

THE EDIFIER

Church of God (Seventh Day) Australia October 2026



New Wine
Living Water
Rest for the Weary
Feeling Sorry for Yourself?

A magazine dedicated to uplifting
and transforming peoples' lives
through the uncompromised Word of God

THE EDIFIER



The truth will make you free

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Still Life Painting of a Wine Glass, by Leah Anderson, Western Australia. New wine versus old wine is a metaphor Jesus used and one we've capitalised on in a couple of places in this edition of The Edifier magazine. (Please note that by using this artwork, we are not endorsing the misuse of alcohol.)

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The Religious Lost

From the Editor

"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," cautioned Jesus. The Pharisees were well educated in biblical writ, could memorise entire portions of scripture, tithed diligently, and always ceremoniously washed their hands before eating.

Outwardly they looked like the epitome of faithful virtue. But Jesus could read their hearts, and what He exposed was their terrible darkness. He described those very religious men as "whitewashed tombs," "blind guides," "vipers," as well as "sons of hell!"

Thus it was almost counter-intuitive that Nicodemus, one of the leading Pharisees, braved the night to secretly chat with Jesus. It was another miracle when Saul of Tarsus encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, and in that moment, became Paul the apostle, follower and preacher of Jesus!

The miracle of humble enquiry, and coming to the Truth as personified in Jesus, is today part of our mission field as we graciously minister in the lives of others. I recently connected with some very sincere Bible believing and commandment-keeping people. They pray daily. They love Sabbath rest, eat only foods permitted in scripture, as they eagerly look forward to the Kingdom of God. But, from our conversations, it seemed apparent that they do not yet know Christ – that is, on a deep, covenantal level. Jesus is conspicuously absent in conversation. Although His second coming is anticipated, could a lukewarm embrace of Jesus be akin to denying Him?

The good news is that Jesus is still knocking and calling on the door of all our hearts, bidding anyone who hears His voice, to open up to Him. It's fellowship at its best! (See Revelation 3:20).

By God's grace, may we be a catalyst and conduit for reaching out to the religious lost. Through kindness and compassion, and our testimony anchored in our Lord Jesus Christ, may many others also come to enduring, joyous and authentic faith. □

*John Klassek, Pastor
Western Australia*



REST FOR THE WEARY

Weariness touches every life.

Responsibilities, expectations, and worries can quietly accumulate until rest feels out of reach. Jesus speaks directly into this reality with a simple invitation: "Come to me." He does not demand performance or perfection - only trust.

The Sabbath rhythm echoes this invitation each week. It creates space to lay down burdens we were never meant to carry alone. Jesus offers rest that goes deeper than sleep or leisure; He offers rest for the soul. This kind of rest restores our inner life and reshapes how we carry life's demands.

Many people struggle to rest because stopping feels irresponsible or indulgent. Jesus challenges that belief by offering a lighter yoke. The Sabbath becomes a practical way to accept His invitation, reminding us that grace (not pressure) is meant to guide our lives.

As we rest with Christ, we learn a new way of living - one marked by humility, trust, and dependence on God. Observing a Sabbath rest teaches us that we are not sustained by effort alone, but by a relationship with the One who carries us. □

