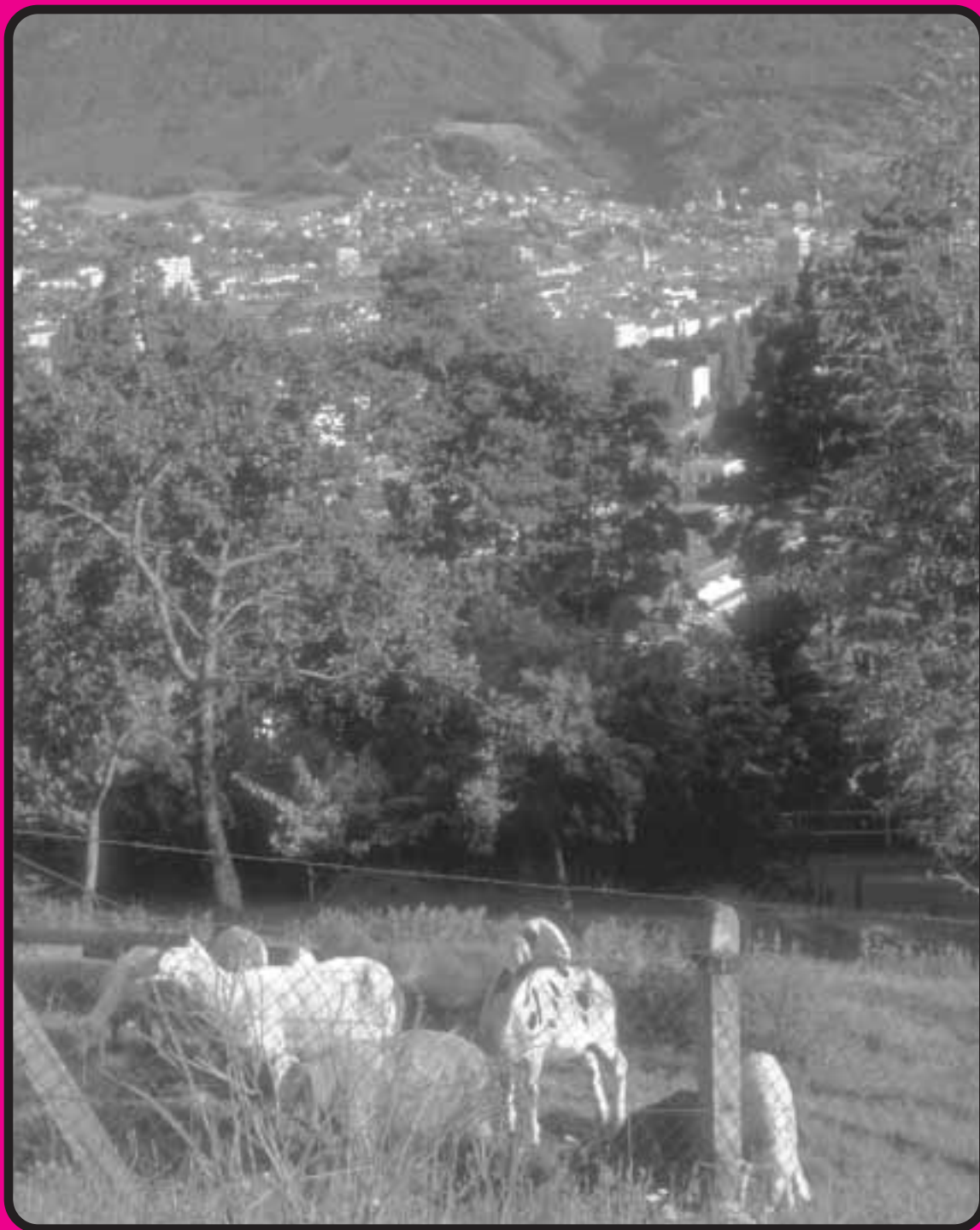


EVANGEL

The Good News of Jesus Christ



Live by faith

Great is God's Wrath (Numbers 16:31-34)

In the latest issue of *Evangel*, we saw that the people of Israel did not trust the power of God to give them the land of Canaan. The Lord said to his people, "Go enter the land for I will give it to you." But the people said, "No, we cannot, for the nations in the land of Canaan are too great and powerful for us." What they were saying to the Lord is, "Lord we do not trust that you have the power to give us this land." The result of their refusal to obey the Lord is that the Lord said this generation will die in the wilderness and I will give the land to the next generation, all those who are 20 years and under.

