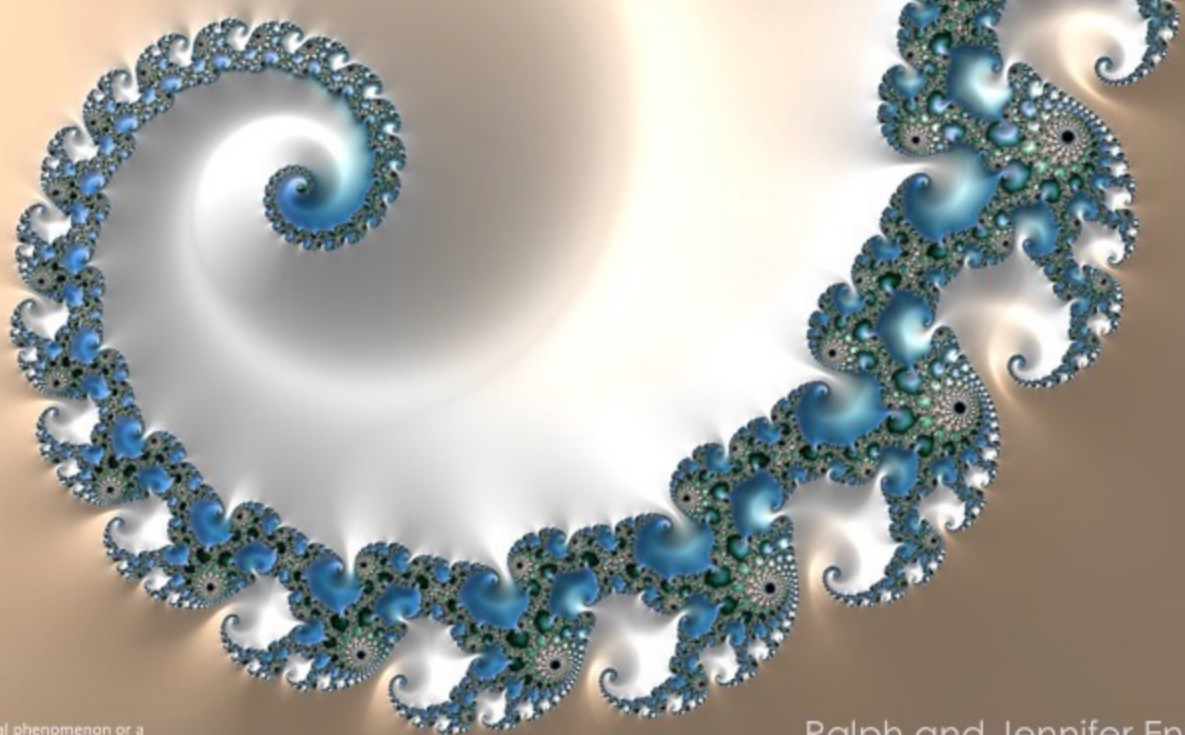


UNFOLDINGS

eLetter



A fractal is a natural phenomenon or a mathematical set that exhibits a repeating pattern that displays at every scale. (see Wikipedia)

Ralph and Jennifer Ennis

Unfoldings

Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



DELAYED HOPE

Put yourself in the above image. What might you be thinking? feeling? hoping?

We all need hope—it fuels our futures when the past or the present seems overbearing. Hope can give us a joy that is indescribable without seeing its fruition.

However, delayed hope can cause us to grapple with disillusionment. The sense that our hope was an illusion or meant of someone else.

Surely Simeon and Anna wrestled with delayed hope as they waited for the coming of Emmanuel. Day after day they went to the temple. Surely they must have know that they hoped for the same coming Savior. Surely the delay impacted how they lived out their latter years of life.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. **Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest**, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. (Hebrews 4:9-11 KJV)

We live in a world with many stresses and few places to rest.

Reflect ...

As life unfolds for you today, how might this passage encourage you to walk with God as your day unfolds? What longings or decisions might this passage impact?

