

**OCT 2023**

**“THE SALTSHAKER”**

**No.230**



*“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Eph 2:10)*

*“I thought in my heart, ‘Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.’ But that also proved to meaningless.” (Eccl 2:1)*

*“Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” (Neh 8:10)*

Are you enjoying life? If so, what is that is causing your enjoyment; or preventing you from enjoying it? What do we mean by enjoying life anyway? I am reading the autobiography of Sarah Getrude Millin, who you probably haven’t heard of. She grew up in the diamond fields of Kimberley at the turn of the 19th/20<sup>th</sup> centuries. She wrote something that really struck me : “One of the pleasures ...in becoming older is that I no longer have to enjoy myself...Enjoying myself – or, rather, the notion that it was my destiny and duty to enjoy myself in a particular way – was one of the burdens of my youth; and it is, I have discovered, one of the burdens of youth generally” (*The Night is Long*).

It is no different now in 2023. Too many of us are pleasure seekers. It costs a lot of money and when it is apparently achieved, it doesn’t actually seem worth it after all. Am I right?!

Solomon came to that conclusion in the book of Ecclesiastes. I do not believe for one moment that it is wrong to take pleasure in things, good food, a relaxing book or film, a chance to spend time with family or friends or to visit somewhere, but I also do not believe that that is our purpose in life and if we think it is, we will come short. Paul tells us that our purpose is to do good works and, taken slightly out of context, Nehemiah assures the people of Israel and, by extension, us that joy, real joy, is found in the Lord and that will give us strength through the ups and downs of daily living.

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*[Please excuse another long article this month. My excuse is that it is a busy time of year for me!]*

### **A hot water bottle**

*Amazing – What a wonderful God we serve.*

This is a story written by a doctor who worked in Africa

One night I had worked hard to help a mother in the labour ward; but in spite of all we could do she died leaving us with a tiny, premature baby and a crying two year old daughter. We would have difficulty keeping the baby alive as we had no incubator (we had no electricity to run an incubator).

“We also had no special feeding facilities. Although we lived on the equator, nights were chilly with treacherous draughts.

“One student midwife went for the box we had for such babies and the cotton wool that the baby would be wrapped in

“Another went to stoke up the fire and fill a hot water bottle. She came back shortly in distress to tell me that in filling the bottle it had burst (rubber perishes easily in tropical climates).

‘And it is our last hot water bottle! She exclaimed. As in the west, it is no good crying over spilled milk, so in Central Africa it might be considered no

good crying over burst water bottles, and there are no drugstores down forest pathways.

“All right,’ I said, ‘put the baby as near as you safely can, and sleep between the baby and the door to keep free from draughts. Your job is to keep the baby warm.’

“The following noon, as I did most days, I went to have prayers with any of the orphanage children who chose to gather with me. I gave the youngsters various suggestions of things to pray about and told them about the tiny baby. I explained our problem about keeping the baby warm enough, mentioning the hot water bottle, and that the baby could easily die if it got chills. I also told them of the two-year-old sister, crying because her mother had died.

Commented [T1]:

“During prayer time, one ten-year-old girl, Ruth prayed with the usual blunt conciseness of our African children. ‘Please God,’ she prayed ‘Send us a hot water bottle today. It will be no good tomorrow, God, as the baby will be dead, so please send it this afternoon.’

“While I gasped inwardly at the audacity of the prayer, she added, ‘And while you are about it, would you please send a dolly for the little girl so she’ll know You really love her?’

Commented [T2]:

Commented [T3]:

“As often children’s prayers, I was put on the spot. Could I honestly say ‘Amen?’ I just did not believe that God could do this.

“Oh yes, I know that He can do everything; the Bible says so. But there are limits, aren’t there?

The only way that God could answer this particular prayer would be by sending me a parcel from the homeland. I had been Africa for almost four years at that time, I had never, ever, received a parcel from home. Anyway, if anyone did send me a parcel, who would put in a hot water bottle? I lived on the equator!

“Halfway through the afternoon, while I was teaching in the nurses’ training school, a message was sent that there was a car at my front door. By the

time I reached home the car had gone, but there was a large 22-pound parcel. I felt tears pricking my eyes. I could not open the parcel alone, so I sent for the orphanage children. Together we pulled off the string, carefully undoing rack knot. We folded the paper, taking care not to tear it unduly. Excitement was mounting. So thirty or forty pairs of eyes were focused on the large cardboard box. From the top I lifted out brightly-coloured, knitted jerseys. Eyes sparkled as I gave them out. Then there were the knitted bandages for the leprosy patients, and the other children looked a little bored. Then came a box of mixed raisins and sultanas – that would make a batch of buns for the weekend.