A rebellion

And so for the next 40 years the people would wander through the wilderness until the present generation died and the Lord would give the land of Canaan to the next generation. You would think that the people would learn something from all this, that they would listen to the Lord God. But it didn't take very long and the people began to complain and they rose up in rebellion against their leaders. The Lord had made Moses and Aaron the leaders in Israel, but now a man by the name of Korah, together with Dathan and Abiram and 250 other Israelite men, well-known community leaders, rose up against Moses and Aaron.

One day they came to Moses and Aaron and they said, "You Moses, you Aaron, have gone too far! The whole community belongs to the Lord and the Lord is with us. Why then do you set yourselves above the LORD's people?" What they are saying to Moses and Aaron is, "What right do you have to be our leaders? What right do you have to put yourselves above us and tell us what to do?" They were upset with the leadership of Moses and Aaron.

They blamed them for the situation in which they are now wandering about aimlessly in the wilderness. They said, "You brought us out of Egypt, a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the desert and now you want to lord it over us. You didn't keep your promise to give us a land flowing with milk and honey, where there are fields and vineyards!" They were angry with Moses and Aaron because they blamed these two men for their situation.

Blaming God

These people who rebelled did not live by faith in the Almighty God. If they lived by faith, they would have been careful in what they said. They would not dare to bring such accusations against them. It was not Moses and Aaron who said to Israel, "We will be your leaders and we will take care of you." Moses never wanted to be a leader, but the Lord commanded Moses to lead the people. Moses was not given a choice. And the Lord God is the one who told the people, "I have commanded Moses to lead you, for I am going to take you out of Egypt and I will give you a new land, flowing with milk and honey." It was God who made that promise, not Moses, not Aaron. But these rebellious men are afraid to accuse God of wrong doing, therefore they accuse Moses and Aaron of wrong

doing. They said, "it is your fault that we are in this situation."

This is not faith, this is not trusting in God, but these people said, "Since we do not like what is happening to us, therefore we will take over and we will lead ourselves." These people do not want to take any responsibility for their own actions. If they truly believed in God, their reaction would have been different. They would have fallen on their knees before God and said, "Lord, it is our fault that we are in this situation, you are right and just in punishing us this way, for we did not want to listen to you and we did not trust that you would give us this land." Faith understands that the responsibility lies with ourselves.

That is as true today as it was in the days of Moses and Aaron. All men are blame shifters. It began already in Paradise when Adam blamed his wife for eating the forbidden fruit; "It is that woman you gave me who made me eat it." When we look at our own lives, how often do you not catch yourself blaming others for the problems in your life? Accepting responsibility for our own actions is hard to do. And so also these men in Israel refused to accept responsibility for their actions. They did not want to accept that their situation was a result of their refusal to trust the Lord. Instead they shift the blame to Moses and Aaron.

God's anger

Moses instructs these men to come the next morning to the tabernacle, which is the tent where the Lord lived among his people. There Israel brought their sacrifices to the Lord. He tells them they are to take their censer, a vessel in which they would put hot coals from the fire and burn incense on it. It was something that only Aaron the high Priest was allowed to do. And he

for God is Great



says to them, "At that time the Lord will show whom he has chosen to burn incense before Him, you or Aaron the high Priest."

And so in the morning these men did as Moses said. They came to the Tabernacle with their censers burning incense. It is important to notice here the reaction of the Lord. The LORD says to Moses and Aaron, "Separate yourselves from this assembly so I can put an end to them at once." The Lord was extremely angry with them. By opposing Moses and Aaron, they opposed the Lord God. Moses and Aaron were not doing their own thing, they were following the will of the Lord. These men rebelled against the Lord and therefore the Lord says to Moses and Aaron, get away from them, for I am going to destroy them together with all the people.

