

The English Page with Excerpts

“Tomorrow Never Comes”

Mutsumi Suzuki



“So, just in case tomorrow never comes, and today is all I get, I'd like to say how much I love you” .

There was a reason Mutsumi Suzuki published a translation of Norma

Marek's poem “Tomorrow Never Comes” . In high school, Mutsumi's sister Kaori was seriously injured in a motorcycle accident and suffered from medical complications that continually grew worse as years passed until her death. Increasingly, Mutsumi grew bitter.

“Both my parents and I thought: if only this accident had not happened, she could have lived. I began to hate her friend who had caused the accident.”

After Kaori passed away, her father mentioned to Mutsumi that right up until her death, Kaori had continued to read Mutsumi's old Bible. Upon hearing this, Mutsumi decided to return to the Christian faith and slowly a change began to work in her heart.

“If my sister had not died, I might have been estranged from God forever. My hate toward the victimizer began to dissipate and I felt that just as I have been forgiven, I also should forgive” .

Many years later Mutsumi was a graduate student in San Diego. One day, she received news that her mother had been hit by a drunk driver while walking her dog. Mutsumi immediately rushed back to Japan. Still in shock, when he finally reached home she was reluctant to get out of the car to face another tragedy. However, Mutsumi was comforted in remembering that some time ago her mother had remarked to her:

“I don't really understand stuff about Jesus and the Cross, but when I die, I know I won't be crying out to Buddhist or Shinto gods, but will cry ‘Jesus’ and call on His name” . Furthermore, one month before her death, his mother had sent an email to her.

“When I go to heaven, I can tell Kaori that I had a very happy life” .

Mutsumi eventually finished school and moved back to Japan. Just as she began to settle back into things, a friend sent him Marek's poem. When she read it, she felt like Kaori was speaking directly to her.

“And today may be the last chance you get to hold your loved ones tight.”

“So hold your loved ones close today, whisper in their ear, tell them how much you love them and that you'll always hold them dear.”



A Shinto Priest's Daughter Marries a Christian Minister

Interview: Tadashi and Setsuko Ouchi



“The three of us, our pastor, Setsuko and I went to Setsuko's father to get his blessing and permission to get married. He flatly refused. He didn't want to disgrace his family line. He just couldn't accept the idea of having a pastor related to him and

he said that he would permit the marriage only on condition that I either quit being a pastor or if we moved abroad.”

“Setsuko's father never gave in, but he did try to find a way for his daughter to be able to marry without having to compromise. He finally decided to legally take her off the family register by having her uncle adopt her. That way he felt he wouldn't be dishonoring his ancestors who were priests going back twenty generations.”

“I couldn't meet my father for the first seven years of our marriage until he became sick with cancer...”

“Ultimately it took twenty-five years to close the gap in our relationship with my father...”

Getting the Right Self-Image

by Satoshi Nakamura



“When I look back on my childhood, I see the root of my own inferiority complex. That arose from the fact that I was very short in height.

When I entered junior high school, I was a mere 130 cm tall and the shortest student in the school. This deeply affected my emotional

development. My parents used to introduce me to people with the words, “This is our son who is the shortest in his school”, and it hurt me on the inside although I didn't show it. I even tried exercise and diet to grow taller, but nothing ever worked ...”

“I was only able to overcome my inferiority complex when I met Christ. When I believed that all of my past sins were forgiven through the cross of Christ, my values changed and I was able to accept myself as I was...”

Pastor Naito's Q & A



Q: My husband and I have always argued since we were married, particularly concerning finances. I tend to be more of the saving type while my husband says that “Money is for spending” and doesn't like budgeting. My husband works hard and brings in enough income, but I'm always worried that we won't have enough. We're okay for now, but you never know what will happen with the employment situation at the company. I just want to know how a married couple can be united on handling their finances.

A: "I always try to see finances from three angles-- how to generate income, how to use the money, and how to save for the future."

