



The G.E.M.

Volume 3 Edition 11

The Grace Electronic Magazine

November 2009

REFLECT ON HOPE

It only feels like yesterday when we were wishing you a Merry Christmas for 2008, and already Christmas 2009 is only six weeks away.

That of course means that the time has come to buy year end presents for colleagues at work and Christmas presents for family and friends.

For many along with this planning for the festive season comes planning for the next year's small group, Sunday School and youth programmes.

As Grace Media we want to assist you in these areas. Visit our store today for some great gift ideas and what to use for 2010.

You will also see that in February we will be starting up our Bible Study Connect Group, so why not join us for great discussions on resources available and tips on improving your small group ministry.

Now, this month in *The G.E.M.* we have focussed on hope. It is in times like today that we so easily allow the stresses of life to destroy our spirits, pull us away from God and others, and make us ineffective for the Kingdom. We pray that through this month's feature article on page 3, along with the products reviewed, that you will have a festive season filled with hope and joy for 2010.

Also, be sure to visit us from 9 to 21 November for this month's Mid-Month Markdowns, where we are offering 10% discount on all fiction titles. Great gifts for your loved ones, or for yourself to enjoy while on holiday.

Until next time, continue to place your hope in the Lord, and He will renew your strength.

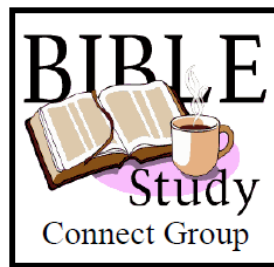
Glyn and Linda. †

"Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord"
(2 Peter 1:2)

www.ChristianGames.co.za

**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE
FOR AMAZING PRODUCTS!**

**SUITABLE FOR ALL AGES &
GROUPS!**



ATTENTION ALL SMALL GROUP LEADERS!

JOIN US

for a time of Fellowship and Discussion on:

**Small Group Resources available
Tips on how to use them
And various other related topics**

Who Should Attend:

New, experienced and potential small group leaders, pastors, Alpha Course leaders, and anyone interested in leading or starting a small group ministry within their church.

Dates: Thursday 4 February 2010, 19h00-21h00,
and/or
Saturday 6 February 2010, 08h30-10h30.

Venue: Grace Media, 2 Bishopstone, Penhurst Ave,
Essexwold, Bedfordview, Johannesburg.

Cost: R50 per person per session.

To book contact: Grace Media on 011-454-6045 or
shop@gracemedia.co.za

**BOOK NOW!
SPACE IS LIMITED!**

Learn from other leaders and share your own experiences.

SHOP TRADING HOURS:

Monday – Friday:

9am – 5pm

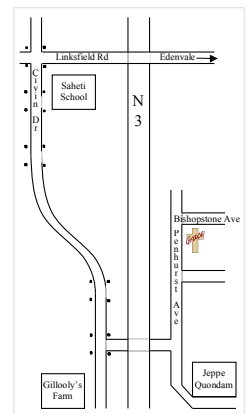
Saturday:

9am – 2pm

**Closed Sundays and
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Directions: From the N3, take the Linksfield Rd off ramp. Turn right up hill. Stay in left lane. Turn left into Civin Dr. At the stop street at the road works, turn left under bridge. At t-junction turn left. Through the boom. We are ± 200m on the right hand side. Entrance is in Penhurst Ave.



To advertise your church, ministry, business, event or product in *The G.E.M.* or on the Grace Media website, contact Glyn Williams on 011-454-6045 or webmaster@gracemedia.co.za

BIBLE BASICS

1 & 2 Kings & 2 Chronicles *The United and Divided Kingdoms*

The two books of Kings and 2 Chronicles tell the story of the monarchy of Israel following David's death up to the time of the Babylonian Captivity. Together they record the glory of the nation under the rule of Solomon, the steady decline under the reign of the kings that followed, showing clearly the reasons for the division of the kingdom and its eventual captivity.

Perspectives: The perspectives of these books are different. Kings is the historical account, while 2 Chronicles is a divine commentary that reflects the spiritual aspect of the history.

Authors: Traditionally, Jeremiah (roughly 650-580BC) has been recognised as the author of Kings, while Ezra as the author of Chronicles. However, certain scholars today suggest that the books were the result of a compilation process that began with its initial composition in the late seventh century BC and concluded in the middle of the sixth century BC.

Structure: Originally in Hebrew, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles were only three books and not six as in our English Bibles. However, when they were translated into Greek, they were split up due to Greek requiring a third more of the space than the Hebrew text.