Omar Afiouni
New South Wales

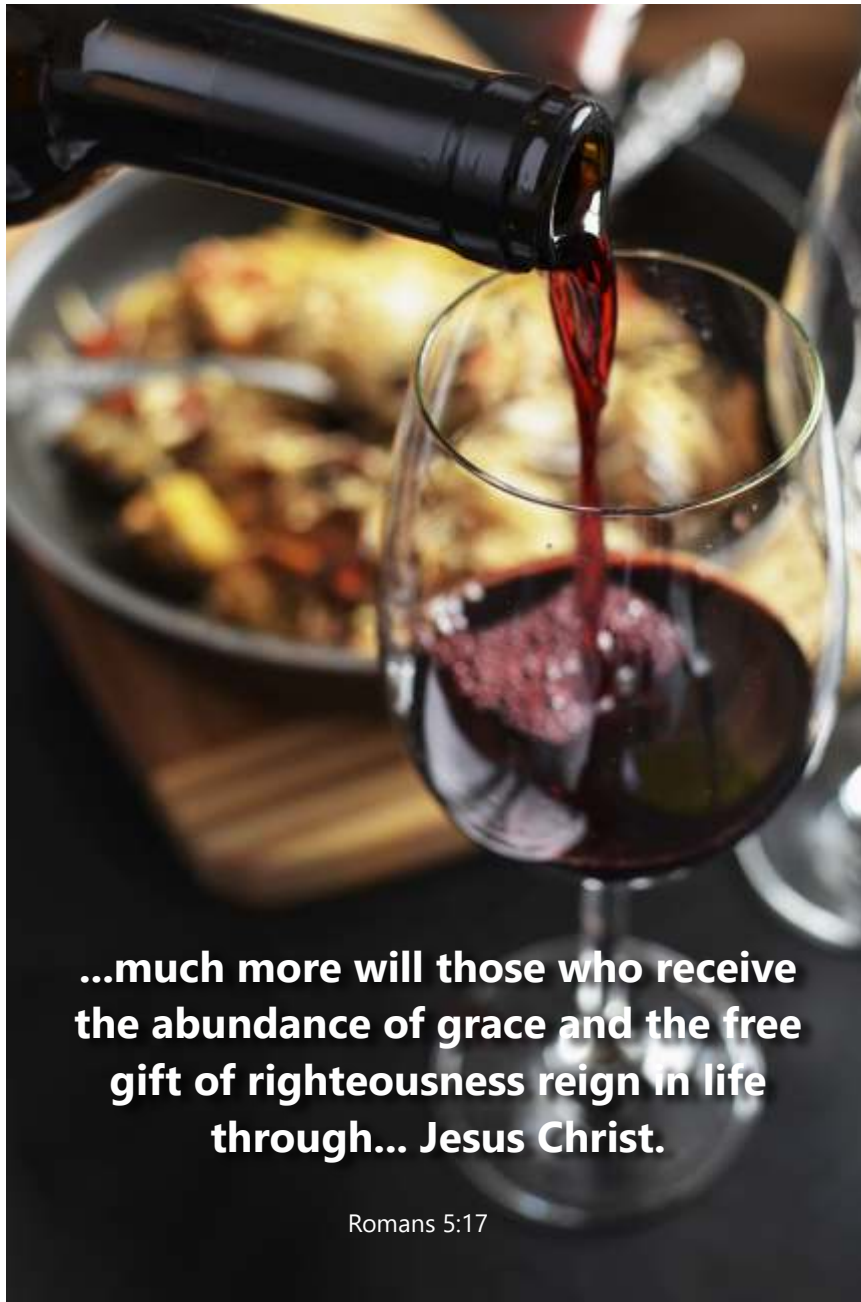


Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens
and the earth by your great power and by your
outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.

Jeremiah 32:17

Artwork by
Leah Anderson

Lord, I bring
You my weariness.
Teach me to rest in
Your grace and walk
in Your gentle ways.
Restore my soul
as I place my trust
in You.



...much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through... Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:17

OLD WINE

NEW WINE

former "works of law," which was all about Abrahamic descent, circumcision and associated animal sacrifices.

Jesus brought "new wine" to Israel – "the truth" (John 1:17) about how God was now calling both Jews and Gentiles to salvation, but Israel rejected this "new wine" in preference to the "old wine" that they had known for many centuries and which Moses had mediated for them.

This "old wine" represented the law of righteousness that Israel, in their struggle to upkeep, had known ever since Sinai. Yet here was Jesus showing a new means and depth of righteousness that all should follow through faith, baptism and spiritual sacrifices, rather than by the

We now recognise that, throughout the whole of the New Testament, we are consistently being told that Jesus brought "new wine" to Israel and that this same message of justification by faith was to be preached to the Gentiles (Matthew 28:19-20).

Only then can we understand what John is alluding to in John 1:14-17 where he is simply contrasting the different means of attaining to righteousness and how that righteousness could then be maintained in the time following the coming of Jesus. □

*Mike Baran
New South Wales*

Living Water

Jesus told the Samaritan woman by the well, *"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."* (John 4:10)

And sometime later, Jesus cried out with the same invitation, *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"* (John 7:37-38)

So, what is this "living water" that Jesus offers?

The disciple John explained that Jesus was referring to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

One of the distinctives in the Church of God (Seventh Day) doctrinal statements states the nature of the Holy Spirit.

Based on God's self-revelation, the ancient Israelites learned, *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one."*

(Deuteronomy 6:4). In fact, in responding to a question about the greatest commandment, Jesus answered by quoting that very verse. (See Mark 12:29)

The Church of God (Seventh Day) takes seriously our use of the Bible in all matters of practice and faith. Thus, we declare that God

is one, not two or three. We care enough to avoid extra-biblical and humanly-devised constructs, which would include a Trinitarian-based theology. The Holy Spirit proceeds from our heavenly Father and bears witness about Jesus. (John 15:26).

