

BIG TRUST IN A BIGGER GOD

BY DAVID EDMONSTON

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Who is your God and how big and trustworthy is He? We all must have big trust in a bigger God. Why? Because that's what leads to perseverance! We live in a fallen world. We all experience pain and suffering. Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33 NASB). Do you trust God regardless of your circumstances?

A God we can fully understand is not the true God.

We must begin with who God is. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9). We can't fully understand God. He is infinite. We are not. The Lord is holy, holy, holy (Isa. 6:1-3, Rev. 4:8)! God is omniscient (all-knowing). How else could He so accurately foretell the events of Jesus' life and death literally hundreds of years in advance (Isa. 53), as well as many other historical events? He knows all our days (Psa. 139). God is omnipotent (all-powerful) and omnipresent (everywhere at all times). God is holy, loving, righteous, and just in all He does. "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Loving kindness and truth go before You" (Psa. 89:14). God cannot violate His own character. This is the God of the Bible. Belief is easy when life is going well.

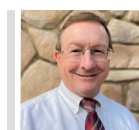
The question is, "Who is *your* God?" Is He holy, loving, and just regardless of your circumstances? If our belief, faith, and trust aren't big enough to overcome bad circumstances, we're on shaky ground! In this world, we have tribulation. We like to understand and control people, things, circumstances, and even God because understanding and control give us a sense of security. A God we can fully understand is not the true God. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares the Lord.

We are tremendously blessed to be born again, but without diminishing His love at all, God's plan is much bigger than any of us as

individuals. Consider Romans 8:28, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose." In the original Greek, this verse is in the plural tense, not singular! It's not all about us as individuals. As with Jesus, sometimes God uses an individual's pain and suffering to do a work in other people's lives. Usually, it benefits both, but not always. In a temporal sense, how did it benefit the prophets to be murdered? Or, the martyrs throughout history? God's thoughts and ways are above ours! We must have big trust in a bigger God!

My desire is to encourage us to trust this infinite God so that we will persevere in the faith! Scripture makes clear that perseverance is of utmost importance: "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him" (Jam. 1:12). Jesus said, "But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved (Matt. 24:13). Most importantly, the Lord is glorified when His saints endure. Jesus endured the cross by focusing on the joy set before Him (Heb. 12:2). Let us walk in unity, love, and service, focused on Jesus and the prize that He victoriously won through His death and resurrection! Remember Paul's words, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be* compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Rom. 8:18). To God be the glory! 🙌

Photo credit: Jenell Shrock



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Beautiful Feet

BY IVAN YODER

Few people typically put the two words “beautiful” and “feet” together. Feet are functional and forgotten unless something doesn’t work. There probably wasn’t a significant difference in perspective in ancient times. Feet were even more prominent for movement in a time with no powered transportation, always worn and dirty. The prophet Isaiah prophesied hope years before there was a need for hope for a return from exile, and used the picture of beautiful feet to remind us that all people long to hear good news:

“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!” (Isa. 52:7 NIV).

Consider for a moment the last time you received good news during a difficult season. How did you respond—with joy, relief, excitement? At the same time, our news feeds are often filled with bad news, and encouraging stories of hope are increasingly difficult to find. Our world continues to need peace, good news, and salvation.

“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost” (Isa. 55:1).

Rosedale Network of Churches continues to focus on our *mature and multiply* vision. One of our prominent values is *urgency*, and a key passage supporting that value is Isaiah 55:1. It reminds us that people are hungry for God, but as the Apostle Paul writes in Romans 10:14-15, how can a person be saved unless they call on Jesus, and how can the call be heard, or hear unless someone preaches, or preach unless someone sends? Then, he references the beautiful feet of a person bringing good news.

The years and centuries have not changed the need for people around us to hear good news. We who carry the Spirit of Jesus within us have a message of hope that our neighbors need to hear. Our world has

a desperate need for the gospel to touch every corner and people with not just beautiful feet, but hearts of compassion to take it there. Carrying the good news to people who do not know Jesus fits well with the *multiply* portion, but people within our network and its churches also need good news. The gospel is not simply good news for salvation but is just as impactful for us who continue to live our new lives in a broken world.

On this journey of life, we continue to need the beautiful feet of fellow believers who bring the good news of the gospel into our lives.

