cross of Christ.

Let us start a fresh relationship with God this very moment. Let us make a firm decision to surrender our lives completely into His hands and walk according to His will.

A new beginning is not a destination to be reached; it is a miraculous journey of faith that continues eternally through our Savior, Jesus Christ. Let us break the bonds and chains of the old life and step boldly into the ever-new life found in Christ Jesus.

May God bless us abundantly! Amen.

- K. John Bhushanam

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REQUEST

Dear Vidyarthi Velugu and Campus Connect readers,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We would like you to note the following:

1. For address change, non-receipt of magazine, new subscription, or renewal, please contact the office staff, Brother K. Phani Kumar (8985482388).
2. Pray and encourage so that Vidyarthi Velugu has no postal issues and everyone reads and receives spiritual benefit.

Each month, send only two important praise and two prayer points of EU and EGF through the VV Prayer Points link by the **20th**. Those interested in writing may send their essays, stories, and poems to editorvv2018@gmail.com.

- Editorial Board

NEW BEGINNING

Changed Times... Unchanged Hope

Imagine this for a moment: If your life had a "refresh" button, what is the one thing you would want to reset this year?

As we step into the New Year, we carry both hope and hesitation—hope for real change, yet hesitation because past resolutions have so often faded. The New Year feels special precisely because it promises a fresh start. A new calendar and new plans remind us that God is a God of new beginnings.

Yet we often wonder, "Will this year really be different?" We ask this not because we lack the desire to grow, but because lasting change can feel impossibly hard. In the session ahead, let's walk together through simple, practical, faith-filled steps that can lead to true growth—growth in our faith, our habits, and our everyday lives. This can be the year something genuinely shifts.

1. Lasting Spiritual Goals

Many New Year's resolutions begin in

moments of strong emotion. After listening to a powerful sermon or attending a spiritual camp or prayer meeting, a student might make a decision that "I will pray every day" or "I will never miss my Bible reading again." These decisions are sincere, but they are often vague. When academic pressure mounts, daily schedules become busy, or exhaustion sets in, the initial motivation slowly fades.

Lasting spiritual goals are fundamentally different. They are clear, personal, and rooted in identity rather than mere activity. Instead of focusing solely on what we do, they focus on who we are becoming.

Let us consider the example of Daniel in the Bible. He didn't simply wish to be faithful; he made a deliberate decision to live as God's servant, even in a hostile

foreign land. He maintained a regular prayer life, even though his life was at risk (Daniel 6:10). His faithfulness flowed from his identity, not from momentary inspiration.

When students begin to see themselves as children of God, their actions naturally follow in alignment with His will.

2. Start With Small Steps

"Whoever is faithful in little will also be faithful in much" (Luke 16:10).

Ambitious spiritual goals often fail not from lack of devotion, but because they become overwhelming over time. Consider a college student who suddenly resolves to read the Bible for an hour every day. This might work for the first few days, but when classes intensify or exams loom, the goal seems to be a burden — and eventually gets abandoned. The problem isn't weak faith; it's starting too big.

Scripture teaches us to start small and stay consistent. Jesus said, "Whoever is faithful in little will also be faithful in much" (Luke 16:10). Small steps reduce pressure while building confidence. Reading just five Bible verses or praying for two minutes each day may seem modest, but practiced consistently, these small disciplines build strong spiritual habits.

Instead of vague commitments, clear and practical goals are essential. Rather than saying "I will read the Bible," try something specific: "During my morning Quiet Time, I will read five verses and pray for two minutes." As the saying goes, a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Any goal that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) becomes much easier to accomplish. This principle applies not only to spiritual matters but

also to academics, career, and personal life.

3. Integrate Spiritual Discipline Into Daily Life

Our walk with God shouldn't feel like a separate part of life — it's meant to flow into everything we do. Many students assume prayer and Bible reading are connected only to Sunday, or a church service, or fellowship meetings. While these gatherings are vital, God desires to walk with us throughout every ordinary moment of our day.

The key is weaving spiritual practices into the rhythm of our daily lives. A short prayer before you open your books, listening to Scripture while you travel, or thanking God before you sleep—these small habits slowly improve and strengthen our daily life.

Deuteronomy 6:6–7 encourages us to talk about God's Word as we sit, walk, lie down, and get up. It shows us that faith is meant to be part of everyday life, not something separate. When faith fits naturally into our daily habits, it becomes joyful and life-giving—never a burden.

4. Progress Over Perfection

Many students give up on their spiritual goals after one small failure. Missing one quiet time can make them feel like everything is ruined. But spiritual growth is not about being perfect—it's about getting back up and continuing the journey.

Think about Peter. He denied Jesus three times during a very difficult moment, yet after he repented, God used him as a bold leader in the early church. Proverbs 24:16 reminds us that even when the righteous fall many times, they rise again. God values faithfulness and a willing heart, not flawless performance.

Even a small prayer whispered on an overwhelming day matters to God. When

students begin to see setbacks as part of learning—not as failure—they grow stronger and more hopeful. By choosing progress over perfection, they experience freedom, joy, and steady, lasting spiritual growth.

5. Avoid Burnout Wisely

Life keeps changing, and our goals need to be flexible enough to change with it. During exam pressure, family concerns, or seasons of anxiety, feeling spiritually stretched does not mean we have failed—it simply shows that we are human. The Bible reminds us that there is “a season for everything” (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Wisdom teaches us not to give up on our goals but to adjust them thoughtfully when needed.

Regular self-evaluation helps us understand our real limits and responsibilities. For example, a student who usually wakes up at 8:00 a.m. may struggle if they suddenly decide to wake up at 6:00 a.m. A wiser approach is to move gradually—waking up at 7:30 a.m. for the first month, then 7:00 a.m., and slowly working toward 6:00 a.m. These small, steady victories build confidence and create lasting momentum.

“Similarly, if waking at 6:00 a.m. for Quiet Time feels too difficult during exams, it’s much better to adjust to 7:00 a.m. than to give up entirely. Consistency matters far more than following rigid rules.”

Remember, Quiet Time doesn’t need to be long to be meaningful. Even five minutes of honest prayer keeps us connected to God. When time is limited, reading the Bible can be replaced with listening to an audio Bible. Jesus Himself invited His tired disciples to rest (Mark

6:31). Rest is not a sign of spiritual failure—it is part of a balanced, healthy lifestyle.

Adjusting our goals thoughtfully shows wisdom and helps us grow. Academics, careers, and relationships are important, but God should always come first in our journey. When we put God first, everything else falls into place, and life becomes more balanced and meaningful.

Conclusion

True renewal isn’t about making big resolutions once a year—it’s about walking faithfully with God every single day. Students don’t need overwhelming goals or drastic changes. What truly matters is taking small, steady steps that lead to real growth. Progress, not perfection, is the key, and every little step builds momentum and confidence over time.