"If in doubt, talk it over with your husband, but also go ahead and make those decisions that you can on your own and yet be saving for the future...There is nothing wrong with spending all your savings when that time comes and if you really need to. After all, that's why you are saving. There's no virtue in saving for the sake of saving."

Freedom from Homosexuality

Christopher Yuan, Professor of Moody Bible Institute



"The first time I had same sex attractions was when I was nine years old after I came across pornography at a friend's house. At such a young age I was confused and afraid of those feelings. Without any guidance from my parents, those magazines soon became my master. Those magazines gave me a distorted view of sexuality. So pornography fueled my same sex attractions. I had my first same sex encounter at age sixteen. But I kept my feelings hidden through high school, college, and even the Marine Corps. Then I moved away to Kentucky to go to dental school. There I no longer kept it a secret and lived openly as a homosexual in the gay community.

Growing up I never really thought I had any struggles, addiction, or bondage of any type. But as events came up in my life, I was definitely in bondage, and have been in recovery since. But I've realized that everyone is in process of recovery. Some are more obvious than others, and some people don't know yet. But my hope is that my story might encourage your walk in recovery to fight the fight and keep pressing on. Although my struggles have mostly to do with sexuality and with drug addictions, I hope that, as you hear my story, you'll find some similarities in our struggles to give you strength. Most importantly, I hope that you'll see how great the God we have is."

From being gay, drug dealing, getting arrested, incarcerated, and declared HIV positive, to an amazing conversion through his mother's untiring prayer and freedom from his bondage, Christopher Yuan shares a powerful testimony that will give hope to thousands who struggle as he did.

What If We Love Each Other?

by J. Budziszewski

QUESTION:

Dear Professor Theophilus:

I have a question that may sound a little bit hypocritical coming from a follower of Jesus, but I wanted to ask someone I could trust, who didn't know me, and who wouldn't release my name...I have been in Christian school for most of my life, I go to

a wonderful church, and my family all love and serve the Lord. My girlfriend was responsible for getting me to join my current church; she is truly my gift from God.

This brings me to my point. My girlfriend and I have been together for nearly a year now, and we would get married if not for our remaining years in college. She can envision our future together, as can I, all ordained by God and blessed by our pastor. We recently decided to engage in sexual intercourse. We both had questions about our decision to do this and we both decided to seek advice before deciding to have sex again. We are truly in love, and we connected spiritually before we even decided to have sex. After intercourse, we felt an even closer bond than ever before. Without a doubt, we are mentally, spiritually and emotionally married; our marriage is only missing a ring, a preacher and a church ceremony to make it official.

If we make sure that we use protection, is it really that wrong for us to engage in making love? The Lord frowns on promiscuity, but we are not being promiscuous. The Lord values lifelong commitment and the two of us are as committed as a couple can be. I would like your opinion on this matter as we are both praying and seeking an answer.

PROFESSOR THEOPHILUS REPLIES:

I'm glad you and your girlfriend have decided to seek advice before having sexual intercourse again. Because you've been frank with me, and because you've asked me to "lay it on the line" for you, that's exactly what I'll do.

For the full answer that carefully explains this young couple's mistaken presumptions and misunderstanding of what the Bible teaches about sex, go to: http://www.boundless.org/2000/regulars/office_hours/a0000254.html

Focus on Youth (part 3)

Working with Junior High Kids

by Yasuko Omi



We featured articles from Hi-BA, a ministry to high schoolers, KGK, a ministry to college students, and now our third is from CSK, a ministry to junior high kids. Yasuko Omi works with adolescent kids through Chugakusei Seisho Kurabu or CSK, a ministry whose aim is to reach junior high students for Christ and to see them grow in their faith. Here are some points she brings out:

1. Understand that junior high days are the vital preparation time for becoming an adult.
2. There is a tendency to throw all junior high kids in a single category, but in fact there is a very wide range, from the innocent child-like to the seasoned adult-like, and therefore each needs individual attention.
3. Parents need to give junior highers a positive example of marriage.
4. Parents need to cultivate better communication with their teenagers.