I want to encourage you to consider how beautiful feet can be impactful in our *maturing* vision. Brothers and sisters in the family of God have an indispensable role in speaking life and hope into each other’s lives. When we walk with each other through tough times and seasons, we encourage each other. When we carry each other’s burdens, we can share a message of strength and restoration through the cross. On this journey of life, we continue to need the beautiful feet of fellow believers who bring the good news of the gospel into our lives; in short, we need the gospel daily.

One of the things I look forward to at the annual Multiply Conference is the opportunity to encourage and to be encouraged by brothers and sisters in Christ. I look forward to worshiping and sharing the good news together in central Pennsylvania at Multiply in just a few short weeks. How beautiful on the mountains of Pennsylvania will be the feet of those who proclaim the gospel and declare “our God reigns.” Who is God asking you to bring good news to in the next few weeks? 

Photo credit: pexels.com/vitalygariev



Ivan is moderator of Rosedale Network of Churches and lead pastor at Locust Grove Mennonite Church. He and his wife, Pam (who serves part-time in women’s ministry), are the parents of two adult children.



Learning Tips Beyond the Syllabus

BY SUSAN PETERSON

It is a joy and delight to be a teacher, but also a serious responsibility. I feel this deeply when I labor in prayer and wrestle over how to choose materials, utilize class time, and design assignments in order to create an experience I hope is profound, relevant, enjoyable, and effective. Yet learning is a two-way street, and students play an essential role as well. Certainly, students know that they should read the textbook, complete assignments, and participate in class. But what about things that aren't written in the syllabus? Are there other significant practices that enhance learning? In this short article, I'll mention three.

First, I encourage college students not to wait until the last minute to complete their work. This isn't just about avoiding procrastination or running out of time. Learning requires connecting new ideas with old ones, linking new information into already established neuronal networks in our brains. To do this well, we need time to roll ideas around and ask good questions.

Two especially valuable kinds of learning are comparison and perspective questions. Comparison involves looking for similarities and differences between topics. When psychology students are learning about neurotransmitters, for example, it's worth their time to compare neurotransmitters with hormones, noting similarities and differences in location, mechanism, and function. This leads to greater understanding.

Our instincts about how to review and study information are often wrong.

Perspective questions ask us to consider a topic from different angles. If education students are learning a new teaching method, they can ask if any biblical principles apply, how a school child would react, and how it rates from a budgetary perspective.

Certainly, we try to discuss good questions in class, but time spent alone in leisurely contemplation is invaluable. Not only does it help integrate the new, fragile information into larger, more stable networks, but it also helps students to truly sort out, know, and believe the truths that teachers are hoping to get across. Knowledge gained through internal wrestling is more stable knowledge than information that is merely accepted and regurgitated at a surface level.

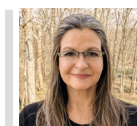
Another tip for college students is about how to "study" effectively. Our instincts about how to review and study information are often wrong. Cognitive scientists have found that the popular study methods of re-reading material and looking over one's notes don't actually lead

to enhanced long-term remembering. Instead, learners should test themselves, asking themselves to recall and recount information, only looking back at notes when memory fails. Research shows that self-quizzing (or friends quizzing each other) is one of the most successful study methods. Students can set themselves up for this by taking their notes or making their textbook annotations in the form of questions and answers. Creating flashcards while reading can be more time-efficient than reading first and making up review questions later. It's also good to space out our self-testing sessions, starting with every couple of days after encountering new material and then gradually increasing the intervals. Self-testing at spaced intervals is one of the best research-backed ways to lock information into long-term memory.

My final tip is one of the most enjoyable yet neglected: get good sleep. It's obvious that we need sleep in order to feel alert and focused, but the sleep we get *after* learning is especially crucial. Neuroscientists now understand that what we learn in the day is only lightly and temporarily recorded until it is encoded into stronger neuronal pathways while we sleep. A bad night of sleep blocks optimal memory consolidation, leaving learning more fragile. The importance of sleep cannot be overstated. I am not, however, under the delusion that college students will always go to bed at a decent hour. And many of us often struggle to get good sleep for reasons beyond our control. One helpful practice, though, is building short rest periods into our day. Nothing can replace sleep, but a 10-minute nap, a few minutes of quiet solitude, a walk outdoors—all these can help mitigate some of the detrimental effects that bad sleep has on cognition. Research shows that the brain replays and compresses recent learning into longer-term memory during brain breaks, even while we are awake. One of my students told me he has the habit of taking a short walk in between studying for his different subjects, and this kind of practice is a good example for all of us, regardless of age or learning style.

