



# The G.E.M.

Volume 2 Edition 2

The Grace Electronic Magazine

February 2008

## TIME TO LOVE

Because of Valentine's Day, February is traditionally seen as the month of love. In keeping with that tradition, this month's edition of *The G.E.M.* will focus on the topic of love, not just love of the romantic kind, but also of the spiritual kind, in particular, our first love for Christ.

How many of us remember when we fell in love with our spouses? How often do we reminisce on the beginnings of our relationship? How does that compare to the number of times we reminisce on when we started in our relationship with Christ. In our main article on page 3 we look at how we can rekindle that first love that we so often tend to lose in our walk with the Lord.

We have included our usual *Word Sudoku* on page 2, along with our next country in the *Missions Spotlight*.

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Be inspired this month to not only love your family, friends and neighbours, but also to renew your first love and passion for Christ.



Until next time,  
God bless. †

## GOD'S PLAN

To discover God's plan for marriage, we need to go back to the beginning and revisit the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2. On the sixth day God makes Adam, but then He says, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him"(v18). So God causes Adam to fall into a deep sleep, takes one of Adam's ribs and fashions it into the woman.

I am quite sure that Adam was beside himself in his admiration for Eve, for he said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man" (2:23).

Eve had done nothing to earn Adam's response. Adam knew only one thing about Eve – she was a gift from the God he knew intimately. Adam simply accepted her because God made her for him, and he knew that God could be trusted.

From this there is a principle for marriage that we must not miss: Adam had faith in God's judgement of what Adam needed.

We too are to recognise that our spouse was selected for us by God. At times things may be difficult and it may not seem like it, but God has put us with our partner for a reason. We need to accept them for who they are and that they are a gift from God.

Reading a little further we come across the second part of God's plan for marriage, which is to do with its formation and function.

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame" (vv24,25).

Here we see four guidelines for building a strong and godly marriage.

1. *Leave his father and mother:* we are to become independent from our parents or any others who may have reared us.
2. *Be united to his wife:* a permanent committed bond is formed between the husband and wife. When God joins two people together, it is forever.
3. *Become one flesh:* this means not only the physical intimacy between a husband and wife, but also emotional and spiritual intimacy.
4. Adam and Eve were "both naked, and they felt no shame": there were no feelings of fear or rejection, but instead they felt total acceptance by each other. Being bathed in the warmth of knowing that the other person accepts you is what makes marriage a true joy.

In this month of love, thank God for the gift he has given you in your spouse. Spend some time prayerfully seeking God's guidance in strengthening your marriage in the four areas mentioned above. And finally, allow God to express His love through you to your spouse. †

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## DIARY OF EVENTS

**Daniel Conference with Angus Buchan**  
14-16 March 2008 at NG Gemeente, Moreleta  
For more information visit: [www.moreleta.org](http://www.moreleta.org)

**Josh Groban Concert**  
29 March 2008 at the Sun City Superbowl  
Book at <http://www.computicket.com/>

**Mighty Men 2008 Conference**  
18-20 April 2008 at Shalom Farm, Greytown  
For more information visit: [www.shalomtrust.co.za](http://www.shalomtrust.co.za)

**Christian Business Expo**  
7-8 June 2008 at the Expo Centre, NASREC.  
For more information visit: [www.christianexpo.co.za](http://www.christianexpo.co.za)

## MISSIONS SPOTLIGHT

### Republic of Kenya Jamhuri ya Kenya

**Capital:** Nairobi

**Official Languages:**  
Swahili and English

**Currency:**  
Kenyan Shilling

**Population:**  
31,138,735

**Government:**  
Republic



At 582,646 km<sup>2</sup>, Kenya is the world's forty-seventh largest country. From the coast on the Indian Ocean the low plains rise to central highlands. The highlands are bisected by the Great Rift Valley; a fertile plateau in the west. The Kenyan Highlands comprise one of the most successful agricultural production regions in Africa. The highlands are the site of the highest point in Kenya (and the second highest in Africa): Mount Kenya, which reaches 5,199 meters is also the site of glaciers. Climate varies from tropical along the coast to arid in the interior. There is also Mount Kilimanjaro which is located on the Kenya- Tanzania border.