Life will bring pressure, unexpected changes, and challenges—but we are never alone. God is always with us, helping us, guiding us, and giving us the strength we need to keep moving forward. As Proverbs 3:5–6 reminds us, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.” When we trust Him and follow His guidance, even the smallest steps begin to make a big difference.

A transformed life doesn’t happen overnight—it grows through faithful daily steps. Little by little, habits shape character, small victories build confidence, and over time, life begins to change in meaningful and lasting ways. Keep taking those steps, no matter how small, and trust that God is walking with you every step of the way. Your journey of faith, patience, and perseverance will bring real, lasting transformation.

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- Punna Rao Vemula,
Narsapur (Medak)

YOUR QUESTION - OUR ANSWERS



January Month Question:

What do you talk about during 2/2 time in camps?

Answer

In the camps conducted as part of the Union of Evangelical Students of India (UESI) ministry, 2/2 sessions (personal fellowship) are crucial. Information regarding how to converse with students during this time and which topics to discuss is provided below.

General Topics to Discuss During 2/2 Time

During the camp days, in the evening hours, senior students or graduates have 2/2 fellowship with fellow students.

- First, establish a friendly atmosphere by introducing yourselves to each other.
- Inquire about the student's education, family background, financial situation, and their parents' way of life.
- Ask how many times they have attended a camp before. Ask for their opinions on the facilities, food, and organization here.
- Provide necessary career advice based on the college they are studying in (Government or Private) and their course.
- Ask and find out what they have learned through the sessions held in the camp that day.

Conversations Based on Camp Type

There are three types of camps in UESI ministry. The 2/2 conversation changes depending on the purpose of each camp:

1. Evangelistic Camp (EC)

This is intended for students from Christian backgrounds who do not have the experience of salvation, and for those of other faiths.

- Patiently answer the doubts and questions in the students' minds.
- While observing their spiritual state



Nuthana Sirshika

based on their conversation, explain the greatness of God and the importance of salvation.

2. Discipleship Training (DT) Camp

This is a training camp conducted for students who have received salvation.

- It is important to explain Biblical doctrines and discuss the characteristics of a true disciple.
- Give guidance on our responsibility in society as disciples of Jesus Christ and how to live for God in the world.

3. Leadership Training (LT) Camp

This is a training camp conducted for students who have already attended a DT camp and possess leadership qualities.

- Discuss how to be a witness as a Christian leader in colleges and in future employment.
- Provide advice on how to discern God's will in key matters such as employment and marriage.

Prayer

Before ending the conversation, conclude the 2/2 session by praising God for the things learned in the camp that day and praying with burden for the students' personal needs.

- K. Barnabas (Bhadraiah),
Teacher, Mancherla

February Month Question

Bible Reading: Quality vs. Quantity?

Send your answer by **January 10th**.



THE JOY OF MISSING OUT (JOMO)

In this day and age, because of social media, everyone's life is like an open book, constantly visible to all. In such a world, it is very natural to feel like we are missing something. It could be a festival, a trend, a fun moment, or simply the feeling that someone else's life is much better than ours.

This anxiety about missing out on what others are experiencing is called "FOMO" (Fear of Missing Out). However, there is a powerful alternative that brings us peace instead of this pressure. It is a powerful alternative based on faith in God called "JOMO" (The Joy of Missing Out).

This means ceasing to worry about what we lack and finding joy in what we have. This does not mean running away from life; rather, it means happily accepting the life God has given us.

1. The Damage Caused by FOMO

FOMO is a psychological feeling. Due to social media, it has increased significantly in recent times. Although it may seem like a modern problem, in reality, it is a struggle that has existed in the human heart for a long time. Now,

it is simply being expressed through digital tools.

The root of this problem is not events, but "comparison."

The main reason for this is the fear of being left behind and the desire to be connected with everyone. Psychologists state that comparing ourselves with others, insecurity, and the fear of being left alone are its symptoms.

Due to the rapid technological advancement, particularly among today's youth (Gen Z), this effect is very strong. Studies show that over 90 percent of youth use social media daily. Among them, many spend more than four hours a day on it. Approximately 70-80 percent of

them regularly experience this FOMO problem.

When you see friends going on vacations, posting beautiful photos, or achieving successes on social media, your brain starts telling you things like:

- * I am falling behind in life
- * Everyone is happier than me
- * There is no excitement in my life.

FOMO is not just feeling bad that we aren't doing good things. It is a strong feeling that we are missing out on something great that others are experiencing right now. Emotionally speaking, this increases anxiety and insecurity within us. It creates a feeling that our life is "less than."

Psychologically, our brain always seeks the approval of others. As a result, comparison becomes a habit. The more we compare, the more inadequate our lives feel.

"...measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Cor 10:12).

2. Contentment and Living in the Present

In these days, being content has become very difficult. This is because social media only shows everyone's "beautiful moments" of life. The world tells us that being busy and being in the spotlight is what constitutes greatness. A life lived quietly and with faith might not seem interesting to look at online. But Scripture reminds us:

"Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6).

To overcome this FOMO, you must learn to love the state you are

currently in. Contentment does not mean your life is perfect without flaws. It means recognizing that the time God has placed you in is valuable. Job's response even in difficulties stands as a great example of godliness with contentment.

Living in the present moment brings true joy. Joy does not come from what others are doing; it comes from how you are living. When you slow down and notice the blessings you have, your growth, your relationships, and your life's journey, this FOMO loses its strength.

3. From Human Approval to Inner Peace

Social media thrives on 'likes', comments, and the attention of others. Every "like" we get releases a chemical called dopamine in the brain. This gives us temporary happiness. Over time, this becomes like an addiction. We yearn for others' approval, look for notifications, and get caught up in unnecessary busyness.

But faith works differently. It depends on peace, our identity, and God's purposes. When you realize that your value comes from God and not from people, you won't have the need to compete with the digital world.

Remember:

People usually see only the filtered version of our lives —the best moments. But God sees our full reality. He knows our struggles, our intentions, and our growth.

Instead of asking "Do people like my life?", we should start asking ourselves, "Is the way I am living bringing peace to my heart and glory to God?" When you stop thinking about external approval

and start thinking about inner peace, you become mentally and spiritually stronger.

4. Leaving Digital Noise to Build Relationships

To conquer FOMO, changing your mindset alone is not enough; habits must also change. Here are some simple ways:

- * **Allocate time for social media:**

Using the phone for 1-2 hours less per day brings a great change in your mental state.

- * **Decide on "No Phone Hours":**

Put the phone aside during meal times, while praying, while studying, or before going to sleep.

- * **Turn off notifications:** Turn off unnecessary alerts that damage your concentration.

- * **Spend time with real friends:** Instead of just online chatting, talk to people in person.

- * **Do activities that give you enthusiasm:** Reading, playing games, singing songs, writing, or helping others.