Basic Outline: The outline of the books parallel each other and divide naturally into two equal sections:

	<u>1 Kings</u>	<u>2 Chr.</u>
Solomon's Kingdom	1-11	1-9
The Divided Kingdom	12-22	10-11

	<u>2 Kings</u>	<u>2 Chr.</u>
The Divided Kingdom	1-17	10-11
The Southern Kingdom	18-25	12-36

Value: The books of Kings and Chronicles are very important in terms of their history. Archaeological discoveries are continually being made of accounts contained in these books. Although reading the history may be somewhat tedious and unexciting, the stories in these books illustrate two things:

- 1) God is no respecter of persons (see Acts 10:34),
- 2) When we place everything on the altar, God will hear our prayers and respond (see 2 Chronicles 7:14).

Through the books of Kings and Chronicles we see the entire history of the nation of Israel. It is through this nation that our Lord came to earth, choosing this nation in order to fulfil His plan and promises. He is still their God and has yet to fulfil His purposes for them (see Romans 11:1).

Lesson: The main lesson that these books have for us today is simply to be loyal and true to God. It does not pay to do evil. †

PRODUCT REVIEWS

LUKE'S PASSAGE

by Max Davis



Luke Hatcher is destined for big things. The star of his high school baseball team and selected to play for the Atlanta Braves, Luke seems all set to begin life outside of high school ahead of the pack.

But everything changes when he is challenged by a fellow student, resulting in the death of his high school sweetheart. That day would send Luke on a course totally different from what everyone expected. Luke joins the army and is shipped off to Vietnam.

Luke's Passage follows the story of a young man's emotional and spiritual journey in dealing with an extreme tragedy. One that takes him into the dark jungles of Vietnam, through many more challenges, twists and turns, and eventually back to his childhood home.

Luke's Passage is a compelling read. This fictional tale is one that is so true to life that anyone who has ever felt like they ruined their life in one bad decision, will return to a faith of believing that God will give them a second chance.

Our Price: R 120



A GREATER YES DVD



Amy Newhouse had a deep passion for God, and a love for people. After following what she believed was a call from God to go out into the mission field, Amy begins a different journey that would not only change her life, but those of her family, friends and even those in other distant cities.

As a teenager, Amy is diagnosed with cancer. With family, friends, fellow students and the community at large all praying for her, Amy receives some relief from the disease. But the relief is short lived and the cancer returns.

Fighting a battle that Amy cannot win, she never falters in her faith. Even though it seems as though God's answer is no to healing her, this tale shows us the *Greater Yes* behind what in our eyes is a tragic "no".

A Greater Yes is a challenging movie that will have you in tears, but one that will give you hope. A hope that overcomes even the most serious, life-altering, negative circumstances of our lives. A hope founded in a God who knows what is best for us.

Based on a true story.

Our Price: R 140

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

6 November 1832

Let a Thousand Fall



Along the edge of western Africa sits Liberia, black Africa's first independent state. It was established in the early 1800s through the efforts of the American Colonization Society, an organization devoted to repatriating American ex-slaves in colonies along the African coast.

The first missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Melville Beveridge Cox, was directed there in 1833. He was a young widower, pale and prostrated with grief and planning for missions service in South America. "Why not go to Liberia?" asked his bishop, seeking someone to send to that land of fatal fevers.

"If the Lord wills," replied Cox. "I have no lingering fear. A grave in Africa shall be sweet if he sustain me." To a friend, Cox wrote, "I know I cannot live long in Africa, but I hope to live long enough to get there; and if it please God that my bones shall lie in an African grave, I shall have established such a bond between Africa and the church at home as shall not be broken until Africa be redeemed."

To students of Connecticut's Wesleyan University, he said, "If I die in Africa, you must come over and write my epitaph." When a student asked what they should write, Cox replied, "Write, Let a thousand fall before Africa be given up."

He made a final visit to the graves of his wife and small child, then on November 6, 1832, Cox boarded the *Jupiter* and set sail. The seas were rough, and at first he doubled over in seasickness. But by mid-ocean, he was at work, planning a mission house, school, and farm. Glimpsing the coast, he wrote, "I have seen Liberia and live! It rises up like a cloud of heaven!" He disembarked at Monrovia on March 7, 1833, and threw himself into the work. But on July 21 he awoke from a fitful sleep, bathed in sweat and shouting, "Come, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" He died in a fever, having served less than four months.

There were 999 left to go; and because of Cox's example, five other youths were already on their way.