Share ...

Are you a parent, mentor or friend? Consider sharing this passage and image as a way to encourage others to walk with God as life unfolds for them today.

Unfoldings

Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



POOR and RICH

Consider the two images on this page. Which do you most identify with? What emotions surface as you imagine yourself put into the picture story of the one you least identify with?

The economy of God in the Kingdom of God is upside down. The poor are to boast and the rich are considered poor and pitiable!

*Let the lowly brother **boast** in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. (James 1:9,10)*

*For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, **pitiable, poor, blind, and naked**. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. (Revelation 3:17,18)*

Poverty has many hallmarks. In our world it is usually measured in possessions and net worth. Seldom do spiritual and relational richness define being rich. The ability to see oneself as God see us is a richness that flips poverty on its head. **As poor we all see the mercy of our exaltation in Christ.**

Riches are deceptive without a proper understanding of our poverty and shame. As rich people in world history, we can easily forget our neediness; our utter neediness as we pass away as a flower.

This upside down economy doesn't excuse the materially rich from helping the poor or the money-poor from helping the rich. Rather God's economy offers dignity with humility to everyone who is embracing their dependency before God and need for His mercy.

How might God's view of poverty and riches encourage and challenge our hearts today? To whom are we bringing dignity?



Unfoldings

An eLetter from Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



LABOR TO REST

Put yourself in the above image. What emotions surface for you?

A labor to rest is prescribed for the people of God.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. **Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest**, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. (Hebrews 4:9-11 KJV)

We live in a world with many stresses and few places to rest. Even when we seek to rest, images of unrest—of shootings, wars, demonstrations, financial tensions, relational conflicts and future troubles—flood our thoughts.

As the world changes exponentially, where can we find a rest worthy of laboring? How can we labor to enter into rest? And how might belief be linked with labor and rest?

Personally, we find that it takes a concerted work of belief to truly rest—to cast aside all distracting worries and trust in the presence and goodness of God Who is trustworthy and with Whom our souls can rest.

Trust implies openness to receive and we receive His rest as we trust. The Triune God is worthy of our trust and we are in deep need of His rest!

Reflect ...

As life unfolds for you today, how might this passage encourage you to walk with God as your day unfolds? What longings or decisions might this passage impact?

Share ...

Are you a parent, mentor or friend? Consider sharing this passage and image as a way to encourage others to walk with God as life unfolds for them today.

Unfoldings

An eLetter from Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



HEALTHY EYES

Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are healthy, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are unhealthy, your body also is full of darkness. Luke 11:34

When was the last time you considered your eyes as the lamp of your body? That's not common language for most of us in today's world. As we proactively fill our eyes with sights of good light, the darkness of evil is purged from our bodies—and we see healthily.

Put yourself in the above image. What story do you imagine these eyes tell? Do you relate to this story?

Today's media mixes good and evil—light and darkness. This makes it difficult not to see darkness. Personally, I find it difficult for my eyes and body to be “full of light” all the time. However, as we journey forward with God's grace, we find health in our eyes, our bodies and in all of life.

Eyes are precious. As I look into some eyes, I see God's grace looking back at me. Other eyes portray past hurts and lack of hope. Our eyes are an opportunity to authentically reveal where we are in our journey with the Father as we receive His mercy and grace today.

Reflect ...

