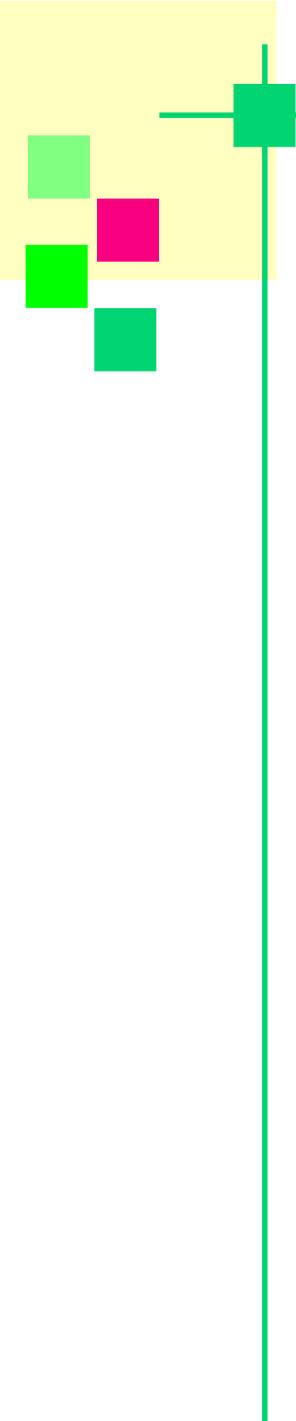




BLADE

ISSUE 15



Relating to the Salvation Deficient

Many unsaved young people are having a harder time than you realize, in the ups and downs of life. The ups in the world are usually not all that far up, and the downs tend to be way, way down. When *you* have a trial or battle, you can be comforted with the knowledge that I love you and that all things work together for good. *You* also have plenty of loving people around you, who will help you if they can, and give you the love and encouragement you need. But for many young people in the world there is little comfort—sometimes no comfort at all.

One of the best ways to relate to the young people you witness to is to walk a mile in their shoes. Think of the last time you had a trial. I don't usually suggest you dwell on the negative, but in this particular case it's for a positive and helpful purpose, so it's worth it.

Picture yourself going through a battle. Perhaps you were clumsy and you broke an expensive piece of equipment. Then the next day you were talking to this real cute guy or girl and the words came out all wrong, making you look a bit dumb. Or perhaps there is someone you are in love with who does not reciprocate those feelings. These types of things can make you feel pretty low.

But now imagine yourself in the System, having made the same mistakes or experienced the same heartache.

Some mean, ill-tempered guy is cursing at you, calling you bad names, and making your life miserable because you broke a piece of his equipment. He has no understanding or forgiveness and you get the feeling that he wishes *you* were the thing that broke instead of that lifeless object he treasures.



Imagine your entire school making fun of you, playing nasty pranks on you, and labeling you as a dork because that cute girl made fun of you behind your back after you talked to her. You know you're not a dork, but there's virtually nothing you can do to restore your reputation, and nobody wants to be your friend now.

Or imagine that the person you loved has cruelly dumped you for some other guy who has more money. She says she never loved you in the first place but was just using you for as long as you had money to spend.

Trials are bad enough on their own, but the added worldly factors can increase them one hundred-fold! What really takes the cake is that in spite of all worldly young

people might be going through and how horribly people might be treating them at home or at school, they have to keep up a façade of coolness. Believe Me, that's not easy to do when you feel like you could just cry all day.

So next time you're witnessing to a young person, try to delve deeper. Understand that there's a lot of worldly strain on him or her. Sometimes all she needs is for someone to listen to her. All he needs is to hear that Jesus loves him. In spite of young people's cool outward appearance, they might just need to be understood. Find out what they are going through and then give them the answer: Me, the God of love! ■

Personality CLASH!