Some teach the doctrine of the Trinity, a concept that states God exists as three co-equal persons, yet this cannot be substantiated from scripture. Trinitarianism is a humanly devised, post-biblical construct and, however sincere, is but a limited attempt to define the nature of God.

**"If anyone thirsts,
let him come to
me and drink.
Whoever believes
in me, as the
Scripture has said,
'Out of his heart
will flow rivers of
living water.'"**

Instead of the triumvirate, Jesus taught, *"I and the Father are one."* We see this "oneness" also experienced within human marriage, when a man and woman become one flesh. In God's eyes, they are no longer two, but one. We are made in the *"image and likeness of God,"* and the Bible reiterates the oneness of God. The "us" and "our" in Genesis, for example, is attributed as God's "uni-plural" voice as Father and Son.

We must be careful and respectful about trying to extract more from scripture than what the text says. The limitations of human language and understanding cannot adequately describe the transcendence of God.

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An essential part of the “new wine” or revealing within the gospel testimonies is where Jesus not only introduced us to God the Father, but also to the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is described by Jesus as “living water.” We are to come to Jesus and in believing and receiving Him, we become recipients of God’s Holy Presence living in us. Our condition without God is likened to “thirst,” *“My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?”* (Psalms 42:2)

The Holy Spirit is also likened throughout scripture as wind, water, fire, oil and as a dove. Repentant believers in Christ have been given the Holy Spirit, enabling us not only to understand spiritual things and live counter-cultural holy lives, but to actually become children of God and have the mind of Christ. We thus stand justified before God, and having crossed over from death to eternal life, we no longer remain accountable for our former sins. *“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”* (Romans 8:14)

Jesus invites all to eternal life when He offers “living water.”

May we thank God, every day and in every way, for His gift of the Holy Spirit – God’s personal presence living within us! □

*John Klassek
Western Australia*

Lord of The SABBATH

When Jesus declared Himself Lord of the Sabbath, He was restoring its purpose. Over time, the Sabbath had become burdened by rules that obscured its benefits. Jesus reminded His listeners that the Sabbath was made for humanity's good - a gift shaped by God's compassion and care.

As Lord of the Sabbath, Christ shows us that rest and mercy belong together. He healed, restored, and lifted burdens on the Sabbath, revealing God's desire for wholeness. The Sabbath is not about restriction, but restoration; not about fear, but freedom.

This truth invites us to reflect on how we approach Sabbath. Do we see it as a responsibility to manage or a gift to receive? When Christ lights our path, the Sabbath becomes life-giving rather than heavy. It becomes a day marked by joy, healing, and renewed connection with God, family, brethren, friends and the community at large.

Honouring Christ as Lord of the Sabbath means allowing Him to define rest for us. It draws us away from both legalism and neglect, providing time for a grace-filled rhythm centred on relationships. ■

*Omar Afiouni
New South Wales*

No Imitation at All

A long time ago, in an age that transcends our own, a mighty angel sought that which was not his. *"For you said to yourself, 'I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God's stars. I will preside on the mountain of the gods far away in the north. I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.'"* (Isaiah 14:13-14 NLT)

Whether you consider these verses to apply to Satan or the King of Babylon, we would have to agree that the arrogance, attitude and malevolence expressed here is clearly Satanic.

Have you ever considered what Satan meant by wanting to be "like the most High"? Was it his desire to imitate God's nature and character to be kind, gracious, merciful, truthful, never changing, all powerful yet self-restrained in the use of that power? Was this desire reflecting an incapability of telling a lie, and not wanting anyone to perish but that all should gain eternal life? Was it to bring life more abundantly, and taking no pleasure in the death of one sinner? Was it to willingly give up his power to become as flesh, to learn obedience, to be humbled, to endure and overcome temptation, to only do the will of God not his own will, and to die as a ransom for his followers, a giver of life?

This is the standard of imitation that we aspire to. The essence of who God is found in His nature and character, not in the things He possesses. God is open and truthful about who He is, and

transparent about what it means to follow Him. God also gives us genuine free choice.

Satan on the other hand is a liar and a destroyer. He was a murderer from the beginning because by convincing men to give up their birthright to become the sons of God, and by withholding the truth and using deception, he intentionally wants all men to die as he himself is destined to be destroyed. Satan does not give man free choice. He actively intervenes, pursues and devours those who would otherwise follow God, such that God must give us protection.