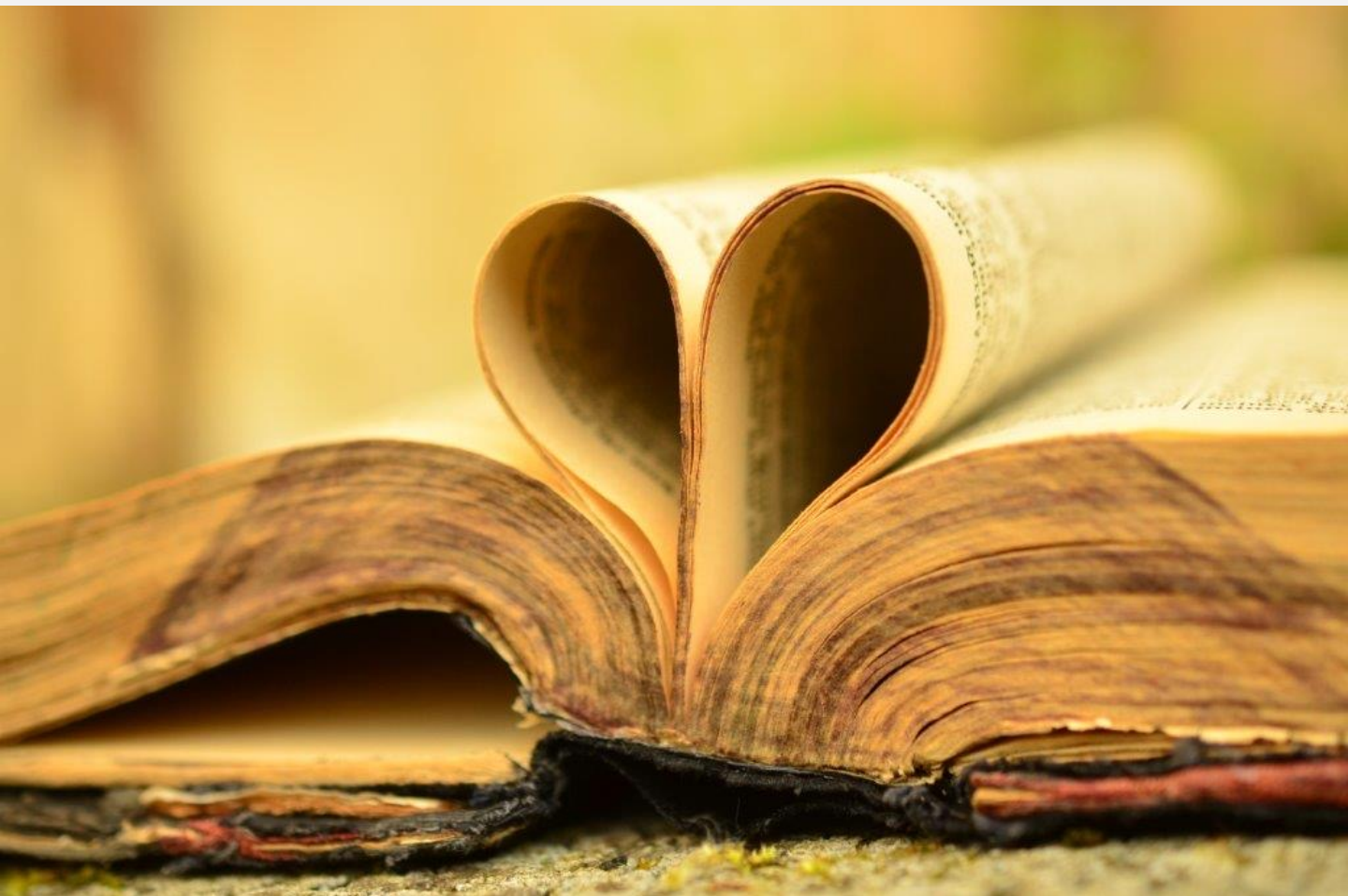
As life unfolds for you today, how might this passage encourage you to walk with God as your day unfolds? What longings or decisions might this passage impact?

Share ...

Are you a parent, mentor or friend? Consider sharing this passage and image as a way to encourage others to walk with God as life unfolds for them today.

Unfoldings

Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



MIND AND HEART

As you view the above Bible and heart symbol, what comes to your mind?

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your **mind**, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
(Romans 12:2 ESV)*

*By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our **heart** before him; for whenever our **heart** condemns us, God is greater than our **heart**, and he knows everything. (1 John 3:19,20 ESV)*

In modern Christianity, we often place a higher importance on the mind over the heart. We may defer to educating our minds as the best way forward in our spiritual lives. More facts, more programs for learning principles, more systematic theology—these choices highlight the importance of the mind. And these are all good.