What do you do when you just can't seem to see eye to eye with someone who is older than you? You know that I want both generations to live and work together in unity, but it can be tough to figure out how to get along with a difficult or trying personality in your Home. It can be even tougher when, instead of trying to make things easier for you, it looks like that person is piling extra burdens on your shoulders.

The frustrations can overwhelm you at times, but instead of weeping in your closet or punching the air, bring your frustrations to Me so that I can soothe them away with practical solutions. Here are a few special insights for right now:

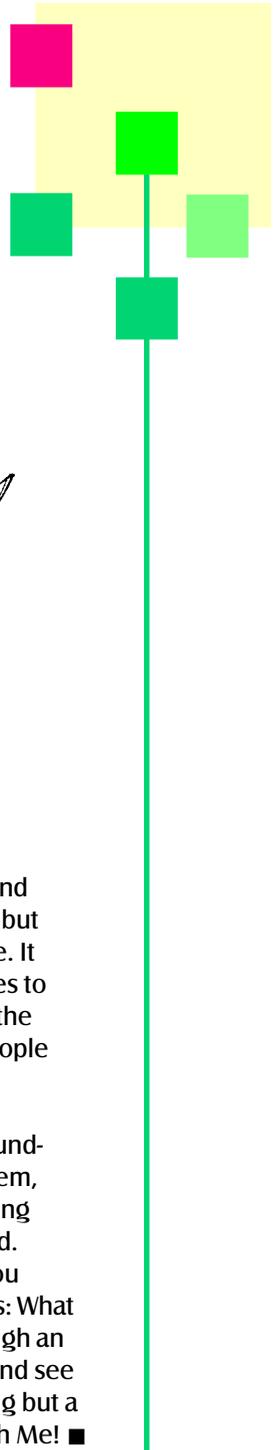


Inside every person's heart is a gem, the gem of the beautiful soul that I gave him or her. It can be hard to see the gem in some people. Others may find it hard to see the gem in your heart at times too! There are lots of things that can block each other's view. But when you're faced with a tough character, someone you just can't seem to get along with, remember that I can help you love *every* person in *some* way.

When you just aren't "flowing" with

someone, come to Me for instructions. I'll show you what you've got to do to bring peace to your life. My instruction to you can work miracles in the most impossible-looking situations.

You don't have to feel alone in a sea of frustration and inner dissatisfaction. I know what you need in order to work well with each one in your Home. I can whisper these secrets to you. I have what you need in My hand now. Will you come and get it? Lend Me your ear, and the secrets will be yours.



Where My Spirit is there is liberty—the freedom to love and live life to the full. There is another kind of liberty too, but that one is a *false* liberty that actually leads to bondage. It is the so-called freedom of the world that the Devil uses to entice people to taste of forbidden fruits. Then he locks them into the bondage of addiction to them. Beyond that first free choice that people make to do these things, there is no more freedom, because they become addicted to these things.

The liberty of My Spirit is a liberty that includes boundaries—boundaries that keep you free! They are not, as the Devil likes to paint them, “suffocating restrictions,” but they are railings to keep you from falling over the edge of the cliff, or from getting sucked into the quicksand.

The Devil will try to bring you into bondage through offering you supposed freedom to partake of forbidden fruit. But think about this: What forbidden fruit is there that does not lead you into a bondage through an addiction for it? Look at those who say they want you to “be free” and see what freedom they have. The freedom that they offer you is nothing but a bondage to the world and the things of the world. Be truly free with Me! ■