The less noise there is in your digital world, the more clarity there will be in your real life.

5.Divine Joy with JOMO

If we look at the Epistle to the Philippians in the Bible, it is often called the "Epistle of Joy." But the surprising thing is that Paul wrote it while in prison. This is proof of the great truth that our circumstances cannot determine our joy. In the same epistle, the Apostle Paul wrote:

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:11).

Notice that Paul says "learned."

Contentment does not come automatically; we must cultivate it. In the same way, JOMO (Joy of Missing Out) does not come accidentally; it is a choice we make intentionally:

- * giving importance to God's purpose rather than popularity;
- * giving importance to God's presence rather than pressure;
- * giving importance to faith rather than fear.

Studies show that practicing JOMO can reduce stress and anxiety by 23%. This reinforces the truth stated in the Bible that peace comes not from comparison, but from contentment.

JOMO tells us:

- * "I don't need to be everywhere to be happy"
- * "I can enjoy this moment I have right now"
- * "Rest, peace, and authenticity are more important than a constantly busy life."

When you embrace JOMO, you stop running for the life you desire and start living the life God has placed before you. That is a life filled with purpose, joy, and meaning.

Conclusion

Regardless of what the world thinks, JOMO is believing that God's plan is sufficient for us. When you choose this, you are choosing God's presence, peace, and faith. This is the life truly worth living.

You are not behind anyone.

God has not forgotten you.

You are not missing anything.

Let us remember that the place where God has kept you now is the right place for Him to perform His work in you.

- Martin Luther Pirangi,

Rajendra Nagar Zone, Hyderabad

God Who Fulfilled His Promise



mother even resorted to blackmailing me. During those times, I would pray to God silently within my heart. In that way, God stood by me and helped me.

“Your God is the one who helped you.”

My name is Rajitha. I come from Rupla Naik Thanda, Manala Village, Rudrangi Mandal, in the Sircilla District. I was born into a Hindu family where idol worship was very prevalent in our home and village. Consequently, I continued to practice idol worship until I completed my intermediate education. Later, I moved to JNTUH to pursue my B.Tech degree.

There, I was introduced to some seniors who spoke to me about God and would take me to family prayers every day. I was greatly surprised by the way they prayed and the love they showed toward me. One day, they took me to an Evangelistic camp. At that camp, I clearly understood the question, “Who is God?” and it was there, in the year 2015, that I was saved.

When I was saved, my family members, relatives, and villagers scolded me severely. Furthermore, they put immense pressure on me, and my

I completed my B.Tech in 2019. Afterward, my family began looking for marriage alliances for me. I told them, “I will get married only after I get a job.” They responded by saying, “You won’t get a job,” and forced me even more to get married. During that difficult time, I relied completely on God. God spoke to me regarding my employment and promised, “I will give you a job” (Matthew 7:9-11). The Sanath Nagar EGF also supported me greatly during that period.

By God’s great grace, I was selected for Group-2, Group-3, and Group-4 government positions. Now, all my family members and relatives acknowledge it, saying, “Your God is the one who helped you.” Subsequently, while I was praying for my marriage, God did my marriage according to His will. I am very happy about this. Currently, I am discharging my duties as a Mandal Panchayat Raj Officer (MPO) in the Siddipet District, having been selected through Group-2.



Hydration Hack

Water is fundamental to life. The human body comprises nearly 60% water, while the brain alone is roughly 73%. However, our bodies do not simply retain this reserve. Through urine, sweating, breathing, digestion, and blood filtration, we continuously lose water. This constant depletion, known as daily water turnover, amounts to 2–3 litres per day for most adults, even without strenuous physical activity. Consequently, doctors repeatedly stress the importance of adequate intake to maintain the body's hydration balance.

1. Dehydration: Warning Signs

When we fail to replenish what is lost, dehydration sets in, and even mild cases have serious repercussions. A mere 1–2% drop in body water can lower energy, disturb mood, and

impair memory. As blood volume decreases, less oxygen reaches the brain, resulting in mental fatigue and sluggish thinking. Research confirms that even slight dehydration causes poor focus, slower reaction times, memory difficulties, and negative mood shifts. At 10% dehydration, delirium becomes common and the senses begin to fail; at 15%, survival is unlikely. Therefore, water is not optional; it is a fundamental essential for life.

2. The Agony of Unquenchable Thirst

Because water is vital for survival, the body signals its absence with intense distress. Physical thirst is one of the most painful sensations a human being can experience. Imagine placing crores of rupees, tons of gold, and a single glass of water before a person dying of dehydration. In that moment,

wealth becomes meaningless; the individual would reach for the water without hesitation. This is what real thirst looks like.

History reflects this vulnerability. Shipwreck survivors during World War II lasted, at most, about eleven days without water. Scripture captures this same agony.

"Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue."(Luke 16:24)

If bodily thirst is this unbearable, the thirst of the soul must be even deeper.

3. Staying Hydrated: An Act of Gratitude

Caring for physical hydration also carries spiritual meaning. Many treat the body as separate from spiritual life, yet Scripture presents a different view. Human beings are created in the image of God, and the body is described as a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19–20). We do not belong to ourselves; we are stewards of what God has entrusted to us. When we drink enough water, eat wisely, and care for our health, we are honoring this trust.

As the apostle Paul writes,

"Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31).

Even ordinary actions such as drinking water can express gratitude, discipline, and reverence.

Proper care of the body enables clearer thinking, sustained energy, and faithful service. Simultaneously, Scripture reminds us that physical nourishment is not ultimate. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Practices such as fasting highlight this truth. Fasting does not deny the value of the body; rather, it teaches that while physical strength matters, it is not the source of life itself. Spiritual disciplines deepen our hunger for God, while responsible care of the body keeps us capable. Together, they prepare us to receive what Scripture calls the Living Water.

4. Thirst Fulfilled: The Promise of Living Water

If physical hydration keeps the body alive, the question remains: what keeps the soul alive? Many attempt to satisfy inner longing through success, entertainment, relationships, recognition, money, or career advancement. Scripture calls these "broken cisterns" that cannot hold water (Jer 2:13). They promise fulfillment but leave the soul restless and dry.

Jesus addressed this universal need when He stood before a crowd and declared: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37–38). Inner dryness is not a sign that you need more entertainment;

it indicates that your soul is longing for God. In this powerful invitation by our Lord, three important truths stand out:

a) The Need: “If Anyone Thirsts”

The first step is recognizing the need: “If anyone thirsts.” This condition confronts us as believers. Are we truly thirsty for God, or have we learned to live with spiritual dryness? The psalmist expressed genuine longing when he wrote,

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for You, O God” (Psalm 42:1).