Sometimes it's helpful to look at ratios in order to balance our perspectives on an issue. When we look at the ratio of Scripture verses regarding the mind versus the heart, we find a 1:6 ratio. For every 1 verse dealing with the mind, there are more than 6 verses dealing with the heart (in the ESV). Thus, we may well consider that spiritual formation must be framed with the heart foremost in mind.

And consider the words of Jesus. How often did He address heart issues in the Sermon on the Mount and throughout His ministry?

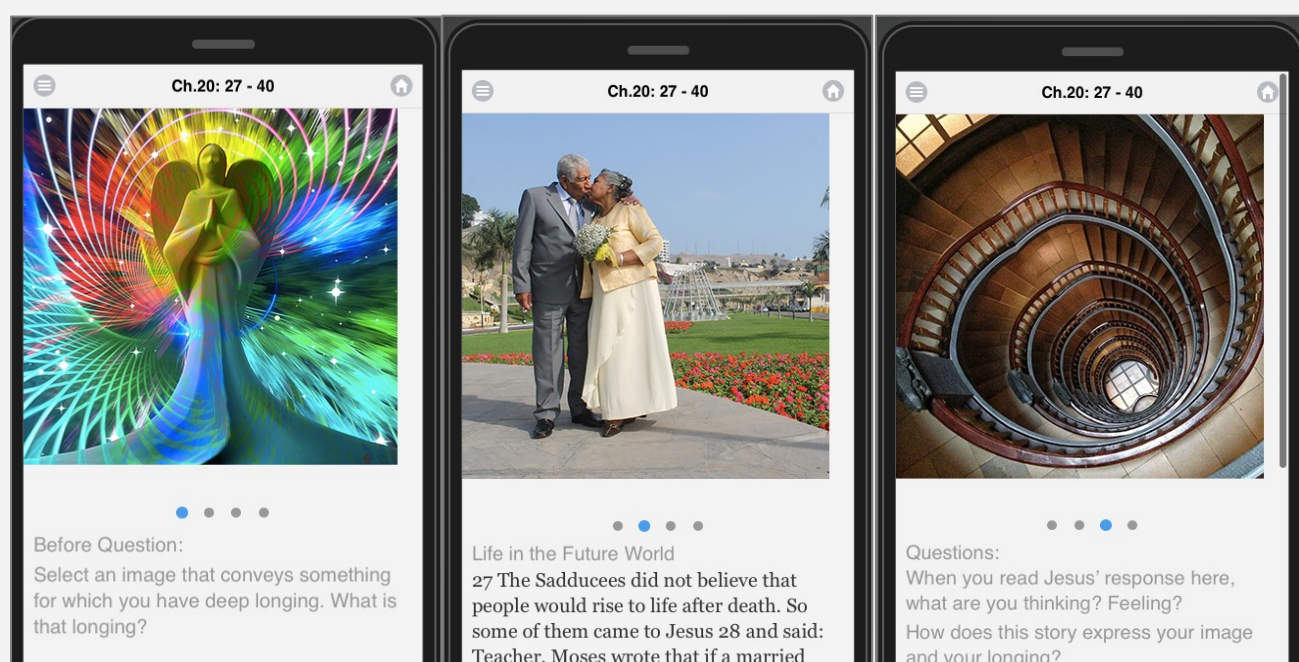
An effective way to tap into hearts is by using images. The act of engaging with an image is usually a heart experience. This visual heart connection allows us to engage with Scripture in a very different manner than employing our analytical minds.

As you consider your spiritual growth and ministry, what ratio of heart and mind do you experience? What would a 1:6 ratio look like in your life and ministry? How are you being invited by God from both a heart and mind perspective?

Consider sharing this passage and image with a close friend or small group. How might you encourage each other's heart and mind?

