



July-September 2018  
NEWSLETTER



NAVY PHOTO BY PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS MORGAN N

# SO HELP ME GOD

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AIR FORCE PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. KELLEN KROBING



ARMY PHOTO BY SGT. 1ST CLASS MICHEL SAURET

Army personnel lead the front of a four-man team carrying a 185-pound dummy as a "stress march" during the U.S. Army Reserve Best Warrior Competition on Fort Bragg, N.C.

## DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

# Combating sleeplessness

by CH (LTC) Steven Hokana  
USA (Ret.)

Turn to the Lord when the night demons come prowling.

"In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety" (Ps. 4:8).



Sleep is of immeasurable value. Leaders know the combat power of a well-rested force. Sleep is a weapon

that increases lethality and reduces casualties on the battlefield.

Did you have a sleepless night? Many long for a deep, restful slumber, but it evades them. Why? It could be due to physical pain, late-night gaming or caffeine-saturated sports drinks. In His Word, the Bible, the word "sleep" is used over 110 times!

There are other reasons we toss and turn: worry, anxiety, fear. The Lord knows this. God cares desperately for

you! He reaches out in love. Jesus gave His life on a cross to restore and give life eternal. His glorious resurrection "seals the deal." Death is destroyed. We will be raised to live with Him forever.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus takes on anxiety (Matt. 6:25-34). He wants you to know about His care for you. He illustrates His love for you by way of birds and grass. As God feeds the birds, He nourishes you. Even short-lived, seasonal grass has the concern of God. Imagine how much more He cares about you! St. Paul echoes Jesus in Phil. 4:6:

See SLEEP, page 2



# Psalm 4

Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!

You have given me relief when I was in distress.

Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!

O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame?

How long will you love vain words and seek after lies?

*Selah*

But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him.

Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. *Selah*

Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the Lord.

There are many who say, "Who will show us some good?"

Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!"

You have put more joy in my heart

than they have when their grain and wine abound.

In peace I will both lie down and sleep;

for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

## Sleep

*Continued from page 1*

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

When anxious, replace it with thankful prayer to Christ who grants us peace.

Psalm 4 (*at left*) takes a deep dive into the subject of sleeplessness. King David, the author, knows of sleepless nights.

King David's tone as he addresses the Lord is of desperation. Wow! Even the Lord's best was susceptible to sleeplessness. David approaches God, and we have the same right. We come to Jesus Christ, our Lord, in times of desperation. We have access to Him 24/7.

David speaks of shame. Belittling leads to depression, anxiety, suicide and homicide. Acknowledge your shame to Him. Lay it at the foot of Golgotha. Yes, shaming hurts! Just ask someone who has been humiliated on Facebook or dissed by a loved one. But we are reminded that we are "set apart" by the Lord (Ps. 4:3). God the Father looks at us through the eyes of

the cross. His Son makes us wonderful, beautiful and cherished! Jesus sets us apart.

David addresses the problem of anger in this psalm (v. 4). It is serious business (*see below*). Anger is recorded 269 times in the Bible. Even Jesus gets angry (Matt. 21:12-17; Mark 3:5 and 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-4; and John 2:13-16). But it's what we do with our anger that makes all the difference. Instead of becoming angry, "offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD" (Ps. 4:5). We are the right sacrifice. In Rom. 12:1, Paul says, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

The promises of God transform minds and hearts. This grants sleep. Psalm 4 is all about Christ's loving embrace. Nothing except the promises of God frees us from anger and anxiety. We look to the Lord Jesus as the source and center of joy! When we approach the Lord with such powerful feelings, we lift it to Him and then sleep in peace.



### For more on anger, please explore:

- ▶ [lcms.org/ministry-to-the-armed-forces/resources](http://lcms.org/ministry-to-the-armed-forces/resources)
- ▶ [lcms.org/publications/sohelpmegod](http://lcms.org/publications/sohelpmegod)
- ▶ [thelc.ms/lhm-warriors-of-faith](http://thelc.ms/lhm-warriors-of-faith) (*Lutheran Hour Ministries' video series "Warriors of Faith," Session 2 is titled "Anger," can be downloaded or purchased as DVD*)



AIR FORCE PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. EFREN LOPEZ

## How do you view God's Word?

# Nuclear power or porcelain paint?

by CH (LTC) Steven Hokana  
USA (Ret.)

In my parents' home is a large walnut bookcase that contains a set of classic encyclopedias dating back to 1913. These books provide a window into a world that no longer exists. The maps show boundaries of empires where democratic nations exist today. There is an entry about a new transportation contraption called the "aeroplane." You sense the hesitancy of the editors. They are not sure it's going to work. Instead, dirigibles, airships and blimps are seen as the future of aviation (A.R. Spofford et al., eds., *The New and Complete Universal Self-Pronouncing Encyclopedia* [8 volumes], 1913).

One entry in that encyclopedia is on a rare mineral. According to the 1913 compendium, this mineral is ground to dust and used to color porcelain. If you paint it and then fire it in a furnace, it becomes a brilliant orange. If you work it into the clay and place it in the kiln, it turns black. Other than that, the editors say, it has no other practical use.