In the wild, a waterhole is often the most dangerous place for a deer. Predators hide nearby, and lowering its head to drink makes the deer vulnerable. Yet the deer drinks because its need is greater than anything else—even life. True spiritual growth begins when the desire for God outweighs the desire for comfort and safety.

b) The Remedy: “Come and Drink”

The remedy Jesus offers is wonderfully simple: “Come and drink.” He does not call people to earn, achieve, or prove themselves. The Living Water is received by faith, not by effort. While this begins at salvation, it is not limited to a single moment. It involves a daily, sometimes desperate, turning toward Christ. Longing leads to coming, and coming leads to a disciplined life shaped by prayer, meditation on

Scripture, and continual dependence on God. The supply is abundant, but it must be personally received.

c) The Promise: “Rivers of Living Water”

Finally, Jesus promises not just satisfaction, but overflow. He declares that from within the one who drinks will flow “rivers of living water” (John 7:38). Life in the Spirit is therefore not meant to be contained or stagnant. Those who remain close to Christ, the true source, experience what He described as “a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14). This inner renewal does not end with the individual. Those who are continually refreshed by Christ become channels through whom God’s life flows to others, bringing encouragement, hope, and spiritual renewal wherever they go.

5. Conclusion

Just as the body requires daily hydration, the soul requires daily renewal. Comfort, success, and distraction cannot replace Christ, for “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again” (John 4:13). Only He satisfies the deepest thirst of the human heart. The invitation still stands: be thirsty, come humbly, drink deeply, and live overflowing.

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Active Listening

Not Just Hearing, But Understanding with the Heart

Have you ever noticed that while someone is speaking to you, even though you are looking at them and nodding your head, your mind is wandering elsewhere? This is an experience common to us all. It is pretending to listen without truly hearing. This is called 'Passive Hearing.' However, in Mark 4:9, when the Lord Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear," His intention was not merely about hearing sounds. The inner meaning of His words is that we must listen with deep understanding and full attention.

Throughout the Bible, God desires only one thing from us. It is not to merely hear His words superficially, but to receive them wholeheartedly and transform our lives. The teachings of Jesus are not just words; they are living truths that lead us toward a deeper faith. When we love Jesus and honor Him, our attitude toward His words changes. We value His words not out of obligation, but out of love.

This kind of listening is evidence of true devotion. In this rushed life, stopping for a while to sit at His feet and dedicating time to hear His gentle voice amidst the chaos of this world is true worship. We must not remain mere spectators; we must become partners who transform our lives through His truth.

This habit should not be limited only to prayer but should also be demonstrated when speaking

with those around us and those in distress.

1. What is Active Listening?

Active listening is superior to merely catching sounds with one's ears. It involves grasping the meaning behind the speaker's words, feeling their emotions, and establishing a heartfelt connection by responding with the right intention. Through this, the listener becomes not just an auditor, but an empathetic person.

2. Hearing versus Active Listening

- * **Hearing:** This is a physical process where sounds strike the ear. Our focus or attention may or may not be present.
- * **Active Listening:** This involves paying full attention to the speaker and grasping the inner meaning of what they are saying. As a result, giving a clear and contextual response becomes possible.

3. Spiritual and Ethical Perspective

The Bible also exhorts us not only to hear God's words but to receive them with our hearts and transform our lives. It is only by honoring the teachings and inviting them into our inner being that they can bring about a change in our behavior. This quality should be reflected in our prayers and personal relationships.

4. Six Easy Methods to Develop Active Listening

- * **Be Fully Present:** When a conversation is taking place, your focus, body language, and thoughts must be right there.
- * **Listen with Patience:** Do not intend to respond immediately while the other person is speaking; listen to their feelings completely.
- * **Reflective Response:** Use sentences like "Seeing what you are saying, it seems this

matter has caused you great pain" to show that you have understood their feelings.

- * **Clarifying Questions:** If there are doubts, ask questions. For example: "Is what I understood correct?" or "How did you feel at that moment?"
- * **Reflective Summary:** briefly stating the main points before the conversation ends brings clarity to both parties. This helps to gather scattered thoughts in one place and take the conversation to the next stage.
- * **Suitable Response:** Offer advice only if necessary; otherwise, simply share in their feelings and stand by them.

5. Non-Verbal Signals

Our body language provides more reassurance to others than words do:

- * **Eye Contact:** While respecting cultural norms, looking into the other person's eyes while listening indicates that you are listening to their words attentively.
- * **Body Posture:** Leaning slightly towards the conversation indicates interest. One should remain calm without crossing arms.
- * **Nodding:** This encourages the speaker and conveys that you are following the matters being discussed.

- * **Facial Expressions:** A reaction (a smile or sadness) should appear on your face corresponding to the other person's emotions.

6. Common Mistakes to Avoid

- * **Immediate Judgments:** Do not try to give advice while listening. Let them speak completely first.
- * **Interrupting:** It is not good practice to state your opinion before the other person has finished their sentence.
- * **Distraction:** Looking at a phone or engaging in other tasks acts as an insult to the other person.

"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak" (James 1:19)

7. Christ's Compassion - Active Listening

The life of Lord Jesus is the supreme example of 'Active Listening.' He did not just hear words; He listened to the hearts of men.

- * **Full Presence:** No matter how busy He was, Jesus gave His full time and attention to those who came to Him.
- * **Empathy:** Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:35). This was not just about solving a problem, but about sharing in grief.
- * **Identifying Needs:** When speaking with the Samaritan woman at the well, He recognized the deep spiritual thirst she had not asked about.

"Everyone should be quick to

listen, slow to speak" (James 1:19) is the cornerstone of active listening. Let us also, like Jesus, recognize others as valuable, set aside our own agenda, and give value to their emotions.

8. How to Put it into Practice

- * **Humility:** Set aside the urge to prove that what you say is right.
- * **Focus:** Put aside distractions like phones and focus on the speaker's words, tone, and body language.
- * **Listen to the Heart:** Recognize their pain before offering advice.

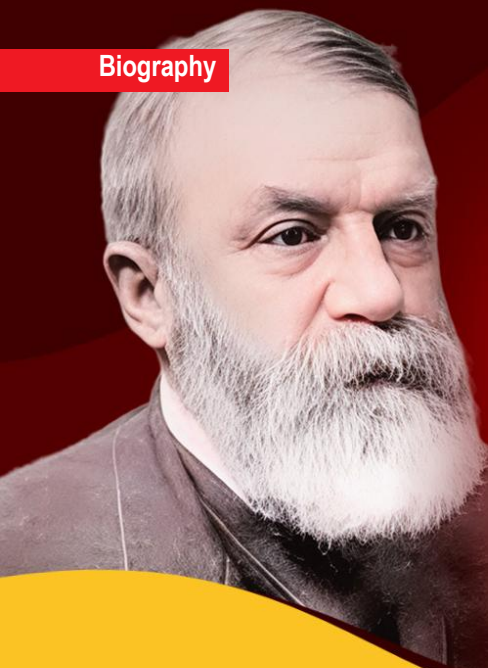
8. Conclusion

Active listening is not just a skill; it is a great tool that strengthens relationships in our family, society, and spiritual life. By practicing this, we can become more empathetic individuals. Take a small decision starting today: "I will listen to others not just with my ears, but with my heart." Only then will you see a miraculous change in your relationships.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your word which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Teach us to listen not just with our ears, but with our hearts. Prepare our ears to hear Your voice and the cries of those around us. May the way we listen be a reflection of Your love and grace toward the world. In Jesus' name, Amen.