I know what it is to be poor or to have plenty, and I have lived under all kinds of conditions. I know what it means to be full or to be hungry, to have too much or too little. Christ gives me strength to face anything. Philippians 4:12,13

Quoted from: *On this Day: 265 Amazing and Inspiring Stories About Saints, Martyrs & Heroes* (electronic edition) by Robert J. Morgan. †

SHATTERED DREAMS

Paul wrote in his letter to the Church in Rome, "I have been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there" (Romans 15:23-24).

From these verses we see that Paul clearly wanted to meet with the Christians at Rome, and then to travel to Spain. Something he had been wanting to do for many years.

Were Paul's hopes fulfilled? It appears from the information that we have that they never were. Paul did indeed travel to Rome, but not under pleasant circumstances. Rather he went there as a prisoner and was locked up in a prison cell.

As far as we know, Paul never went to Spain either. Instead he was put to death by the sword, in Rome. Paul never saw his dream fulfilled.

This has to be one of the most common problems of our human existence; that of shattered dreams and failed plans.

No doubt each of us have had hopes that have not been fulfilled. We have all set out to achieve some goal, our far off Spain, only to be left disappointed. I am sure that every one of us can in some way relate to Paul's situation.

Varied Reactions

There are as many reactions to this experience as there are people on the earth. Many react with bitterness or resentment. They grit their teeth, and decide to grin and bear their disappointment. They do not accept it, but merely endure it, resenting their fate. Many times they are even angry with God.

Unfortunately such bitterness and resentment spills over into other relationships. They may become cruel to their mate, harsh to their children, or hostile towards work colleagues. They become mean or bitter, lacking in love, and find fault with everything and everyone.

Still others, when they see that their hopes cannot be fulfilled, give up. Choosing rather to live without them, they withdraw into themselves, losing their zest for life.

For these people there is no joy. To them there is no beauty in nature. They are deaf to the sounds of music. Unresponsive to the warmth and smiles of others. Such people come to live hopeless lives.

What then is the Christian way to face the disappointments of life? How should we approach unfulfilled hopes? Is there any other way we may respond?

Life's Circumstances

No matter how much Paul wanted to go to Spain, he was unable to do so. The Roman authorities had put him in prison, and there he would stay until his execution. He could not change his outward circumstances.

Very often we cannot change the situation we are in. We cannot remove an illness, bring a person back from death, or change a

failure that has already occurred.

Even though we may not be able to go to our own Spain, there is still something we are able to do; we have the ability to change our attitude. Are can respond in a creative and meaningful way.

God has a good purpose

As Christians we know that there is a purpose to our disappointments; they come to deepen our spiritual understanding, to reshape our lives and improve their spiritual quality. Very often they come also to bring healing and good into the lives of those around us.

Paul tells us, "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

What then should we do when we stand face to face with disappointment?

An Opportunity

First, we should honestly confront our shattered dream by asking ourselves, "What good purpose does God have for me in this situation?"

However bleak our situation, God intends to bring some good out of it.

Perhaps our disappointments will give us sympathy for others, break our self-centred pride, or deepen our spiritual life.

There are many testimonies in the Bible of good coming out of difficult or hopeless situations.

King Hezekiah is one such example. When stricken with an illness he said of his experience, "Lord, by such things men live; and my spirit finds life in them too... Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish" (Isaiah 38:16-17).

Through a desperate situation, Hezekiah found new life in his spirit.

Even the cross, which came about as a result of man's sin, God used for the the salvation of the world.

Setting New Priorities

Too often we set our hearts on vain and passing things, but shattered dreams turn us away from such things.

Our disappointments therefore help us to set our priorities right again. God uses them to turn us back to Him and to show us what really matters in our lives.

Here too the Bible gives us many examples. Paul, in referring to the hardships he and Timothy suffered, said, "We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life... But this happened not so that we should rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead" (2 Corinthians 1:9).

Through disappointments, our priorities are put back in order. We return to the things that are important, and put new plans into place and actions that are a benefit not only for our own lives, but also for those we love.

Peace and Stability

Finally, with the help of God, our trials and disappointments bring peace and stability to our lives.

This is not peace as the world understands it, which comes when the bank account is full, when the body is free from pain, and the mind free from worry. Peace as the world understands it is when one has reached the shores of Spain.

But the peace which the Bible speaks about is a calmness and confidence of soul. It is peace in the middle of the storm. Even in the midst of trouble, true peace enables you to remain joyful no matter what.

But this peace does not come instantly. Rather it comes after many months and years of hard experience.

In the cavalry when they train a horse, they repeatedly subject it to loud noises. As a result, the horse learns to ignore loud noises. A horse by nature is nervous of loud noises, so it does not learn this in an instant. Over time it becomes less sensitive to noise, until finally it can go into the thick of battle without flinching.