Completing work early, testing ourselves, and getting good rest are not merely hallmarks of an honorable or virtuous student; they are fundamental strategies for learning more, understanding more, and remembering more. 

Photo credit: [Boom Photography on Pexels](#)



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Dealing with Discomfort

BY ROSEDALE INTERNATIONAL

As followers of Jesus in a foreign land, Rosedale International (RI)'s workers often find themselves in situations of stretching or discomfort. While difficult, these moments open a space in which to experience the faithfulness of God. Three women on the field recently shared their reflections on discomfort; names and locations have been changed or omitted for security.

Ellen, Worker in the Mediterranean

Our first main task here has been to get over jet lag. Truth be told, our kids have been absolute champs. They slept full nights from the first night here, and with few exceptions have done so since. Eddie and I have muddled through jet lag with lots of grace for each other and lots of local tea. And now, after a couple of weeks, I think our brains have finally figured out where we are!

In addition to conquering jet lag, we set out to explore our town. Eddie and I have very limited language, but we've had fun trying to communicate via motions and Google Translate. It has led to many awkward (and sometimes fun) moments. During our attempt to get SIM cards for our phones, we struggled so much that a helpful local who spoke some English came to our aid. We made a good connection with him, and Eddie hopes to grab tea with him soon.

These next weeks will involve more adjustment to the culture and the town, some orientation work with our team, and beginning language classes.

Opal, Worker in the Mediterranean

Yesterday I was so looking forward to a Sabbath Sunday after months of visitors and travel. I thought I deserved it and that God would want this for me. I briefly had the story flit through my head of Jesus healing on the Sabbath and saying, "The Sabbath is made for people, not people for the Sabbath," but I continued to enjoy a restful and peaceful morning.

The word about Sabbath forgotten, I knew this was the time to be present, to give and learn with my neighbors.

After lunch, my neighbor rang the doorbell. She was inviting me, with other neighbor women, to visit her father, who had just returned home after a hospital stay. Recently, we have learned that it is very important to show care by going to someone's house after a hospital stay—so invasive to our private Western sensibilities!

I felt the sacrifice in my body. The word about Sabbath forgotten, I knew this was the time to be present, to give and learn with my neighbors. Peace seeped into my mind as I realized this was the way for me today. We drove together to a neighborhood tucked up against the mountain and walked together to the house.

We shared a large, lovely tea and both hilarious and sobering conversations. I prayed for these beloved ones who were sharing their real lives with me. At the end of the evening, one neighbor shared the sorrows heaped on her head in the last year and a half. She said, "All there is, is tears." I was able to share that I'm praying for her in Jesus' name. Only later did I remember that Jesus had prepared me for a flexible Sabbath; I had been ready to force the rest I needed, but instead walked with Him into the rest where He was present.

Nila, Worker in South Asia

This month has been so wonderful, filled with visitors, fun surprises, and so much joy. I can't say that the same was true last month. While the beginning was great, the second half of the month was full of disappointment. I thought that I was going to be able to visit with family in another country, watch my brother perform in a holiday parade, and tour the country with my mom and sisters. I was beyond excited!

Unfortunately, because of conflicts in this part of the world, I got stuck in the Dubai airport. I was so close, and yet so far, from the family I desperately wanted to see. It was one of the lowest points that I have ever experienced. Through it all, my heavenly Father held me so close. When I was at my lowest, wondering how to move past my deep disappointment, I was met with so much grace and love from the people in my community. My co-workers, students, and their parents were so kind. It was a reminder to me that, despite our cultural differences, they have welcomed me into their world. I feel so humbled and grateful for this dear place. 🙏

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RI is the mission arm of Rosedale Network of Churches, working to take Jesus to the ends of the earth by fully engaging Rosedale Network churches in maturing and multiplying disciples, especially among the least reached.



From the Archives

BY PHIL WEBER

You may remember the 20-year run of the Conference Crier, the newspaper that for a time was published at conference, featuring articles, ads, and reports from the event itself. With another annual Multiply conference looming, and this one in a location close to Mifflin County and the Belleville RNOC churches, it seemed appropriate to re-publish the Crier from 2000, the last year the annual gathering was based in the Belleville area. 📰