– Ramana, Shamshabad



D.L. MOODY

(1837-1899)

The Ordinary Man Who Shared
God's Love with the World

In the spiritual firmament of the 19th century, the star of Dwight L. Moody shone most brightly. Yet, behind that extraordinary brilliance stood a simple, uneducated country boy. His life story serves as a powerful illustration of how God's grace can transform an ordinary life into something extraordinary.

"I was born in the flesh in 1837. I was born in the Spirit in 1856."

Born into an impoverished family in Massachusetts and deprived of even basic primary education, this boy grew to become one of the most influential spiritual leaders of the 19th century. His influence crossed continents and touched millions of hearts. He described his own life with these words: "I was born in the flesh in 1837. I was born in the Spirit in 1856." These words reflect his remarkable journey of transformation from physical birth to spiritual rebirth.

A Childhood of Hardship

The foundation for Moody's strong and determined personality was laid during his childhood. Understanding these hardships is crucial to understanding his life. He grew up in a family of nine children; his father died at a young age, leaving his mother to fight an untiring battle to raise them in poverty amidst strict Puritan discipline. These experiences forged him into a man of steel.

His childhood was spent in North-

field. When his father died suddenly at the age of 41, the family sank into deep financial trouble. Creditors took everything they could find, down to the firewood in the shed. During these difficult times, his mother taught them the importance of keeping a promise. If the children agreed to do a task, it had to be completed.

Her question, "Did you say you would?" remained with them for the rest of their lives.

From a young age, he displayed both clever mischief and perseverance. At the age of five, to get a ride to his grandmother's house, he offered a bunch of wildflowers he was holding to a cart driver. His mother was very strict regarding discipline. Once, she sent Moody himself to fetch a switch to beat him with, instructing him to ensure it wasn't too green. Although Moody respected his mother's discipline, he realized early on that love was more powerful than fear. Therefore, he decided to lead his own future family not with the harsh rod of 'Law,' but with the warm embrace of 'Grace.'

Boston: A Turning Point

Eventually, with the ambition to "build a life for himself," he went to Boston. Initially, he faced disappointment. Finally, he found a job at his uncle's shoe store, but with strict conditions. Mandatory attendance at church and Sunday School was the most significant of these rules. Moody, whose ambition

was to excel in business in Boston, did not know then that an unexpected spiritual event would alter the course of his life.

The Moment That Changed Everything

Moody's life exemplifies how a single genuine experience can transform a person completely. This incident became the focal point of his life. His ambition shifted from accumulating wealth to dedicating his life to God's service.

He surrendered his life to Christ... in the back of that store in Boston, the young man seemed ready for the light that shone upon him."

His Sunday School teacher, Mr. Kimball, recalled that moment: "I determined to speak to him about Christ and about his soul... I started down to Holton's shoe store. When I was nearly there, I began to wonder whether I ought to go in just then during business hours... I decided to rush in and have it over with at once... I found Moody in the back part of the building wrapping up shoes. I went up to him at once, and putting my hand on his shoulder, I made what I felt afterwards was a very weak plea for Christ. I don't know just what words I used, nor could Mr. Moody tell. I simply told him of Christ's love for him and the love Christ wanted in return. That was all there was. It seemed the young man was just ready for the light that then broke upon him, and there, in the back of that store in

Boston, he gave himself and his life to Christ."

This event was not a public spectacle. It was a quiet, personal, and crucial decision. But it completely shifted his priorities. As a historian noted, "He did not need more morality, but great power." That quiet moment changed the trajectory of his life. The steps of the young man running after wealth were now about to begin a great journey for the salvation of souls on the streets of Chicago.

Leaving Business for God's Service

Moody's decision to leave a successful business life was incredibly courageous. At a time when he was close to his financial goal of earning \$100,000, a single experience compelled him to give it all up for a faith-based ministry with no guaranteed salary.

In Chicago, he initially rented four pews and filled them every Sunday by bringing in young men from the streets. He established the North Market Hall Sunday School for the city's poor and unruly children (street gangs). The pivotal event that changed his life occurred here. A Sunday School teacher was deeply distressed because he felt he hadn't led a single one of the "unruly" girls in his class to Christ.

Moody took the teacher to visit each girl's home. In just ten days, every girl in that class accepted Christ. That prayer meeting was a historic moment. A teacher close to death, a group of girls who had newly found Christ, and a young man finding his life's purpose

in their midst—the spiritual energy in that room set Moody's heart ablaze.

***We had a time of great joy there... at that time God kindled a fire in my soul that has never gone out.*—Moody**

This incident reinforced his decision to leave business completely. His ministry, which began locally in Chicago, soon expanded to the international stage and moved the world.

Worldwide Revival

Moody's influence crossed American shores, leading to a spiritual awakening in Great Britain. His success came not from formal education or oratorical eloquence, but from his sincerity and the simple, powerful message of the Gospel.

At a YMCA conference, he met the singer Ira D. Sankey. Moody said directly to Sankey, "You are the man I



have been looking for... You must come to Chicago and help me in my work."

Their partnership created miracles. Together they created the "Moody and Sankey Hymn Book," the impact of which was immense. They did not keep the royalties for personal gain. Initially,

the funds were used to rebuild a church destroyed in the Chicago fire, and later to fund the Northfield schools.

Their campaigns in Scotland and London had a massive impact. Initially, they faced opposition in London. Newspapers mocked him as the "most vulgar preacher," and magazines like Vanity Fair published caricatures of him. However, his sincere sermons captivated even skeptics. Soon, prominent figures like the Lord Chancellor praised them. A desire grew within him to transform his global evangelistic ministry into a lasting legacy through education.

Education and Training

Moody realized that true, lasting impact would come not just through his sermons, but by raising up future generations of Christian workers. He was not merely building schools; he was building an army of "Gap-men" (those who bridge the gap between laypeople and ministers) to continue the work he could not do alone. Inspired by his own lack of education, he created opportunities for others that he never had.

He founded the Northfield Seminary for girls and the Mount Hermon School for boys. His motivation was to provide quality, Bible-based education to youth with limited financial means. There was a unique rule in these schools: all students had to perform physical labor. This not only promoted humility but also "removed social barriers," ensuring students from all backgrounds started on an equal footing. Explaining

his purpose for founding the Chicago Bible Institute, Moody stated he believed in training practical workers to "stand between the laity and the ministers."