The mineral is uranium, which is the key element in nuclear power. What power! It is used as a devastating weapon of war. But it has other uses as well.

Uranium is used in medicine to detect disease, kill cancer, propel spacecraft millions of miles and purify food. Uranium powers 14 percent of the world's electrical needs. If you see uranium only for coloring porcelain, it's not of much use. If you see uranium for what it is today — for its power, significance and influence on humanity — it's off-the-charts powerful and compelling.

When the Bible becomes anything other than the record of salvation, it is like using uranium as porcelain paint. We miss the point. Self-help, steps to a happy marriage, how to lose weight, secrets to acquiring wealth, a manual for



**WHEN THE BIBLE BECOMES ANYTHING OTHER THAN THE RECORD OF SALVATION, IT IS LIKE USING URANIUM AS PORCELAIN PAINT. WE MISS THE POINT.**

ethical living ... it's just porcelain paint compared to nuclear power.

In the fourth Gospel, John tells us the true purpose of the Bible, which is both powerful and compelling. He writes: "But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may

have life in his name" (John 20:31).

The events and sayings of God from Genesis to Revelation lead to Easter, that great and glorious day of resurrection. Jesus' death on the cross is our victory over death. The sacrifice of the Son of God places upon us His righteousness. The Lord wants this victory over death as a very part of your life. Jesus did indeed die for you and the whole world.

Christ wants to be part of your life — your vocation, your hobbies, your sorrows and joys. This is a difficult concept to take to heart. You may perceive your life as bland, boring, routinized, uneventful, uninteresting and mundane. But it does not matter what you think. This is love that comes down from heaven. It is a mystery that Jesus wants to be among His people, the sheep of His hand.

Jesus disrupts the ordinary and mundane. He is the resurrected Son of the living God, the Lord God incarnate. This same Jesus destroyed hell and death forever. He did all this for you, and He desires still to be part of your life.

Ps.121:7-8 reads: "The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. **The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore**" (*emphasis added*).

Jesus continues to desire to be with you after the resurrection, after the "mission accomplished" event of Easter. His presence poured into you by the Holy Spirit gives you life through the regeneration of Holy Baptism. It continues with the forgiveness of sins and the

Sacrament of the Altar. The desire of the Lord to continue to be part of your life, to be invited to your table, your conversations, your relationships and every aspect of your life is part of the full force of God's Word. As we go about our daily lives, we do so as one who is redeemed and loved.



MARINES PHOTO BY CPL AARON PATTERSON

# Are you **'flooded'** by the **stresses** of life?

Life throws a lot of crazy stuff at us. But remember, our God is bigger than any current problem, blindsided haymaker or serious life situation. We are comforted in His suffering. God's incomprehensible love placed Himself on a cross. He stretches out His arms and embraces us with His love. Through His love, we can navigate through the most challenging and difficult times. Here are recommendations to help you get through those stressful times.

## BE A PERSON OF PRAYER

Consider all those in Scripture who turned to God in their distress. Abraham, Samson, Deborah, Jeremiah, David, Habakkuk, Elizabeth and Paul all took on serious life challenges and turned to the Lord in prayer. If you are new at a life of prayer, spend time in the Book of Psalms.



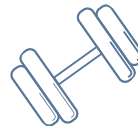
## BE A PERSON OF LOVE

The words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 are intended for a church in conflict. Corinth had issues of alcoholism, gluttony, marriage, local superstitions and division based on income. Paul instructed them to use, demonstrate and share love with one another. A love based on Christ on the cross involves self-sacrificing, the giving of one's self and a deep sense of care for one another despite disagreements.



## TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

If you don't have a hobby, find one. You need a break. Find something you enjoy and that re-energizes you. Second, stay social. Isolation is lonely and can lead to depression.



## REMEMBER YOUR BAPTISM

Baptism applies to all situations and all circumstances. It is paramount when in a potentially overwhelming life situation. Along with Baptism comes the Lord's Supper. We commune with Christ and gain strength from Him and the whole Christian Church.



# CHECK IT OUT!

## Web Resources

Lutheran Ministries Media, Inc. produces a weekly, 30-minute Lutheran broadcast worship service called "Worship Anew." Each service includes music, Scripture readings, prayers and a pastor delivering a message that is designed to feel one-on-one to the viewer. If you don't have access to a Lutheran service, give it a try at [worshipanew.org](http://worshipanew.org).



Stay on top of current issues facing us today by listening to *Issues, Etc.* — Christ-centered, cross-focused talk radio. Listen live, from archives or on podcasts.

[issuesetc.org/category/podcast](http://issuesetc.org/category/podcast)

LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces has a Facebook page. Like us and get connected with ministry throughout the military.

[facebook.com/MinistryArmedForces.LCMS](https://www.facebook.com/MinistryArmedForces.LCMS)

## Apps

Through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod mobile app, you can locate LCMS churches in your area, get a daily devotion on and more.



[lcms.org/resources/mobileapps](http://lcms.org/resources/mobileapps)



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