Kenya enjoys a tropical climate. It is hot and humid at the coast, temperate inland and very dry in the north and north-east parts of the country. There is however a lot of rain between the months March and May. The temperature does remain high throughout these months.

Kenya is a country of great ethnic diversity, with the Kikuyu people making up 23 % of the population. The predominant religion is Protestant and Quaker at 45%, with many non-Christians scattered throughout the country.

Despite the current political situation, Kenya is the only West African country that has not experienced a civil war.



Maasai man in traditional dress.

### Missionary Organisation to Kenya:

#### World Gospel Mission

Website: <http://www.wgm.org/>

E-Mail: [wgm@wgm.org](mailto:wgm@wgm.org)

## SHOP WINDOW

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## WORD SUDOKU

This puzzle works in the same manner as normal Sudoku, except that the numbers have been replaced with letters.

When complete, revealed in the shaded area will be the word the name of the man who asked:

*How can a man be born when he is old?*

Answer in next edition.

#### Last Month's Solution

H	I	G	B	N	O	R	E	U
E	R	N	U	I	H	G	B	O
O	B	U	R	G	E	N	I	H
G	H	B	O	U	R	E	N	I
N	E	I	G	H	B	O	U	R
U	O	R	N	E	I	B	H	G
B	G	E	I	R	U	H	O	N
I	N	O	H	B	G	U	R	E
R	U	H	E	O	N	I	G	B

#### Letters Used

C D E I M N O S U

		I	E	M				
	O		I					
S							U	
	U				C	O		
		M	S				E	
	E							N
					S		M	
			O	N	C			

## Top 25 Must Reads

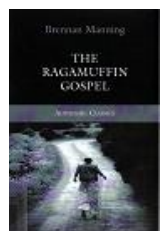
### THE RAGAMUFFIN GOSPEL by Brennan Manning

As Christians today, we often focus on spiritual achievement, beating ourselves up when we don't perform the way we think we should. We believe in God's grace, but somehow we cannot manage to apply it to our day-to-day lives. The truth is we cannot earn God's acceptance any more than we can earn our salvation. Yet he gives it to us, no matter who we are or what we have done.

Brennan Manning's now classic meditation on grace and what it takes to access it – simple honesty – has changed thousands of lives.

It will change yours too.

**R90.00**



## RENEW YOUR FIRST LOVE

How would you describe your current state of affection for Christ today? How is it different from when you first met him? Has the passion seemed to have grown cold? How far have you wandered from the place where he wants you to be?

Most of us can point to a specific time in our lives when our hearts were on fire for Christ. We loved him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and with a passion that was evident to all. Our love for others was clearly seen and practiced without thought. But for many reasons, and without intending it, we have at times let the flames die down until they are but glowing embers. Sometimes even to the point when there was little but a wisp of smoke and ashes blown away by the wind.

What will it take to return to that first love? To return to that love and passion that God wants each of us to experience everyday as a way of life?

### Revelation 2:1-7

*"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands: I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.*

*Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. But you have this in your favour: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."*

Even though these verses are related to the church as a whole, I do believe that they are just as applicable to the individual. We see Jesus commending the church (us) for good service, perseverance, and resisting the evil doers. However, he is concerned that we have forsaken our first love.

But apart from that, he gives us the steps we are to take to return to that first love:

### Step 1: Remember

In verse 5a we are told to "*Remember the height from which you have fallen.*" This will give us a perspective on how different we are now compared to what we were like when we first came to know Christ.

But getting our minds around this is not always so easy, so here is a simple exercise to help.

Take a sheet of paper and rule a line down the middle. In the left-hand column write down what you were like when you first became a Christian, then in the right-hand column write down what you are like now.

Now compare the two columns and see the changes in your life.

This exercise may be a little depressing at first, but that, believe it or not, is good. You will become aware of the failures, sin, and limitations in your life, and you will start to feel some remorse or regret. It will have the same effect as Paul's letter to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 7:8-10).

This then automatically leads us into the next step.

### Step 2: Repent

Revelation 2:5b tells us that we are to move beyond the remorse and guilt to transformation. We need to turn our lives 180 degrees from doing things our way, to doing them God's way. This is true repentance.