Then, as I put my hand in deeper again I felt the.....could it really be? I grasped it and pulled it out. Yes, a brand new, rubber hot water bottle. I cried. I had not asked God to send it; I had not truly believed that he could.

“Ruth was in the front row of the children. She rushed forward crying out ‘If God has sent the bottle, He must have sent the dolly, too!’

Rummaging down to the bottom of the box, she pulled out the small, beautifully dressed dolly. Her eyes shone! She had never doubted!

Looking up at me, she asked, ‘Can I go over with you and give this dolly to that little girl, so she’ll know that Jesus really loves her?’

‘Of course!’ I replied!

“That parcel had been on the way for five whole months, packed by my former Sunday school class, whose leader had heard and obeyed God’s prompting to send a hot water bottle, even to the equator. And one of the girls had put in a dolly for an African child – five months before, in answer to the believing prayer of a ten-year-old to bring it ‘that afternoon.’

**‘Before they call, I will answer.’ (Isaiah 65:24)**

“Prayer is one of the best free gifts we receive. There is no cost, but a lot of rewards.

Let’s continue praying for one another.

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## **Think of these three things for mental health**

*“Think about Jesus’ example. He held on while wicked people were doing evil things to him. So do not get tired and stop trying”* (Hebrews 12:3 NCV).

God wants you to be healthy in every area of your life—emotionally, spiritually, and physically. For mental health, you must focus your mind on the right things.

### **1. Think about Jesus.**

You’ve heard the saying, “You become what you think about most.” If you want to become more like Jesus, you have to fill your thoughts with him.

Hebrews 12:3 says, *“Think about Jesus’ example. He held on while wicked people were doing evil things to him. So do not get tired and stop trying”* (NCV).

### **2. Think about others.**

The Bible says in Philippians 2:4, *“Don’t just think about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and in what they are doing”* (TLB).

Do you realize how countercultural that is? Our world teaches you to think about yourself and nobody else. But Jesus was countercultural, and when you think about him, you’ll more naturally think of others.

### **3. Think about eternity.**

*“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him”* (1 Corinthians 2:9 NLT). When you start focusing on truths like that, all of your problems seem inferior compared to the glory, the joy, and the pleasure of the things awaiting us in eternity.

Your mind is your greatest asset and also the greatest battleground. Ask God to help you make the choice every day to feed on God's Word, free your mind of destructive thoughts, and fill your mind with Jesus, others, and eternity. Then you'll have won the battle

Rick Warren [www.purposedriven.com](http://www.purposedriven.com)

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### **THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

At the still point of my turning world.

At the core of my being,

I wait to hear and feel the gentle presence of God  
Who calls me to open and let go.

Can I go to that place where God is calling me?

Mervyn Appadu

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### **Knee Polishing**

Some things happening in October...

Sunday : the Rugby World Cup

Monday : school children in Zimbabwe writing public exams

Tuesday : 15 October is global hand washing day – pray that clean water may be available to every person

Wednesday : Grandparents day – pray for your family, especially Granny and Grandpa!

Thursday : Dyslexia Week – pray for those who have challenges reading, writing and studying

Friday : World Sight Day – thank God for health and fitness and pray for those whose bodies may not be as well as they could, especially for those who are blind, partially sighted or with other eye problems

Saturday : what anniversaries are happening in your life? Birthdays, weddings, historic... Pray for them.

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Two nuns were shopping in a supermarket. As they passed by the beer cooler, one said to the other, ‘Wouldn’t a nice cold beer or two taste wonderful on a hot summer evening?’ ‘Indeed it would, Sister, but I am not comfortable about buying beer as I am sure it would cause a scene at the checkout.’ ‘I can handle that without a problem’, the first nun replied. The cashier looked surprised at the arrival of two nuns and a six-pack of beer at his checkout. The first nun said, ‘We use beer for washing our hair. Back at the nunnery we call it catholic shampoo.’ Without blinking, the cashier reached under the counter, pulled out a packet of pretzel sticks and placed them in the bag. He then looked the nun straight in the eye, smiled and said, The curlers are on the house!

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