But Moses and Aaron did not do that. They cared too much for the people. Therefore they fell face down on the ground and cried out to the Lord to be merciful to Israel; not to destroy the whole nation for the rebellion of a number of men in Israel. The Lord heeded the cry of Moses and Aaron and said, tell the people then to move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. The wrath of God was so great

against these men because they refuse to live by faith, that the ground under their tents suddenly split open so that these three men and their families were swallowed up alive.

God's anger was not only kindled against these 3 men, but also against the 250 leaders in the community who supported them. The Lord sent fire, lightning from heaven to destroy those 250 men. So great was the wrath of God that the people began to flee, shouting, "The earth is going to swallow us too!" They trembled with fear before the anger of God.

The wrath of God is great against all those who refuse to live by faith. You see, God was merciful and gracious to his people. He loved Israel so very much. His love was so great, that He delivered them from slavery in Egypt. Because of his love for them, He promised to give them their own land, a very rich land, one flowing with milk and honey. Israel could be sure of God's love, for the Lord is a faithful God who keeps his word. He does what He says.

Respond to God's love by living by faith

But that does not mean that God's love is unconditional. The

Lord wants his people to respond with their love. The Lord asks from his people that they love Him and that they trust Him. He wants their loyalty, so that they will obey and follow Him with their whole life. But when his people say, we do not trust you and we will not do what you say and we will take care of our own lives, thank-you very much, the Lord is deeply grieved. He is a jealous God who asks that we remain faithful. But when his people become unfaithful, when they say to the Lord, "We do not trust you and we are going to do our own thing," then the Lord becomes angry and his wrath is poured out against them.

Therefore you see that all those who live by faith and trust in the Lord really experience great joy in their lives. Faith knows that we can trust the almighty God do give us everything He has promised. But faith also knows that God's wrath is great against all those who refuse to trust Him and who refuse to obey Him. Rebellion against God results in the great wrath of God.

Therefore today the Lord also teaches you to live by faith. For everyone who refuses to believe and stubbornly opposes the Almighty God brings the wrath of God upon themselves. But everyone who looks to Him for their life and salvation will experience the love, kindness and goodness of God. We cannot speak about the wrath of God apart from the mercy of our God. God becomes angry with his people, not because He hates them but because they oppose Him and hate Him. But He will show mercy to all those who love Him and love to serve Him with their whole life. The Lord calls you today to turn to Him in faith. Trust that in Jesus Christ He will give you the life everlasting.

Matt VanLuik

How spiritually

We live in a time in which there is a great emphasis on good health and physical fitness. One look in the Yellow Pages of your telephone book will soon show you a wide assortment of stores and agencies specializing in the well-being of your health. Among all these agencies you will find those who specialize in workouts, such as gyms in which you can work out to your heart's content. One look in these gyms will soon convince you of the seriousness of these workouts. Men and women, dressed in colourful attire, are manning the various stations working up a sweat as they train and develop their biceps and triceps, their shoulders and abdomens, their thighs and calves. All these muscles and more are given a good workout in the hope of looking good and feeling better.

What happens in these centers of physical fitness happens in our homes and on our streets as well. Men and ladies watch their workout shows by way of television programs or videos. Some prefer aerobics, others callanetics, still others prefer to jog or power walk. With great seriousness and earnestness you can meet men and women swinging their arms or breathing heavily as they have the workout on the streets of our towns and cities.

Physical fitness is in and here to stay! For physical fitness does a lot of good. It improves your looks,

enhances your condition, lowers your blood pressure and cholesterol and makes you feel good. It gives you a little high, if you will, a little more zest to face the day and a little more joy in being alive. In the light of this, who would not want to be physically fit? Who would not want to exert himself and workout if the benefits are so great and effective?

However, how about our spiritual fitness? How much emphasis is there on that in our society and in your life? How seriously are you willing to work out for this every day again?

Why you should spiritually work out

When I think about working out for spiritual fitness, there is especially one text in the Bible that comes to my mind. A text you will find in the New Testament, in Philippians 2, verses 12 and 13. There you will read, "Therefore . . . continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."