Unfoldings

An eLetter from Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



Visual Luke

Over the past two years, we have worked in partnership with Vibrant Faith on using images and questions to help connect life and Scripture in the process of spiritual transformation. One of the outcomes of this partnership has been the development of a phone app for Visual Luke.

In short, we ask a "Before Question" that relates to the three or four images we provide for each section of each chapter in Luke. Then we provide the text in the Contemporary English Version. And finally we ask one or two questions at the end of the passage to encourage people to connect life in their context with Scripture.

Here's a "taste and see" of Visual Luke with the three above images.

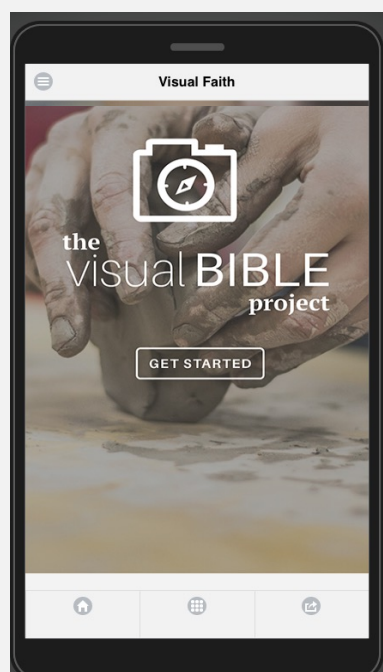
Before Question: Select one of the images above that most draws you. Does this image convey something for which you have a deep longing. What is that longing?

Now read Luke 20:27-40 Life in the Future World

27 The Sadducees did not believe that people would rise to life after death. So some of them came to Jesus **28** and said: Teacher, Moses wrote that if a married man dies and has no children, his brother should marry the widow. Their first son would then be thought of as the son of the dead brother. **29** There were once seven brothers. The first one married, but died without having any children. **30** The second one married his brother's widow, and he also died without having any children. **31** The same thing happened to the third one. Finally, all seven brothers married that woman and died without having any children. **32** At last the woman died. **33** When God raises people from death, whose wife will this woman be? All seven brothers had married her. **34** Jesus answered: The people in this world get married. **35** But in the future world no one who is worthy to rise from death will either marry **36** or die. They will be like the angels and will be God's children, because they have been raised to life. **37** In the story about the burning bush, Moses clearly shows that people will live again. He said, "The Lord is the God worshiped by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." **38** So the Lord isn't the God of the dead, but of the living. This means that everyone is alive as far as God is concerned. **39** Some of the teachers of the Law of Moses said, "Teacher, you have given a good answer!" **40** From then on, no one dared to ask Jesus any questions.

Question after reading:

When you read Jesus' response here, what are you thinking? Feeling?
How does this story express your image and your longing?



You can download this app through the Apple Store by searching for "Visual Faith Bible" (or "Nathan Ennis" – our son who designed the App). This is an iPhone app only. However, you can download it to an iPad by selecting "iPhone only apps". Sorry, no Android version at this time.

We hope you enjoy this way of connecting life and Scripture for spiritual transformation! Please consider sharing Visual Luke with others and using it in personal/family devotions or mentoring others.

Unfoldings

An eLetter from Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



STAND AND ACT

We live in times of uncertainty and violence—much like and very different from generations before us. The scope of destruction to adults, children and unborn babies is unparalleled in a world with 7+ billion people. And the weapons of war that we have today were unthinkable when the prophet Daniel spoke of future times and how we should engage life in seductive, destructive times.

He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall **stand firm and take action.** Daniel 11:32 (ESV)

Standing often implies doing little or nothing. *Action* usually means we're purposefully pursuing specific goals. But to *Stand and Act*—that is foreign to our normal inclinations.

Consider the above image. What surfaces within you as you reflect on this artwork? How might *standing and acting* relate to this image story?

God's redemptive story accounts for the violence spawned by fallen human nature. And long ago He called us through Daniel to stand firm and take action. As our hearts stand firm trusting God alone, we can take action that is not motivated by human fear, revenge, shame, hate—even in the face of wars, personal tragedy and financial turmoil. Our actions come from the peace spawned by the many forms of love we have received from God.