Through these institutions, thousands of students were trained and went on to serve globally as pastors, missionaries, and dedicated lay believers in secular jobs.

Conclusion

Contemporaries described Moody as a man of "consecrated common-sense." Immense energy, profound humility, and a simple, Bible-based faith were the hallmarks of his life.

His final moments on December 22, 1899, were powerful and moving. He described the moment of transitioning peacefully from death to life in his own words:

"Earth recedes; Heaven opens before me... This is no dream... If this is death, it is sweet. There is no valley here. God is calling me, and I must go."

At that moment, he also said he saw the faces of his two deceased grandchildren, calling out, "Dwight! Irene!"

His journey, which began with a "spiritual birth" in 1856, ended with "Heaven opening" in 1899. Dwight L. Moody, who started with nothing, left behind an immense legacy in the form of faith, service, and transformed lives across the world.

- Ruth Vinay

Pragati Nagar, Cyberabad

(Article collected from internet sources)



Amnesia

If we look back just once at the year that has passed, what do we see? Wars, unexpected accidents, untimely rains, floods that created havoc, violence, and roads stained with blood. There were tragedies where passengers who boarded buses to reach their destinations were burned alive, crashed airplanes, riots, and anarchy... so many such things! Added to these were countless heartbreaks that never even made the news.

It is hard to understand how time ran so fast as the days went by. The year 2025 ended in a hurry, kicking up dust as it went. "This year really played games with everyone," thought Uday, his heart growing heavy. The memory that we lost

so many great people, close friends, and noble servants in this year alone distressed him even more.

Just then, Uday's train of thought was broken by a call from Ajay brother. Upon hearing that Ajay was coming to his room, Uday hurriedly started tidying up the place. There was a small fear that his brother would scold him, saying, "What is this, little brother? Why have you kept the room so messy?" Ajay arrived shortly after. Seeing the hastily arranged room, he understood immediately, smiled slightly, and greeted him, "What is it, brother? You seem to be free?"

"I am always free, aren't I, brother!

No studies, no job. I couldn't reach any goal I set for myself," Uday sighed. "Look, Uday, don't feel so bad. God has a great plan for you. Cast your anxiety upon Him; do not carry it yourself," Ajay said reassuringly. Since these were words he heard often, Uday couldn't quite find comfort in them. He stared blankly at the wall and gave a heavy hum of acknowledgement. However, Ajay noticed the tears welling up in Uday's eyes.

"Oh no, brother! I came so we could pray together for a while. I didn't disturb you, did I?" asked Ajay.

"No, brother... it's just some unknown pain. I don't even feel like praying," Uday replied.

"Please, sit like this. Do not be discouraged because you haven't got a job. There is a time for everything. God is faithful. So many people closed their eyes in death this past year. They all must have thought they would step into this new year, right? But God gave that opportunity to us. Why do you think that is? Are we greater than them? No... it is purely His grace! He has given us another new year as a crown of kindness to meet our needs or to fulfill His purposes. Cannot the God who laid down His life for you provide for your basic needs?" he encouraged him.

"We must be grateful, reflecting on the good things God has done for us in the past. We should not distance ourselves from God just because one thing didn't happen.

When ten lepers were healed, only one came back to show gratitude, right? You remember the occasion when Jesus Christ asked where the other nine were?" said Ajay. Hearing those words, Uday fell into thought. He recalled, one by one, the grace God had shown him and the good deeds done for him over the past year. Thinking of his forgetfulness, he smiled and *tapped himself lightly on the head.*

"Hit yourself a little harder, brother! This amnesia you have—meaning your forgetfulness—will leave you right away," Ajay joked. Uday laughed wholeheartedly at those words. With his heart feeling lighter, he prayed briefly:

"Oh God! Grant me amnesia so that I do not remember and grieve over unnecessary things. But, please remove this amnesia I have when it comes to remembering the good deeds You have done, so that I may remember them forever."

This time, Ajay laughed uncontrollably.

- Chegudi Syamala Krupa Rao
Teacher and Graduate,
Rajendranagar Zone

REQUIREMENT

A **graduate helper** is required to work among **neighbor students in the Old City area of the Hyderabad-1 District**. Those who are willing can contact the District Coordinator.

- K. Janakiram, DC, Hyderabad-1
Cell: 80081 32387

WAKE UP BEFORE YOU FALL



In today's world, believers live amidst two great invisible forces. One force is God, and the other is Satan. The 'believer' is the center of the conflict between these two forces. While God leads us towards His holiness, Satan seeks to distance us from God through temptations. Whose voice we obey and how we face temptation depends entirely on our own decision.

Our Commitment

Having realized God's love, we have made a great decision that living with God is far better than the attractions of the world. However, our adversary, Satan, constantly uses temptations as bait to weaken us spiritually and drag us back into our old life. Although these temptations may appear attractive on the surface, we must recognize the danger behind them and be cautious.

What is Temptation?

Temptation is the act of separating a believer from God's holy plan and His fellowship, making them submit to Satan's power. It increases the desire to commit sin and entices us to show disobedience to God's will.

Sources of Temptation:

There are three main reasons why a believer falls into temptation:

1. Satan
2. The Flesh (Carnal desires)
3. The World (Worldly attractions)

According to James 1:13, temptations do not come from God. God allows temptations, but what He puts us through are 'Tests'. These tests serve as opportunities to prove our character and improve our spirituality.

Satan's Plan

Satan has two schemes in this world:

- * That an unbeliever should never come to God.
- * That a believer should not continue in God.

Satan knows his future punishment; that is why he prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. He never tires in his work.

Personal Triggers

In our daily lives, the influence of people, objects, and systems can cause us to stumble.

1. Wordly Friends: Who we make friends with is very important. We should not compromise on matters of God for the sake of friends.

2. Opposite Sex Relationships: In today's times, friendship between men and women has become common. Phone calls and meetings might not be wrong, but they should not lead to temptation. God commanded us to 'resist' all sins, but regarding 'youthful lusts', He commanded us to 'flee'. It is like fire; if kept in the lap, it will certainly burn.

3. Mobile Phone: Due to smart phones, 'Quality Time' spent with God is decreasing. Spending too much time on social media poses the danger of our eyes and thoughts drifting away from God.

4. Laziness/Loneliness: Being idle invites unnecessary thoughts and gives room to Satan. As the saying goes, "An idle mind is a devil's workshop," we must be careful.

5. Pride(Self-Glory): Lucifer thought highly of himself and became Satan. There should be no 'I' or ego in the church or ministry. Satan seeks to bring down a believer using the very same thing that caused his own fall.

6. Unsatisfied Life: Not being content with what one has and craving money, property, beauty, or status leads to temptation.