In seeking to be like God, Satan seeks only power and worship, even if worship is gained by means of deception.

On the other hand, we see in Jesus the holy form of imitation to which we must aspire:

The apostle Paul exhorted the faithful in Philippi, *"Let Christ himself be your example as to what your attitude should be. For he, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to his prerogatives as God's equal, but stripped himself of all privilege by consenting to be a slave by nature and being born as mortal man. And, having become man, he humbled himself by living a life of utter obedience, even to the extent of dying."* (Philippians 2: 5-6 J.B. Phillips).

May we be imitators of our Lord Jesus Christ in all we say and do! □

*Richard Todd,
South Australia*



God's Abiding Presence

Adam and Eve hid from God's presence. Samuel grew in the presence of the LORD. David cried out in prayer, "Cast me not away from your presence..."

These three citations from scripture stem from very different stories, they however have the common thread of discerning God's Presence.

Do we experience God's abiding presence every day and in every way? Or does God seem distant and disconnected? When we pray, we consciously enter God's presence. Likewise, when gathered in community for worship, we come with awe and reverence into God's Presence. Jesus highlighted this reality when He assured His disciples, "When two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them." (Matthew 18:20). What does God's presence actually look like?

In the midst of life's challenges and difficulties, perhaps the most important and anchoring reality can have is knowing and abiding in constant fellowship with God. In fact, cherishing and experiencing His abiding presence is perhaps the greatest antidote to loneliness, failure, accusation, depression and anxiety!

Overwhelmed by the nature of the task ahead, Moses implored God for favour and help. We read of this in Exodus 33:13-15. God assured Moses that, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." This assurance would carry Moses through a variety of difficult circumstances. Later, we read of the bread of the Presence as being central to the decor of the Tabernacle. Why this terminology?

Later, in leading to the new covenant, we appreciate Jesus' metaphoric Bread-of-Life presence, when He says, "I am the Bread of life... Whoever eats of this bread will live forever." In John 14:23 Jesus reiterated the here and now reality of this level of fellowship when he taught, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

Yet, the tension between faith and doubt for many seems to persist. God seems distant and aloof. Some lament that they've never felt God's love on a personal level.

Perhaps you may relate to the Psalmist lamenting a particularly difficult passage in his life, when he cried out (in what is also recognised as Messianic in nature), "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the

words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.” (Psalm 22:1-2)

Jesus understood this very dearly as later those words became his own cry! In speaking into this very struggle, we read His reassuring words in Luke 18:7-8, *“And will not God give justice to His elect, who cry to Him day and night? Will He delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.”*

Jesus tells us that, if we’re listening, He initiates this deep and enduring fellowship. *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”* In other words, we’re invited into intimate fellowship with Jesus. Both Paul and John tell us that we are called into the fellowship with the Father and His son Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:9, 1 John 1:3).

Consider also that God knows us by name. The hairs on our head apparently are all numbered! A great price has been paid in our redemption, and as such God is totally committed to His investment in us. We are loved. We are justified. Our names are written in heaven’s Book of Life. Scripture informs us that we are never alone!

Yet, it is sin – living in an iniquitous state – that alienates and separates us from God. Yet, as we believe in Jesus, receive Him, obey and abide in Him, as Paul attests, *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”* (Romans 8:35). In verse 39 Paul is absolutely sure that nothing in all creation *“will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

It seems that Daniel also understood this when he was cast into the lion’s den. Likewise, his three friends experienced God’s presence when they were thrown by an angry king into a fiery furnace. They too were not alone! David reflected on this when he wrote, *“Even though I walk through the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”* (Psalm 23:4).

An old hymn speaks into the reality of this life’s experiences foreshadowing the glory to be revealed in us. *“Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine. Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine...”* The

knowledge of God’s presence today is a precursor to the fullness of His presence in the age to come.

We are saved by grace through faith! Rejoice that our names are written in the Book of Life. There is a crown of righteousness awaiting us. Jesus will call out our names before the Father and all His angels! (Revelation 35) And, in this life, the LORD zealously assures those who are His: *“Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine!”* (Isaiah 43:1).