As life unfolds for you today, how might the above passage encourage you to walk with God? What longings or decisions might this passage impact?

Consider sharing this passage and image with a close friend. How might you together engage in God's story today by standing firm and taking action regardless of personal, national and global circumstances today?

Unfoldings

Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



SIMPLY REJOICE

Put yourself in the above image. What emotions surface as you view this image? What brings a smile to your face today?

It's both easy and difficult to be simple. We live in a complex world with information overload. We know the impact of the fall of humanity both far and near. Our hearts break over the war in Syria and elsewhere as well as the sufferings of a child or friend. We fret over global economics as well as personal finances. We can fear the coming national and global changes we imagine with political victories and defeats.

We simply cannot control the weight of the information we have—or the imagined future we perceive from that information. So choosing to be simple by simply denying our realities may seem like a viable alternative, but it isn't.

The LORD preserves the simple; (Psalm 116:6 ESV)

*I will walk before the LORD
in the land of the living. (Psalm 116:9)*

*This is the day that the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24)*

God's people always have a choice—walk before God and simply rejoice in life as it is today or become disillusioned with God, deny His goodness and turn away from His grand story of redemption.

As we journey into 2017, we personally find that we need to practice the soul discipline of simply rejoicing. Mess is happening everywhere; but this is still the day God has made—let us with other followers of Jesus simply rejoice.

As life unfolds for you today, how might the above passages and image encourage you? How are you being invited by God to simply rejoice as your day unfolds?

Consider sharing this passage and image with a close friend or co-worker. How might you encourage each other to simply rejoice?

Unfoldings

Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



BETTER CITIZENSHIP

We live in a two-kingdom reality—the Kingdom of God and the dominion of Satan even as we struggle daily to live within human society. The political landscape of our November elections resides within this broader reality of kingdoms. This is nothing new—it is the story of our God.

*These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and **exiles on the earth**. (Hebrews 11:13 ESV)*

*But as it is, they desire a **better country**, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. (Hebrews 11:16 ESV)*

We are called to seek an elusive good within our nation, to be change agents for bringing peace, hope and love to light in a fallen world that desperately needs Jesus. However, our eyes desire a better country—a heavenly city prepared by God. This better country reveals our true citizenship.

Most likely as citizens of the USA and citizens of the global society, we are heading deeper into a period of increased divisiveness—it's doubtful that whoever wins the election will be able to heal our country or bring peace to our world. But as citizens of the Kingdom of God, we have true hope that transcends the nations of fallen humanity which are impacted by the dominion of Satan.

As the election comes and goes, may we be able to see and deeply desire that better heavenly country—a city prepared by God.

Lord, You are the King of kings and presidents and would-be presidents. We pray for their good and that they would truly honor you in their hearts and decisions which impact their citizens. Bind the dominion of Satan in these elections. And Lord give us your grace to desire what You have prepared for us in a better country. Allow us the wisdom and power to be better citizens in the city of our God and within our earthly nation. In Jesus Name. Amen.

As life unfolds for us all this month, how might the above passages encourage you? How are you being invited by God into better citizenship within His kingdom while living as an exile in our nation and on earth?

Unfoldings

Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



REVIVE

*For this is what the high and exalted One says— he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to **revive** the spirit of the lowly and to **revive** the heart of the contrite. Isaiah 57:15 (NIV)*

Do you feel a need to be revived—regain life, be given new strength? Put yourself in the above image. What emotions surface as you view this image, this blurred reality?

Do you ever feel like revival has been cancelled? Instead of being given new strength that refreshes our souls, we often experience the increasing weight of rebellion toward God in our society and in our own souls. What would be the consequences of the holy God ceasing His work to revive us in our national and global context?