That little word "therefore" tells us there is a very specific reason why we are told to work out spiritually. If you were to read the complete letter to the Philippians – something you can easily do in 15 or 20 minutes – you would soon find out what this reason is. The community of people who received the letter was being torn apart by conceit, pride and selfishness. People were starting to feel miserable, out of sorts and cranky. They were becoming impatient, intolerant and unloving with each other.

If you work out physically, you know what this is all about. If you miss your workout once, you already notice the difference. If you miss it on a regular basis, you are soon out of kilter, moody and impatient. On the other hand, when you faithfully

workout at the activity of your choice, your sense of balance returns and you are much easier to get along with.

It's really much the same with your spiritual workout. Working out spiritually, i.e., bringing to growth and development the spiritual life God has placed in you, will make you feel good. You will receive new energy to perform the tasks God has given you and you will be of a wholesome influence in your family and other people you interact with. People will see the difference. Much like they can see the difference when you faithfully work out physically.

The instructor for our spiritual workout

And this is not the only similarity between physically and spiritually working out. When you start to work out physically, you usually have someone else who models your workout for you. This is especially true if you do your workout in front of a television screen. You look at the example the instructor is giving and you do your best to faithfully follow the instruction he or she is giving.

With our spiritual workout it is much the same. Also here we have an instructor who has faithfully modeled what spiritually working out is all about. Our instructor is no else than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. In the letter to the Philippians, you will also read about Him. Right after the readers have been told not to only look to their own interests, but also to the interests of others, they are encouraged to look at the Lord Jesus Christ. They are to think of themselves the way *He* thought of Himself. He had equal status with God, but He did not think so much of Himself that He had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. On the contrary, He set aside the privileges of being God and became human, living a selfless, obedient life and dying a selfless,

fit are you?



obedient death. And we are now to look at Him and follow this example.

Not that we are to work for our salvation like the Lord Jesus Christ did. For He has already done this. Some time ago, I heard a person humorously illustrate this point when the question was asked, "What can I do to be saved?" To which the man answered, "Nothing. You cannot do anything at all." "What do you mean?" the man persisted. "Why can I do nothing?" To which the other man answered, "This has been done for you. Two thousand years ago, the Lord Jesus achieved the salvation for his people. All you have to do is believe it. Embrace it. Work with it."

And that is exactly the point. When we look at Jesus Christ and follow his example, we do not work *for* our salvation, but we work *with* it and bring it to development, fruition and completion, by being obedient and humble just like Jesus was, by thinking of others first, just like He did, by having the same outlook on life as He had.

The similarity with working out physically is once again striking. We do not work out to *gain* muscle, but to *develop* our muscles. We work out to develop strong biceps, a lean abdomen, firm thighs and calves. And just think how seriously we do this when we physically work out. We do this with fear and trembling, as it

were. Every day, the workout takes place. Or every other day. Special clothes and shoes are often worn. And nothing is spared in order to work out properly and effectively.

It's much the same with our spiritual workout. We are told to do this with fear and trembling. That means we are to realize that working out our salvation is a very serious thing. The honour and glory of our God is at stake. Our own spiritual well-being and the well-being of those we interact with is a stake. And if that is so, who would not want to spiritually workout by working out his salvation with fear and trembling?

The power for our spiritual workout

"Can you do this?" you ask. When you physically work out, you sometimes feel as if you do not have the stamina you need. And you wonder how this will be when you spiritually work out. Will you really have the spiritual stamina not only to begin, but also to continue to do this?

Well, the answer to that question is very encouraging. All those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, all those who love the Lord Jesus and desire to please Him and do what He want them to do, have tremendous power and energy at their disposal. For they may know that working out

their salvation with fear and trembling is not done in their own power but God's. It is God who is working in them to will and to act according to his good purpose. You see, it is God's purpose not only *to bring* people to faith, but also *to keep* them in the faith. God not only gives people a new start, He also enables them to keep going. When *we* will, it is *God* enabling us to will. When we act, it is God enabling us to act.