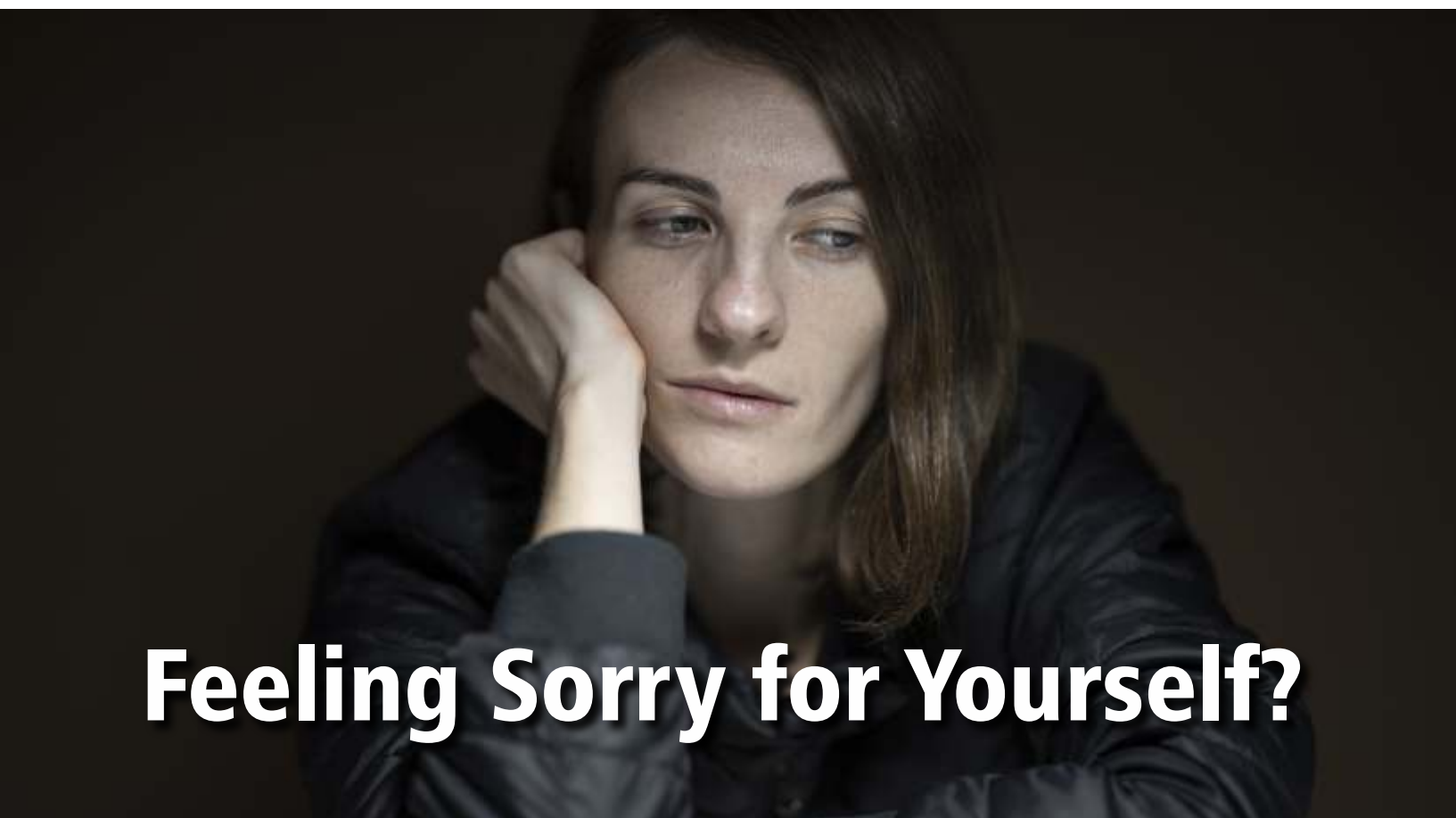
This special status in this life and the resurrected reality to come is nowhere more apparent than when Elisha and his servant were surrounded by the Syrian army at Dothan. (See II Kings 6:15-17). Elisha prayed that the Lord would open the eyes of his fearful servant, and what they then saw was a heavenly army of fiery horses and chariots! Knowing that those who are for us are more than those who are against us is extremely comforting as it is empowering!

What about our own spiritual eyes and ears? Do we experience the Lord’s presence in all we do and wherever we go? In the face of disappointment and the severe trauma of Christ’s crucifixion, two followers of Jesus found themselves walking and talking with a friendly traveller on the road to Emmaus. They didn’t recognise that it was Jesus until He began to pray! In reflecting on their time of trauma and seeming abandonment, they then said to each other as they returned to Jerusalem, *“Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”* (Luke 24:32).