Daniel and his friend give us encouragement! They surly felt the heaviness of human rebellion as they were being carted into exile among the Babylonians. The loss of land, family, friends, and wealth with a promise of national revival in 70 years—these realities would overwhelm most of us. But Daniel lived on a different level within the story of God. He and his friends were able to live above the chaos, being revived by the Spirit of God for the work He intended for them in exile.

As our country seeks to find its way during these days of rebellion toward the triune God, the story of God remains. He is at work. He is not surprised by rebellious hearts—His redemptive work has not been cancelled. For many followers of Jesus, especially those under 35, they may feel as exiles within our country. They live as a shrinking minority that must pray, stand firm and act even as Daniel did.

As life unfolds for you today, how might the above passage and image encourage you? How are you being revived by God within our national and global context? What does it mean to you to live today within the story of God?

Consider sharing this passage and image with a peer or a younger person. How does he/she perceive the high and exalted One’s reviving touch in their context? How can you both pray, stand firm and act together?

Unfoldings

Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



LEANINGS

Put yourself in the above image. What emotions surface as you view this image? Which way are you leaning? What are you trying to see around?

At times we all lean on something or someone. Sometimes we lean in order to test the waters to see if we'll be accepted. Sometimes we lean to just get a peak at what's around the corner. Our longings often impact our leanings—longings that run deep within us. We lean into our longings.

*Then the Rabshekah stood up and called out loudly in Hebrew, the common language, "Listen to the message of the great king, the king of Assyria! Don't listen to Hezekiah's lies. He can't save you. And don't pay any attention to Hezekiah's pious sermons telling you to **lean on God**, telling you 'God will save us, depend on it. God won't let this city fall to the king of Assyria.' Isaiah 36:13-15 (The Message)*

The people of Israel had a choice—lean on the Almighty God or the great king of Assyria. We have other choices for leaning—jobs, money, social status, politicians, etc.

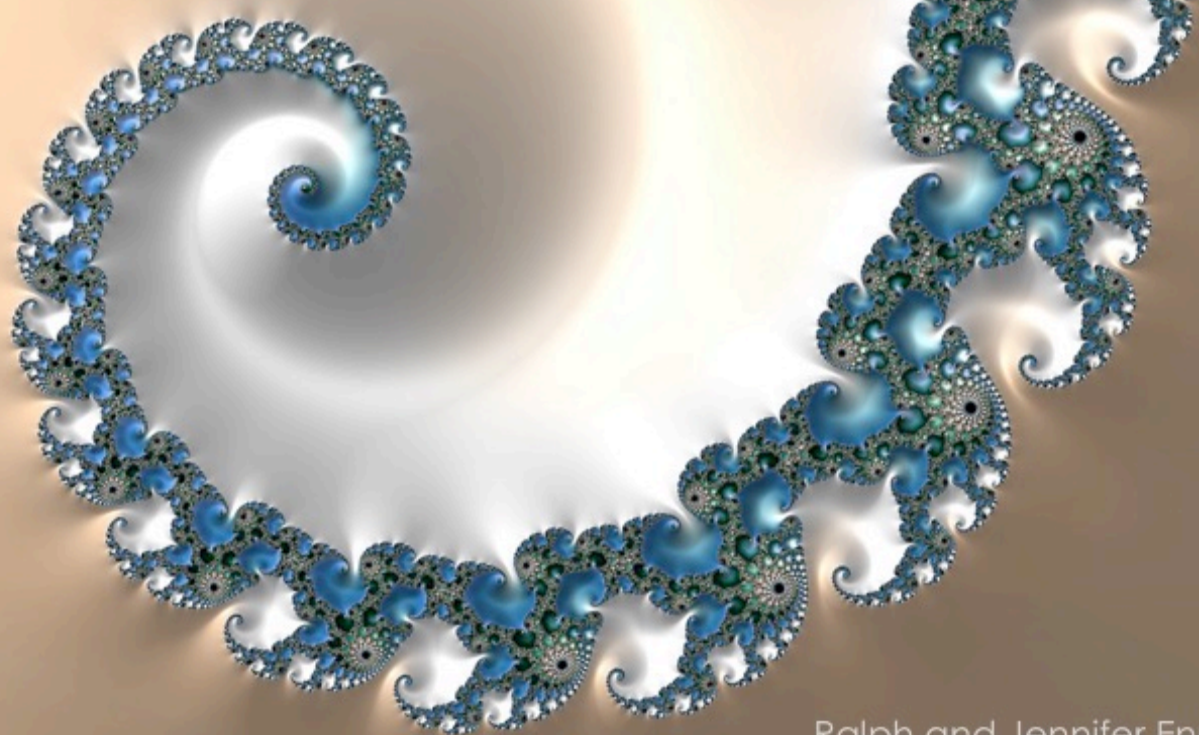
In our journey, we find that we need to lean. With age, our sense of being in control is slowly diminishing. To lean on God is to see the hope of the future—to enjoy the confidence that we are not and never have been in control. Leaning is a good spiritual habit. We can become aware of our true longings through our leanings and learn to depend upon God as we lean.