And that is very encouraging for everyone who takes his spiritual workout seriously. He may know that his spiritual workout does not ultimately depend on himself, but on his God. The good work God has started in his life He will bring to completion. He can count on that. God will not let him down.

When you read this, the summer Olympics will soon be in full swing. Just like all the temples of physical fitness, so also these Olympics once again remind us of the great need to be physically fit. Any athlete who competes in these games can only do so because of the physical condition he or she is in. The athlete has trained and worked out and being able to compete in the Olympics is proof this has been done And so are the medals that may be won.

Let's take our cue from these Olympics and all these temples of physical fitness. They remind us of a very important principle: we need to be spiritually fit. We need to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. There is much at stake. Not only for ourselves and others, but also for our God. May I urge you to begin with your spiritual workout today? If you have not placed your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, then I urge you to do so. If you already have, I urge you to continue to do so. And then in the power of God continue to spiritually work out the rest of your life.

Dick Moes

The LORD Lives Among His People

Bible Story
Based on 2 Samuel 6
1 Chronicles 15, 16

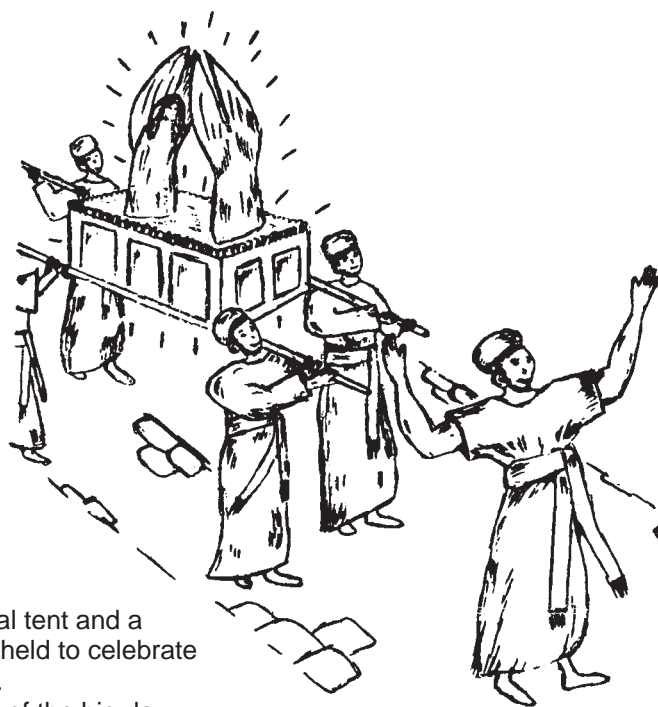
The city of Jerusalem hums with excitement. Mothers scrub the floors, wash the clothes, clean the shelves, polish the pots, all according to the rules. The trumpeters, flutists, hornplayers and harpists are practising their tunes. The sounds of their instruments blend together to a strange but pleasant mixture of tones. Fathers are talking to the many relatives and friends who have come from all over Israel for the upcoming day of celebration. The boys and girls watch when a beautiful tent is pitched on the city square. But then the busy mothers call their children in. Now it is the children's turn to be scrubbed. They know very well that this washing and putting on of clean clothes has to be done for this event. The rules say so.

The fathers and mothers have explained to their children what will happen. The ark of the LORD will be brought to Jerusalem. Right now the ark is in the house of Obed-Edom, who lives in a village not far from Jerusalem. This ark is a beautiful box covered with a layer of real gold. Two golden angels with their wings spread up toward each other stand on the lid. The ark with its lid is the throne of God. For years the ark was in a foreign country, before it came to the house of Obed-Edom. But King David has decided that the ark should come to Jerusalem, the royal city. David knows that the Lord will greatly bless the people who respect and take care of His ark. The ark will

be placed in a special tent and a great festival will be held to celebrate the arrival of the ark.

On the morning of the big day large crowds of people follow King David out of the city and down the road to the house of Obed-Edom. David has been looking forward so much to this moment. A group of Levites, special servants of God, go into the house. Outside David and the people wait in solemn yet joyful expectation. The Levites come out, carrying the ark. Many of the older people are moved to tears when they see the ark. But they cry tears of gladness: the LORD will again, yes always, be their God and live among them!