The Washing Machine

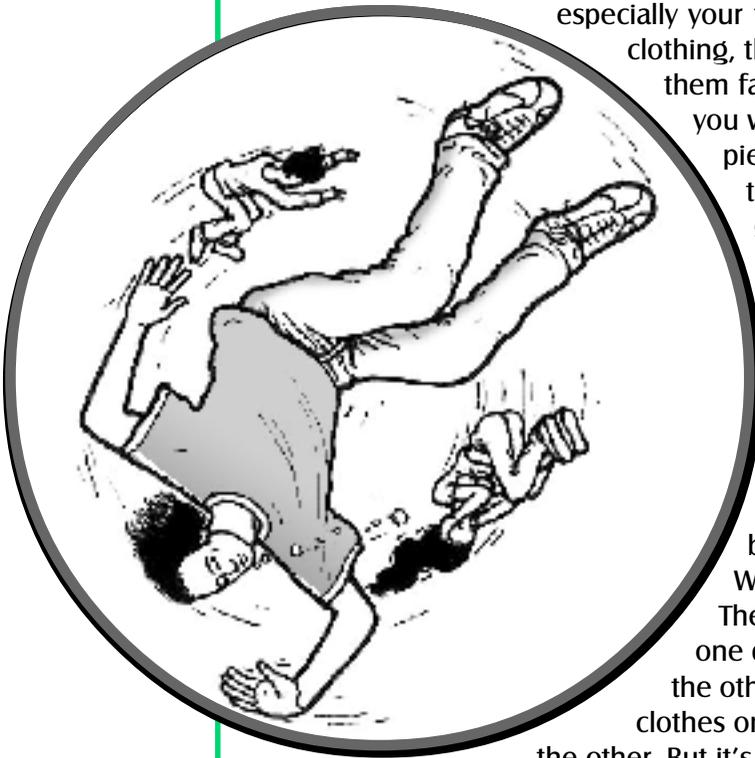
Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial you are passing through; it is only the cleansing and purifying process that I put all My saints through. There are no exceptions—no one escapes! Everyone must go through the “washing machine,” just like all your clothes have to be washed.

If you want to continue wearing things, especially your favorite articles of clothing, then you wash them faithfully. The more you wear a certain piece of clothing, the more often it gets dirty and the more frequently it has to be washed.

Have you ever looked in the washing machine when your clothes are being washed?

What do you see? The machine jerks one direction and then the other, swishing the clothes one direction, then the other. But it's that very jerking back and forth that gets the clothes clean. Then the rinse, then the spin—around and around and around at high speed—till the clothes are flattened and smashed against the sides of the washer.

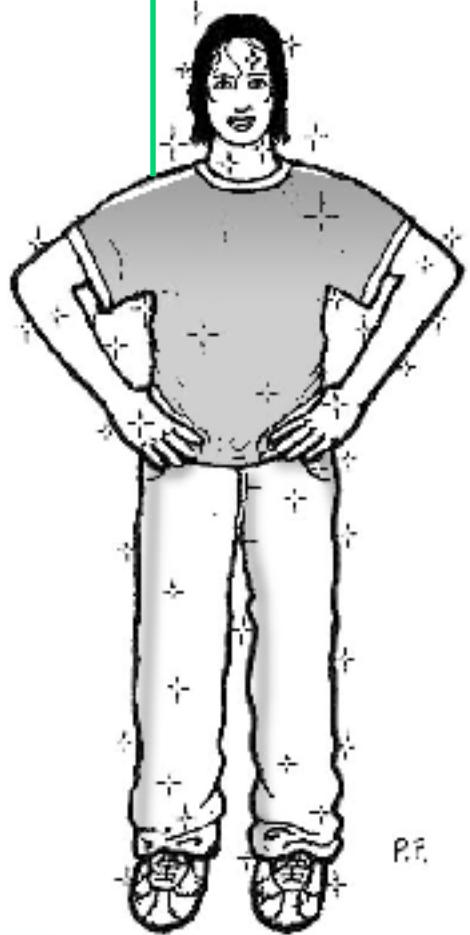
If your clothes are particularly dirty, you might even



put them on a long cycle, running through the whole process a couple of times—jerk, swash, jerk, rinse, spin, jerk, swash, rinse, spin, tumble, spin. It certainly is an ordeal for the clothes and a real purging of the dirt. You may even sometimes add bleach to your laundry to get out stains and to make your whites extra white.