7. Worldly Desires: Knowing that the world is not eternal, yet revolving around it, is falling into Satan's trap.

Corrective Measures

* **Understand the Calling:** Identify which temptation is weakening you. Have a strong desire to

come out of it. Remember that we are called to live 'set apart'.

* **Word, Prayer and Faith:** Have 'Quality Quiet Time' every day and read the Bible. As Jesus Christ said, watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. It is impossible to conquer temptation without God's strength.

* **Personal Mentor:** It is safe to have a spiritual mentor or a brother/sister to share our spiritual state with before falling into sin.

* **Fellowship:** Regularly participating in church worship and prayer meetings allows us to give spiritual support to one another.

* **Fear of God:** God searches our hearts and minds. If we are perishing, He will not remain silent; He chastises us with love to correct us.

* **Personal Discipline:** Personal Discipline: We must establish certain boundaries, such as reducing mobile usage, reading good books, and staying away from overthinking.

Conclusion

God tested Adam, Abraham, and Job. While Adam failed, Abraham and Job conquered. We should not look at those who failed and despair, but take those who conquered as our examples. Our Lord Jesus Christ conquered all temptations and stands as a model for us (Hebrews 5:7).

Remember: Whatever the situation, there is no permission to sin. Even if we fall by mistake, God has the power to deliver us from that sin. Let us turn to Him immediately.

- P. Nageswara Rao,
Staff, Khammam Region



Uncompromising Warrior

(Continuation from the previous issue)

3. Mordecai: The one who did not compromise with worldly ways

Haman was appointed as Prime Minister in the court of King Ahasuerus. According to the king's command, all officials and servants were required to bow down and pay homage to Haman. Although the servants bowed their heads daily to Haman, Mordecai did not honor him. "I am a Jew. I cannot bow down as you do," Mordecai told them clearly.

When Haman learned of this, he was furiously angry. Thinking, "Taking the life of a single slave from a foreign land is a trivial matter," he gathered full details about Mordecai's race and the God he worshipped.

With cunning intent, Haman went to the king one day and pleaded, "O King! There is a certain race of people scattered throughout all the provinces of your kingdom. Their laws and cus-

toms are different from all other people. Furthermore, they do not obey your commands nor respect them. It is not fitting to let such people remain in our country." He requested permission to destroy them if it pleased the king.

The king immediately took off his signet ring, gave it to Haman, and said, "Do whatever seems best to you." A decree was written in the king's name and sealed with the ring. The content of the decree was this: On the thirteenth day of the month of Adar (the 12th month), it was proclaimed across all 127 provinces that all Jews—young and old, children and women—were to be completely destroyed in a single day.

"For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place."

Despite knowing about such a ter-

rifying decree, Mordecai was neither afraid nor did he compromise. Not only did he pray intensely, but he also encouraged all the Jews to fast and pray. He advised Esther, who was the queen, regarding this matter and warned her.

Even in our country today, there are situations where religious laws are being implemented against Christians, creating conditions where one cannot live freely or proclaim the Gospel. Like Mordecai, let us not fear or compromise, but stand courageously on God's side and pray.

4. Mordecai: The man of prayer

Haman, the Prime Minister, developed a deep hatred for Mordecai because he did not honor him or bow down in prostration. Fueled by this grudge, Haman plotted cunningly to completely exterminate all the Jews in the kingdom. He obtained the king's permission for this wicked plan, had the decree written, and sealed it with the royal signet.

According to that decree, it was announced that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, known as Adar, all Jews without exception—youth, the elderly, infants, and women—were to be annihilated in a single day, and their possessions could be seized as plunder. These notices were sent to all the provinces of the kingdom.

Upon learning of this terrible decree, Mordecai tore his clothes in deep grief, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He stood before the King's Gate, crying out with a loud and bitter wail. Addressing all his people, Mordecai advised the Jews across the country to fast. Consequently, all the Jews in the land, and especially those who gathered at the

citadel of Shushan, fasted and were immersed in great mourning, weeping, and wailing.

When Queen Esther learned of this fasting, she was distressed. She sent fresh clothes to Mordecai through Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs appointed to attend to her, but Mordecai would not accept them. Then Mordecai sent this solemn message to Queen Esther:

"Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will surely arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Moved by Mordecai's words, Queen Esther made a courageous decision. She sent a message back to Mordecai saying: "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish."

Thus, Mordecai, Queen Esther, and all the Jews fasted for three days, offering prayers and supplications to God with perseverance. The Almighty God heard their prayers and, through Esther, caused another decree to be written, miraculously saving all the Jews on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar.

If we pray like Mordecai and Esther, many young men and women living in the slavery of sin will be saved. As

UESI graduates and students, let us pray with persistence for the students studying in the colleges and universities of our country.

5. Prime Minister in a Foreign Land

After Esther was appointed queen, Mordecai would walk every day near the King's Gate, keenly observing the situation in the country. One day, he learned that Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's doorkeepers, were plotting to assassinate the king. Mordecai immediately informed Queen Esther of this conspiracy. The fact that Mordecai saved the king was recorded in the Book of the Chronicles in the presence of the king.

One night, the king could not sleep, so he commanded the Book of Records of the Chronicles to be brought and read to him. Upon learning of the help Mordecai had rendered, the king inquired, and it was confirmed to be true. "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" the king asked his servants. "Nothing has been done for him," the servants replied. Just at that moment, Haman, burning with hatred against the Jews, was waiting in the king's court to ask for permission to hang Mordecai on the gallows he had prepared. The servants told the king, "Haman is standing in the court."

The king immediately summoned Haman and asked for his advice: "What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?" Haman thought in his heart, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?" So he advised, "Let royal robes be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, and let them be paraded through the city square." To this, the king com-

manded, "Hurry, take the robes and the horse as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits at the King's Gate." Under unavoidable circumstances and with a heavy heart, Haman clothed Mordecai in royal robes, mounted him on the horse, and led him on parade through the city square, proclaiming before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor."

Afterward, Haman went to his house and told his wife and friends what had happened, weeping bitterly. Meanwhile, the king and Haman were invited to the banquet prepared by Queen Esther, and they attended. At this banquet, the king learned of the plot Haman had hatched to destroy the Jews, and specifically of the gallows prepared to kill Mordecai. Burning with anger, the king commanded, "Hang Haman on that very gallows!"

"He stores up sound wisdom for the upright" (Proverbs 2:7)

Upon Esther's plea and by God's grace, Mordecai was appointed as Prime Minister. He spoke peace to all his people and constantly sought the welfare of his nation. He was great among the Jews and well-liked by the multitude of his brethren. Because he trusted in God and lived as a man of integrity, God heard his prayer and saved the Jews, and thereby Mordecai was granted the high position of Prime Minister.

If we, as students or graduates, live with zeal for God, with faith and integrity, God will surely lift us up to high positions as well.