In the same way, with each passing trial, we begin to more clearly see God's purpose in our lives. The more we see God at work in our lives, the more confident we become when troubles come. The richer our experience with Him, the more fully we see His hand in our times of trial.

Perhaps this is what Paul meant when he said, "...we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope..." (Romans 5:3-4).

Transformed

Too often people sit in their prison cell and long for Spain, seldom transforming the broken remains of a disappointed hope into an occasion to serve God more fully!

We need to remember that God has a good purpose for our shattered dreams. He wants us to see our disappointments for what they are, opportunities.

So, with the help of God, take hold of them, work with them, and make a difference in your life and others. †

God has a good purpose for our shattered dreams

each of us have had hopes that have not been fulfilled

INSPIRATIONAL DVD

Fruitcake and Ice Cream

by Louie Giglio

The message heard by thousands of students around the world during the 2008 seventeen city *Passion World Tour*.

Sometimes the best things in life are those we are not even sure we are looking for at the time, but those we realise we cannot live without in the end.

Fruitcake and Ice Cream is a message that breathes hope for the spiritually searching.



R 180

THE BACK PAGE

THAT'S IN THE BIBLE?

How well do you know the Good Book?

Use the following 20 words to complete each of the verses below, but watch out for the red herrings.

All answers are found in 1 Kings and in 2 Chronicles 1-20.

knowledge noon house four
 Sheba humbled abandon palace
 cloud Zoheleth wealth thirteen
 ten temple wisdom Bethel
 honour Azariah twelve Ahab

1. Adonijah then sacrificed sheep, cattle and fattened calves at the Stone of ____.
2. Then the temple of the LORD was filled with a ____.
3. There was never a man like __ __ __, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD
4. At __ __ __ Elijah began to taunt them.
5. The Spirit of God came upon __ __ __ son of Oded.
6. Now Jehoshaphat had great __ __ __ and __ __
7. Solomon had __ __ __ thousand stalls for chariot horses, and __ __ __ thousand horses.
8. And I will live among the Israelites and will not __ __ __ my people Israel.
9. The leaders of Israel and the king __ __ __ themselves and said, "The LORD is just."
10. It took Solomon __ __ __ years, however, to complete the construction of his palace.
11. Give me __ __ __ and __ __ __, that I may lead this people
12. Solomon built the __ __ __ of the LORD and his own __ __ __
13. King Solomon gave the queen of __ __ __ all she desired and asked for.

Answers in the Next Edition

Last Month's Answers: 1. Temple (2Sa 22:7) 2. Jesse (1Ch 29:26) 3. Thirty-Four (2Sa 5:4) 4. Levites (1Ch 15:16) 5. Bathsheba (2Sa 11:3) 6. Jerusalem, Jehus (1Ch 11:4) 7. Lament (2Sa 1:17) 8. Jabez (1Ch 4:9) 9. Music (1Ch 6:31) 10. Hebron (2Sa 2:1) 11. Land, Nations (1Ch 14:17) 12. Michal (2Sa 6:16) 13. Zadok (1Ch 15:11)

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Z V R N U R H K X C R E Z I C E U N S M E J Z N A N G V
 F X A R A A V V W A E L E J X A N E A E U E B S N P W A
 F N T Y I B K K D R C I R E A O R R J D P H D T P C Q K
 P A L A C E O E Y B V J T B M G O M V R S O D E V I O N
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 A E L P M E T A O D V G S E W Y K Z B I W I N B P P K B
 H X D S P O A O U H Y S S O P D D O K K O K C B W M H U

Find the following words in the above grid.

Ahab	Ahaz	Almugwood	Carmel	Cedar	Elijah
Hezekiah	Hyslop	Jehoram	Jehoshaphat	Joash	Micaiah
Moriah	Naboth	Obadiah	Palace	Proverbs	Sheba
Solomon	Temple	Trumpets	Tyre	Uzziah	Wisdom

Mid Month
markdowns

10% OFF
ALL
FICTION

9 - 21 NOVEMBER

(EXCLUDING ALREADY REDUCED AND SECOND-HAND TITLES)

DIARY OF EVENTS

The Marriage Conference

A conference for leaders of the Alpha Marriage Course.
 21 November 2009 – Johannesburg
 24 November 2009 – Durban
 28 November 2009 – Cape Town

The Summit

A Biblical Worldview Summit for students.
 1-8 January 2010 - Cape Town.

Bible Study Connect Group

A time of fellowship and discussion on Small Group matters.
 Thursday 4 and/or Saturday 6 February 2010.
 Grace Media

Visit our website for more info on these and other exciting Christian events.

He who trusts in himself is a fool,
 but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.

Proverbs 28:26