So think it not strange if you feel like you're tumbled about and being swished and swashed, going head over heels, being rinsed and spun and even flattened. You may even feel like you're going to drown and that the process has no end. If so, just know that you're one of My favorite pieces of clothing and I want to make you nice and clean and wearable. I'm adding some extra softener too—the kind that smells really nice, just like spring-time—and though you might come out a little extra worn from the washing, you'll be soft and so nice to touch, and I will enjoy feeling you and wearing you and keeping you as one of My favorite garments.

I love you. Please know that no "washing" for the present seems joyous, but grievous, nevertheless after the washing you are nice and white and beautiful to wear! ■

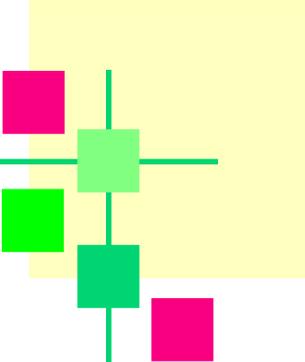


Know that you're one of My favorite pieces of clothing and I want to make you nice and clean and wearable.



When You Lose a Special Friend





He was great, wasn't he? He came into your life out of nowhere, and made you feel loved and special. He was a friend and he was understanding. He cared about what you liked, what you felt, and what you did. He wanted to be with you, and he showed you that you mattered, that you had qualities worth loving and admiring.

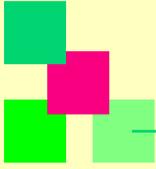
But now it's over. It was time for him to move on. You miss him. You miss the fun times. You miss that love and attention, and you wonder if you'll ever have it again.

There are a lot of other people, besides this dear friend, who need you and your love. Maybe it won't be the same kind of love, with the same feelings or the same experiences. But there is a lot of joy to be had in friendship. There's a lot of reward to be found in going out of your way to be a friend to others—getting to know them, helping them out here and there, sharing a little of your life with them. You'll still miss the one dearest to you, but you'll be less lonely.

One day I'll bring someone very special into your life, someone who will reassure you, in a whole new way, of how much I love you. In the meantime, the love and friendship you get from others will be a sign of My love to you if you'll let it. All love comes from Me and it's all a blessing from My hand.

The love you give others is also a sign of My love for them, so don't be stingy with it. You can fill a big need in someone's life, and improve your own life while you're at it, just by reaching out with a hand of love. ■

Wanna Work at a Computer?



I know about your gifts and talents. I know what you enjoy and what you want most. I know because I made you that way, and I have a plan for using your specific talents in the future. I've made you smart, and given you the potential to be computer savvy. Even



BLADE



though you have a lot to learn, you have great potential! I have plans for using your gifts—the ones you know you have, and even some you don't yet know you have—and one day, when I know the time is right, I'm going to open a door that you can walk through and find your dreams have come true—at least ministry-wise.

I've given you other gifts too, like being good with kids and able to cook and clean, and help organize and manage things around the house. I know those aren't your favorite things to do.—In fact, sometimes they're downright frustrating and even a real drag. It's not that you dislike the work itself so much, and you do love your little brothers and sisters and the other kids around. It's just that you wish you could be exploring your potential in other areas. One day you will be doing just that.

For now, you're right where I most need you to be. It's not only for My sake, or your mom and dad's sake, or your little brothers' and sisters' sake, that I'm asking you to put your big plans on hold for now—though as you know, they really do need you and couldn't manage

without you. It's also for your sake, believe it or not, and it's going to make you a better secretary or office person.

There's a lot more to the job than brains and efficiency. It's a job for a person with a heart, a person with people skills. Have any idea where one of the best places to develop people-handling skills is? Yep, with those little tykes who try your patience to the very limit.

I'm helping you be a well-rounded person. There's more to a person than his or her work and ministry, or gifts and talents. A well-rounded person is one who's been through a few ups and downs, and has had to jump through a few of life's difficult hoops. One of those hoops is taking a situation you don't particularly care for, and putting all you've got into it for the sake of others.