With great care and respect the Levites carry the ark over the climbing road that leads to Jerusalem. Often they stop, when a sacrifice is offered to God on an altar by the roadside. King David dances with all his might in front of the ark. He has put off his kingly robe and looks just like the other Israelites. Behind the ark are Levites who play their trumpets, harps, flutes, and horns. They fill the air with wonderful music. As the Israelites follow the ark, they can see the beautiful city of Jerusalem ahead of them, high up on the hill. What a great day this is! The Throne of God is coming to Jerusalem. David and the other Israelites are very thankful. They want to show the LORD they will serve Him as He desires it.



The Holy parade enters Jerusalem through the gate. Now the sounds of joy echo through the streets. The ark passes the new palace of King David. Then it arrives at the tent and disappears from sight as the Levites carry it in and put it in its new place.

But this is not the end of the celebration. King David comes forward to bring another sacrifice of thanksgiving to God. Then the king turns to the people and blesses them in the name of the LORD. King David wants all his people to trust the LORD. That is also why he is so happy that the ark of the LORD is in Jerusalem. Now everyone can know that the LORD lives among his people.

Then the time comes to go home. But King David is so happy, he wants to people to go on with the celebration at home. He gives every man and woman a generous gift: cake, meat and raisins. As the Israelites go back to their houses, a group of Levites starts singing a beautiful song of praise to God. The people repeat the words in their hearts:

“The LORD is King.
Give thanks to the LORD for He
is good;
His firm love lasts forever!”

Jane

Activity Page

An Art Project

When you make a *COLLAGE* with strings, sticks, paper, cardboard, plastic, wood, straws, etc., you often end up with such a mixture of shapes and colours that the whole thing looks rather busy and messy.

You can fix that by covering the collage with paint, aluminum foil, or paper.

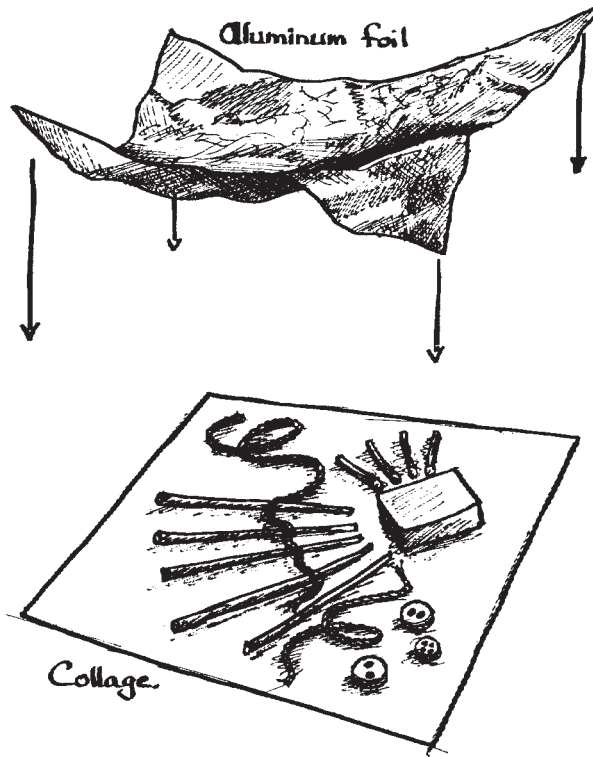
COVERAGE is a technique that will quiet down the busy colour and bring out the design of your collage.

To **paint** over your finished collage it works best to use spray paint or to splatter it all over with a toothbrush and comb. Put a number of layers on in order to cover the whole thing well.

Using **aluminum foil** can have very neat results but won't work well with collages that have lots of big things sticking out.