We are to confess your sins to God and totally surrender our life to him. Not just once, but daily. We need to "sign over" our life to him like we are signing a contract, giving him control of our finances, possessions, careers, families, ministries, and our futures.

Going back to our chart from step 1, we can highlight some problem areas or sins in red (representing Christ's blood overcoming the power of sin and death), then prayerfully hand them over to God and seek his guidance as we break free of them.

### Step 3: Resume

Revelation 2:5 then goes on to say that we are to "*do the things you did at first.*" Look back at your chart. What were the activities you did when you were first saved? Probably they were activities like praying and reading your Bible daily, attending church and Bible studies not as a matter of duty, but because you wanted to. Christ's command now is to do that again.

Why not start by reading the Bible from cover to cover, or by reading the books of John and Romans again. Pray daily, maybe using some key scriptures like Psalms 36 and 51. Start talking to others about Christ the way you did in the beginning. Volunteer to help others or offer to teach a Bible study or Sunday school. Cut off those things that will move you back into sin. Finally, do things that require you to walk in faith, for if your faith costs you nothing, then it is worth nothing.

### In Conclusion

Once we have taken these steps, what then will our welcome be? Remember the Parable of the Prodigal Son? (Luke 15:11-32) Remember how the father greeted his son on his return? Despite the rags, the smell, and the wrongs of the past, the father still ran to his son and greeted him with open arms. None of those "dirty" things meant anything at all to the father – only the heart that had turned home.

Our Father in Heaven is waiting for us to do the same. We need not fear his response, he is waiting for us to return to him.

And will our reward be? We will have a sudden change in our lives. No longer will we pray or read his Word just because we know you should, but because we want to. We will naturally start to avoid the temptations of this world and the things that so easily trip us up. God will be sculpting us into his likeness and the fruits of his spirit will begin to sprout up in our lives.

We will start to make a significant impact on the lives of others as we live as the light and salt of this world (Matthew 5:13-16), our relationships will become richer, our work more excellent. We will begin to experience the peace that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7), until finally we make it to "paradise" and be given "*the right to eat from the tree of life*" (Revelation 2:7). †

## Inspirational Read

### *First Love* by Bill Bright

This book is a carefully drawn roadmap for all who desire an intimate walk with the Lord.

Makes a wonderful gift for those who are feeling distant from God.

**R110.00**



## MARRIAGE TITLES



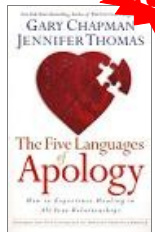
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*Love & Respect*  
by Dr Emerson  
Eggerichs



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*The Marriage Book*  
by Nicky & Sila Lee



**R130**

*The Five Languages  
of Apology*  
by Gary Chapman



**R100**

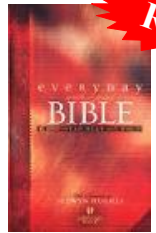
*Intimacy in Marriage*  
by Costa Mitchell



**R75**

*A Cup of Comfort  
for Weddings*  
by Helen Kay Polaski, Editor

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH



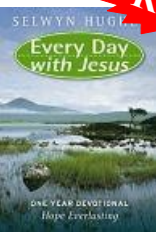
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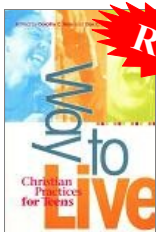
**R130**

*Every Day with Jesus  
One Year Devotional*



**R70**

*365 Daily Devotions  
for Students*



**R140**

*Way to Live: Christian  
Practices for teens*  
by Dorothy C. Bass  
& Don C. Richter, Editors

## CHILDREN'S TITLES



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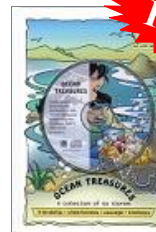
**R100**

*Day by Day Bible*  
Daily devotions  
by Eira Reeves



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Adventures*



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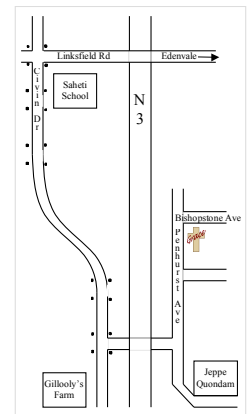
**Saturday:**

9am – 2pm

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*Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.  
Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.  
(1 John 4:7)*