- K. Barnabas (Bhadrayya),
Teacher, Mancheril

LEAVE THE PAST LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Whenver we think about our past life, it generally always disappoints us. We keep feeling sad thinking "I should not have acted that way in that situation." Though regret for past mistakes is necessary, it is not right to bind ourselves in bitter memories of the past, blaming ourselves and wasting our time worrying. We should forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead (Philippians 3:13-14). Because no matter what we do, we cannot change the past that has happened, but with God's grace, we can wonderfully reshape the future.

1. Disappointment of the Past: Jacob's Experience

When Jacob met Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, in his old age, Pharaoh asked him about his age. To that, Jacob replied, "I have traveled this earth for 130 hard years. But my life has been short compared to the lives of my ancestors." (Genesis 47:9).

From Jacob's words, it is clear how completely dissatisfied he was with his past life. Deceiving his brother and father, working as a bonded servant for decades under his uncle Laban, family conflicts, his daughter Dinah being violated, his sons' violent behavior - his

life went on with many ups and downs. Though circumstances were somewhat responsible, the main reason for Jacob's dissatisfaction was his own decisions and past mistakes.

When we look back at our lives too, they may seem meaningless. But with God's help, we can make the future meaningful.

For example, if you are now 25 years old and feel you have wasted the past... imagine you are 50 years old. Then think about how effectively and fruitfully you can transform the next 25 years with God's help. Recognize how the Lord wants to see you.

2. Goal-Oriented Journey: Apostle Paul's Testimony

Unlike Jacob, at the end of his life, Apostle Paul boldly declared,

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race" (2 Timothy 4:7).

Paul's life was also full of hardships. He received many lashes and stonings, was imprisoned many times. He was in mortal danger three times. His whole life was full of dangers - from rivers, from bandits, from his own people, from

other people, in cities, in wilderness, at sea - dangers arose everywhere. He spent many sleepless nights. He endured hunger and thirst. Given his qualifications, there was no need for him to suffer all these hardships. Yet he never worried about his hardships based on them, but rather rejoiced. The difference in perspective about their past lives between Paul who went through hardships and Jacob was mainly the vision of the Lord that Paul had on the road to Damascus. After God appeared to Paul, the two questions He asked changed the direction of his life (Acts 22:8,10):

1. "Who are you?" (knowing God)
2. "What shall I do?" (knowing God's purpose)

To that, the Lord said, "I am sending you to the Gentiles to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me" (Acts 26:18). That's it, he built his entire remaining life on that vision the Lord gave him. When Paul was living for the vision he received, everything in his life, even the hardships, became very meaningful.

3. Divine Plan

God has a great purpose for this universe (Ephesians 1:9-10). In that purpose, we also have a unique role. "The Lord has made everything for its purpose" (Proverbs 16:4). That means God also has a purpose for you.

In God's plan, everyone has a purpose. It is not limited to one community, one class, or only to the wise. Even if you are ordinary in the world's eyes, you are very valuable in God's kingdom. No matter how weak you are, God is capable of using you for His glory.

4. Seek Divine Vision

"Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). Vision means

"the ability to see the future beforehand with faith." This is not building castles in the air - it is taking steps while adding up God's will and our abilities.

Some principles for developing your life vision:

- * **Pray:** Divine vision comes only through prayer. We must ask, "Lord, what do You want to do through me?" We need to be silent in His presence and hear His voice.
- * **Meditate:** God's Word introduces us to ourselves. Only through His Word is the real purpose of our existence revealed.
- * **Recognize:** Recognize the talents God has given you, the burden in your heart. What are you particularly passionate about? Is your work beneficial to others? Think about these things.
- * **Write:** Write down clearly the thoughts God has given (Habakkuk 2:2). A written goal has an authority - it constantly motivates us and keeps us from straying.

5. Conclusion

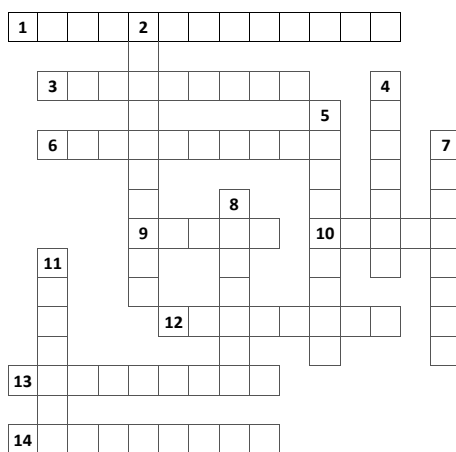
Whatever any object is, if it is used for something other than the purpose for which it was made, it is useless. Our life too, if it does not proceed according to God's purpose, whatever we achieve in life is futile.

Those who live in God's will do not care about the recognition the world gives. Even if hardships arise, they do not collapse. Many times we are satisfied thinking "we are doing some service," but we should think "Is this the work God asked me to do?" God does not look at how much service we have done, but whether we did the work He told us to do. If we can say like Paul, "I have finished the race," what blessed life could be greater than that!

- Nani Babu,

Bowenpally Zone, Hyderabad

January '26 Book of Ezekiel (21-22 Chapters)



Across

1. For whose sword should you make two roads?
3. What are you doing to my holy things?
6. What kind of deeds should be made known to it?
9. By what that you have made do you defile yourself?
10. What will I appoint at all their gates?
12. What will I execute upon you in the land where you were born?
13. Against what should you prophesy concerning the land of Israel?
14. What do all the princes of

Israel do according to their power?

Down

2. What do the foreigners in your midst suffer?
4. What will everyone do to you, saying you are full of turmoil?
5. Son of man, towards what direction should you turn your face?
7. What acts are happening in you?
8. What do those who dwell in you speak to commit murder?
11. What will I satisfy when I clap my hands together?

- K. Kiran Kumar,
Staff, Mahabubnagar

December '25 Book of Ezekiel (19 - 20 Chapters)

Across:

1. Their fathers, 4. LORD, 5. Sabbaths, 7. Young lions, 8. Very high, 10. Destroy, 14. Anger, 16. Land of Egypt, 17. Lioness, 19. Men, 20. Profaning.

Down:

2. Israel, 3. Rebelled, 4. Lifted My hand, 5. Southern, 6. My laws, 9. Countries, 11 Vile images, 12. Fury, 13. Roaring, 15. Evil, 18. Sign.

O Spotless Lamb of God, in Thee

O spotless Lamb of God, in Thee
The Father's holiness we see;
And with delight Thy children trace,
In Thee, His wondrous love and grace.
For Thou didst leave Thy throne above
To teach us that our God is Love;
And now we see His glory shine
In every word and deed of Thine.



When we behold Thee, Lamb of God,
Beneath our sin's tremendous load,
Expiring on the accursed tree
How great our guilt with grief we see.

There we with joy Thy grace behold;
Its height and depth can ne'er be told!
It bursts our chains and sets us free,
And sweetly draws our souls to Thee.

- Mary J. Walker



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