God is always faithful to the promises He makes. *“... for He has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”* (Hebrews 13:5). The lessons we can learn from those who have preceded us is to never allow lesser voices to undermine God’s Presence.

The first humans hid from God’s presence. For those in Christ, that is no longer the path we follow. We eagerly embrace His invitation into fellowship, and we grow and flourish in the Lord’s Presence. We are called to abide in Jesus, to obey Him, and witness for Him. And the reality of the “burning heart” those two disciples experienced on that lonely road to Emmaus, is ours also, available to all who believe Jesus, abide and walk with Him. □

*John Klassek
Western Australia*



Feeling Sorry for Yourself?

I remember one of my clinical placements at a mental health hospital. I spent four weeks there and learned a great deal. It's easy sometimes to become self-absorbed in our own problems: financial, health, or personal struggles. We often feel sorry for ourselves, thinking life must be especially hard for us.

But that's only true until we really see what others are going through. One fact must be stated: life contains suffering for everyone, without exception. If you're not facing hardship right now, thank God for it. But note, it's not a matter of if but when. Difficulties will come, just as surely as the sun rises each morning.

During my placement, I interacted with patients from all walks of life: doctors, nurses, authors, entrepreneurs, and everyday people. They were all human beings like myself, struggling with pain and in need of support. I was grateful to play even a small role in their recovery.

As I listened to their stories, I stopped feeling sorry for myself. The phrase "it could be worse"

suddenly made perfect sense. I realised that while I had problems, they were not unique. My struggles shrank in comparison to what others were enduring. I was reminded that, "You don't have problems, you have challenges, like everyone else. Stop being self-obsessed and make yourself useful by helping others."

Consider for a moment the Christians recorded in Hebrews 10–13. They faced serious challenges in their faith. Some fell away, believing the Christian life was too hard. The writer reminded them of their calling, their first love, and all they had already endured. He urged them to hold on and not give up, pointing to the faithful men and women of old who endured suffering while looking forward to God's promises.

He reminded them especially of Jesus, the Author and Finisher of their faith, who suffered even to the point of death. The Hebrews thought life was tough, just as I sometimes do, but the writer told them plainly:

"You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin." (Hebrews 12:4)

In other words: "You think it's tough? You haven't shed blood yet." That, we can agree with. Our blood has not been spilled in resisting sin, so our struggle hasn't been that tough. It could be worse.

The heroes of faith gave up the world; we often struggle just to let it go. They endured torture and death for their faith; I am not even physically suffering for mine. So what am I whining about? The real problem is self-absorption, that is, feeling sorry for oneself.

Hal Green, author of "Beware of Feeling Sorry for Yourself," describes self-pity as "a form of self-comforting that may parade as self-love, but is actually masked anger."

He explained that self-pity is destructive to character development for the following reasons: It drains precious energy that could be spent on positive thoughts and productive action. Instead of using our energy for good, we waste it brooding over our misfortunes.

It can trigger relapse into old, unhealthy habits. When we are stressed or self-pitying, the body often seeks relief by returning to former addictions or behaviours. He advised: "When you feel self-pity rising, tell yourself immediately, 'Stop that!' and turn your attention to something else."

Self-pity promotes procrastination and hinders growth. It doesn't solve problems; it freezes us in them. It is self-defeating, often parading an endless mental replay of the wrongs others have done to us. It's not an emotion of the heart, but a victim mentality.

There are several key solutions to overcoming a self-pity mindset: Identify and thank God for all

the good in your life. Write down what you're grateful for. Do something kind for someone else. You'll feel joy in making another person's day better. In other words, practice gratitude.

We build confidence when we are grateful. Helping others foster confidence. You'll begin to see yourself as a positive force in the world, not a victim of it.

Adopt a zero-tolerance for self-pity; when we feel down, acknowledge our emotions, but stop feeding them. Shift our focus to gratitude, to what's working, and to finding solutions. Use our energy to build rather than to brood.

For those of us who belong to Christ, we look to the

great cloud of witnesses who have gone before us, and above all, we look to Jesus, who endured the cross. When we fix our eyes on Him, the heaviness of self fades away.

"Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:28–30)

Give your burdens, sins and struggles to Jesus. Let go of the self-pity that weighs you down, and take on His light yoke. He will gently lead you to rest. □

When we fix our eyes on Jesus, the heaviness of self fades away.

*Panom Top
Western Australia*





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