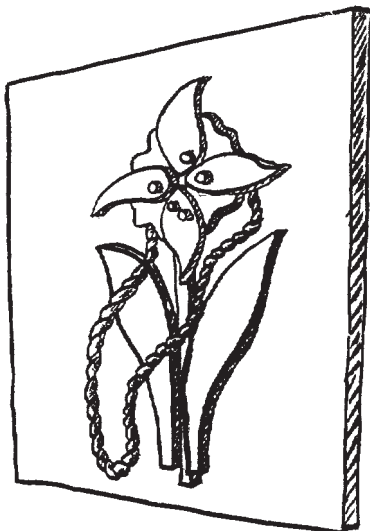
First crinkle the sheet of foil up into a ball, then spread it out again. Apply some white glue to the back (the duller side) and lay it over your collage. Starting from the middle press it down so that the glue will stick.

Coverage with **paper** is maybe the most difficult but it can also have



the nicest result. Mix some wallpaper paste into a pail with lukewarm water. Make sure your paste is nice and soupy and not very thick. Dip sheets of tissue paper or toilet paper into it or let them soak for a bit. Carefully

let the extra water run off and then drape the sheets over the collage piece by piece. When you have applied several layers and let it all dry you can paint it too.



Are you finished?

Look at your art work.

Do you still recognize the shapes and materials that you started out with when you made the collage? Some things have become hidden or look different from what they really are.

Not everything in life is what it appears to be at first glance either. Sometimes you have to pay close attention to find out what is really going on. The Bible can help you with that.

Hugo

Foul Thoughts, Seasoned with Religion

Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, "God has handed him over to me." 1 Samuel 23:7

"In the name of God and of the King!" With such words, people have justified all sorts of enterprises. With these words, explorers have claimed new worlds, and commanders have justified the brutalities of war. These words been used to justify honourable and dishonourable goals.

Many of the things that are in our power to do, are very wicked. If we were to do a wicked thing anyway then it is nice to make it seem like God wants us to do it. Then not only does the evil deed we wish to do seem to be right, but it becomes necessary since it has become God's will! That is what people have often done when they cried, "In the name of God and the King!"

Saul wanted to do something very wicked. He wanted to kill David because he was jealous of him, even though David had already proven again and again to be Saul's most loyal and trustworthy citizen. He just wanted David dead. Twice he had tried to kill David in his own palace by throwing a spear at him. Once he had ordered men to kill David in his own house. Once he had commanded the slaughter of a whole town (men, women, children and animals) because he suspected that they had helped David escape from him.

Saul knew that it was wicked for him to want to kill David, but he had the power to do it, and he would do it anyway. But if he could, he would cover his murderous hatred under a blanket of piety. If people thought that it was God's will for Saul to kill David, then soldiers would obey Saul's orders more enthusiastically; in fact, to oppose Saul's orders, would not just be rebellion against

the King, but apostasy to God! In the name of God and the King, kill David!

That is exactly what Saul did when he learned that the fugitive David had finally settled down for a few days in the village of Keilah. "God has handed him over to me", Saul said, and with those words, he mobilized his troops against the village of Keilah to capture him.

People often use God's name to justify their wicked plans. When Saul did that, David had to flee from the village of Keilah and live in the forests and on the mountains again. It caused even more pain in the life of David's great son Jesus Christ.

The religious leaders in Israel had become very jealous of Jesus, just as Saul had become jealous of David. It did not take long before these leaders were plotting to put Jesus to death. Even a pagan outsider like Pontius Pilate could tell that the Jews only wanted to kill Jesus out of jealousy. But they tried to make it seem that it was their religious duty to kill Jesus.

It is a stunning thing to discover what sins people can commit against God while claiming to do it in the name of God! Do not believe it every time you hear a person say, "I'm doing this because I feel that God wants me to do it." So many people, afraid to question such basic religious motives, have been led into doing the most wicked things on earth.

We need to test the spirit that lies behind people's words. We need to discern. Do not be carried along by religious emotions. We need to know the Bible because there God tells us what his will is; that is the way He equips us so that we may weigh people's words when they say, "God has done this" or "God want me to do that". Without that equipment, people will lead you into doing the most wicked things. But if you arm yourself with the word of God, you will be equipped for every good deed according to the will of God.

Paul Aasman

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