

Dear Reader

We find that the wonderful excitement of the World cup is near its climax as we approach the final few games before the crowning of the new world champions! I feel somewhat sad that it is almost at a close and encourage you all to enjoy every last second as David's article reminds us to stop for a moment and make a conscious effort to take in the things around us so that we can truly experience abundant life. We also rewind to an event in May that gave us a preview of the unity that we were building towards for the World Cup. Katy reminds us of how we should concentrate on how our words should reflect the love, joy and hope of God in every situation. Hope you have a joy-filled July!

Leanne

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LIFE: to the full

By David Bertram

Where are my spectacles? How often do I find myself asking that question? I have put them down absent-mindedly, and now I can't find them. Sometimes I discover they are actually on my face, and I am looking through them as I hunt for them. How ridiculous!

I have been told that it is not a good idea to watch TV while eating supper. The reason is that you are not focusing on what you eat and you can finish the meal not realising what you have eaten, feel 'hungry', and start eating again. I was told we should eat intentionally, concentrating on what we are eating, enjoying every mouthful, tasting the food, chewing it properly and eating slowly.

The fullness of life means, among other things, relishing every moment, so that we get the maximum out of life. It means living intentionally. Jesus said 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' (John 10:10). Jesus has done His part by dying on the cross, rising from the dead, and sending the Holy Spirit. Of course that is not the end. God is always with us, guiding us, blessing us, and leading us into the future He has planned for us. But we have to co-operate with God to make this a reality. It means living our faith intentionally, focusing on his will and his work in our lives. It means awareness.

When I was a schoolboy, one day the teacher asked how many pillars there were along the verandah that we used to get to the classroom. No-one could tell him. He said that we should be observant and that we should notice these details. This also applies to our Bible reading. We should habitually ask ourselves the meaning of what we have just read. We should be observant as we read and we should read intentionally.

Living intentionally means having an awareness of God, and practising to focus on his presence in everything we do.

Jesus said, 'the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.' (John 5.19). Jesus was always aware, always observing, always focused on his role to bring the Kingdom of God to earth. God is always trying to communicate with us, but most of the time we are not listening.

So now I try to make a point of saying to myself, as I put down my spectacles, 'They are on the table.' And if I do that, I will never lose them. If I am truly observant, I will discover little things going on all around me that are signs of God's presence, small things like the beauty of a flower petal, the aroma of the food, the sound of bird-song in the garden, and of course, the needs of the people I live with. Living intentionally means having an awareness of God and practising to focus on His presence in everything we do. The result is deep awe when we see how great God is, and gratitude, when we experience how much God loves us.

FAITH comes from HEARING

By Katy Breytenbach

I was privileged enough to go to the semi-final rugby game between the Blue Bulls and the Crusaders at Orlando stadium in Soweto, South Africa. For those of you reading this that aren't in SA, it was a huge thing because Soweto is one of the largest townships in Gauteng which means it's about as far removed from rugby as you can get! And yet here were these staunch rugby supporters being welcomed by the residents of Soweto. It was an amazing experience, to be a part of history!

Two of my friends and I were squashed close together in the front part of a bus that was filled to the brim with rowdy Blue Bull supporters and the clock was ticking. In fact the game had started and we were still a

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good while away. It's no surprise that the odd comment about "if this is how the transport is now, how bad will it be for the World Cup in three weeks time?" surfaced. I am happy to say though, that these comments were pleasantly (and to my surprise and joy) transformed into cheers and shouts as

someone would check up on the score with a friend over the phone and consequently shout it out to the rest of the bus. The anticipation as well as enthusiasm of the crowd was happily overwhelming to the disagreeable emotion of one or two complaints about not making it on time.

It struck me how easily one sour word could have turned a faith-filled situation into something hopeless if allowed to take root in our hearts. I have experienced it many times, where my hope for this country has only to come across an angry work colleague complaining about the traffic, or a negative news bulletin, and it starts to quickly fizzle.

In the Bible, it says that 'faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ' (Romans 10:17). If I am not hearing things that are not in line with the word of Christ, does it explain why hearing those things gives my faith a knock? Do you mean that hearing things that aren't in line with the Word give your faith a knock?

The truth is, the transport wasn't great getting to the stadium, but whether they knew it or not, screaming out the score to an overcrowded bus and hearing the cheer ripple to the back was reflecting the word of Christ far more than sitting packed together like sardines worrying and complaining about how bad things were and would be.

In the same way, the words which we speak, in every situation, should reflect God (His hope and love), which in turn build faith in our hearts and give others the same opportunity to believe, which brings joy and ultimately abundant life!

The words we speak, in every situation, should reflect God.

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