Some of the qualities I'm instilling in you now are faithfulness and initiative, a spirit of fight and faith, and a vision to make something out of nothing. Those are not only top-notch secretarial traits, but qualities that will help you to face all the things that are up ahead in your life, and to come through standing strong. ■

Heart Matters



I know that when you look at her, you see someone who has given her all to Me. She loves Me with all her heart, and as a result is sweet and loving to people. Add to that the natural charm that I've given her, and the fact that you're a guy, and—bingo!—it's easy to see that you would fall for her.

So you want to be around her every spare moment of the day. You want to sit close to her at mealtimes, or next to her at devotions. She's the first one you go up to at dance nights. But she doesn't seem to be paying a lot of attention to you right now.

One reason for this is that she's just a bit older than you, and while she may like you well enough as a friend, you may not be the kind of boyfriend she's looking for. That's not to say you can't enjoy her company, it's just that you'll have to understand why she may not be responding in the way you hoped she would.

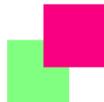
It can be difficult for a girl to know how to handle a guy who's trying *too* hard to be her boyfriend. Often she'll end up ignoring him, or keeping her distance. You have to

learn not to take this personally, and just see it as her way of telling you that maybe you're overstepping your affection a little.

So what can you do? Well, the *loving* thing for you to do is to give her a little space. Try not to be too demanding of her time or attention. This doesn't mean you should avoid her, and go sulk in a corner because you can't be with her. Chances are that she does enjoy your company. It's just that your expectations make her feel uncomfortable.

I know those expectations can be difficult for you to adjust. After all, you're in love! But if you can learn to accept that she may not see things exactly like you see them, and that while she enjoys your friendship, she may not want you to think of yourself as her boyfriend, you'll see that you can still enjoy each other's company.

In the meantime, you can use your friendship with this girl to learn how to better get along with girls in general, and how to treat them like they want to be treated. Then someday, when the right one does come around, you'll be a little more ready for her, and all the special treats and quirks that come with her. ■



GOD BLESS YOU,
BROTHER!



KEVIN



Can you hear the soft cries and longings of the many lost hearts around you? They need someone who will give his life to help them. They have nothing. They are poor in body and in spirit, famished for the food of the Spirit that I have poured out to you in abundance. Won't you go and feed it to them, and save their hungry souls? I will be there to put within your heart a joy and a love for your labors. If only once in your life you are life and joy to someone, it's worth it.

I've watched you as a little tot, growing into a man. The days of youth are coming to a close, and the days of manhood are upon you. Take up the torch, the challenge, and don the garments of love, of unselfishness, of extending your hand to help those in need. Then you will be so surprised. How glad your heart will be, for happiness will then come to find you, and embrace you. Then you will know the true joy of serving Me to the full. No earthly happiness can ever take the place of that joy. Like that little song that you've sung since you were a boy, "The time to be happy is now, the place to be happy is here, and the way to be happy is to make others happy, and you'll have a little Heaven right here."

I've made you just the way I wanted you, and I made you that way for others. Reach out and put a little love in others' hearts today, and they will know that God has loved them that day—because you loved them. You can make that difference. Won't you give it a try? Anything can happen in that little margin of time when you do not give up, but keep on trusting and keep on giving.

How Not to Die in Deep Space

It's easy to wonder how you can possibly survive spiritually on this earth without being overwhelmed by the spirit of the world.—After all, the world is all around you, so isn't it just a matter of time before you weaken and become just another worldling?

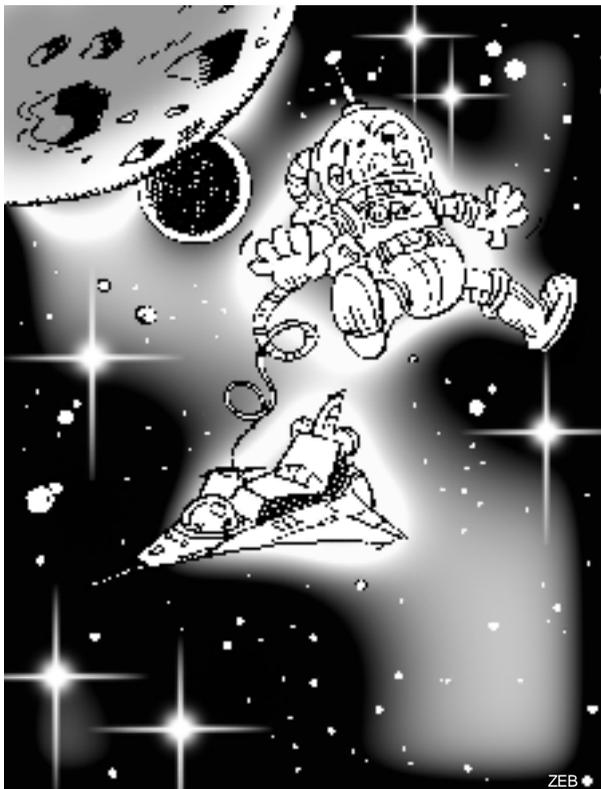
Picture yourself as an astronaut, on a mission in deep space. You have your space shuttle, which is filled with oxygen, but your mission is fraught with danger.—Occupational hazards abound. There's only one space shuttle, but there are millions of miles of space all around you. When you have to go outside of your shuttle, in your space suit, it might seem like the odds of being swallowed up by that endless blackness are pretty great.

But guess what? You won't be swallowed up as long as you have that connection to your space shuttle, that cord that keeps you from floating away. That cord is your commitment to stay attached to My Word.

Then there's your astronaut suit—your protection against being suffocated. If you open your suit even one millimeter, that life-giving oxygen is going to start slowly seeping out. It's like your fellowship with the world—you can't let the world into your heart, your mind, and your spirit. You can be in space, but when space starts to get into *you*, you're on the road to being done for.

You can be in the world, but when you let the world get into you—by collecting the books and the knowledge of the world, the icons of the world, and the ideals of the world conveyed through their magazines—it's the beginning of the end, and you're in danger of being another statistic in the "succumbed to occupational hazards" category.

So don't worry when your mission takes you into deep space—just don't let deep space get into you! ■



ZEB



That First Step!

Change isn't easy. It often comes at a time when you're so comfortable with the way you do things. I often bring changes to challenge you or to redirect you into a new way of doing things that will make your life easier in the end.

But that first step is always difficult isn't it? You're faced with making a decision:

1. *Do I choose to throw myself wholeheartedly into this new move?*
2. *Do I choose to just dip my toe in and not really go with it?*
- Or, 3. *Do I choose to resist this change because it seems like too much work?*

Those are choices everyone is faced with when a new idea is presented or when I bring a change into his or her life.

Here's a bit of advice: It's not the way you feel about it at *first* that counts, it's what you decide to *do* that matters most.

The choice that will make you the most happy is the first-place prize of wholeheartedly jumping in. Then, if it doesn't work out, at least you can look back and say you gave it your very best shot. You can look back with satisfaction, instead of remorse or sadness that you didn't do your best.

The priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant across the River Jordan were faced with taking that first step. They didn't know for sure that the waters were going to part in front of them, but they stepped into that water by faith. Even if it meant they were going to have to swim across with that heavy ark on their backs, they were going to do it because I told them to.

What happened? Did they stop and wait for Me to part the waters before they got down there? No! They walked right into the water, and the instant their feet touched the water it dried up, and they had a clear path to walk on.

When you take that first step you'll find that I do the miracle, but that decision is yours. Only *you* can decide to step into the water. But you'll never find out if I'm able to do it unless you take that first step. Go for it!