As life unfolds for you today, how might the above passage and image encourage you? How are you being invited by God to lean on Him as your day unfolds?

Consider sharing this passage and image with a friend or family member. How might you encourage each other to lean on God?

UNFOLDINGS

eLetter



Ralph and Jennifer Ennis

LINKING LIFE AND SCRIPTURE

Over the past 18 months, I (Ralph) have partnered with Vibrant Faith to develop image based processes to better link life and Scripture for those who are inundated with images from early childhood and learned much of how to live life from images rather than from words.

June 6th Vibrant Faith's on-line image data base launched. There are over 2500 images that have been tagged for subject themes and theological themes and another 2500 images that will become available as they are tagged with keywords. Here's the link:

<https://vibrantfaith.org/visualfaith>

We also examine the ideas behind this project at:

<https://vibrantfaith.org/project/visualfaith>

We have found that using images to help people, esp. younger people, link their lives with Scriptures is a powerful connection along their spiritual transformation journeys. We invite you to review these sites and consider using images as a means of linking life and Scripture for yourself and others.

Coming in a few months is the Visual Luke App—a mobile phone and tablet app of the Gospel of Luke with 3 to 5 images for each section of a chapter and reflective questions to encourage spiritual growth.

By the way, the above image is a computer generated fractal—a mathematical expression that unfolds into this beautiful spiral. We choose this symbol for Unfoldings to remind us of the elegance that God has embedded within nature and the language of mathematics.

After a summer break, Unfoldings will continue in September.

Unfoldings

An eLetter from Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



SACRED NIGHTS

Sometimes we walk in dark nights. When we perceive no light, our fear of the unknown may increase. God may seem to have abandoned or forsaken us. Sometimes these dark nights linger for weeks, months or even years.

Then he (Jesus) said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” Matthew 26:38

Jesus went through a very dark night with his Father and his disciples in a garden. His soul was overwhelmed and He prayed. His friends were also overwhelmed and they slept. This was a sacred night—a time in which the Triune God revealed His purposes and loving heart.

Put yourself in the above image. During sleepless nights, have you experienced times in which your soul was overwhelmed? Are you in one of those times now? How have you noticed or not noticed that God is with you?

We find that sacred nights have shaped our experience with God as much as pleasant times. In darkness, our souls perceive our true desires—and long for light. We become acquainted with our powerless to generate light. We learn to seek God; to be content with trusting Him because He is Almighty God—not because He fulfills our agenda. Our trust in God can be nurtured during sacred nights.

As life unfolds for you today, how might the above passages encourage you? Is there any overwhelming sadness that you are being invited to bring before God today? Any sense of joy that has been or is slowly being formed in you?

Consider sharing this passage and image with a friend. How might you both encourage each in whatever place you are with God? What might He be inviting you to together?

Unfoldings

An eLetter from Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



SINCERE HEARTS

Our hearts are extremely important in our spiritual journeys across all issues of life. The condition of our hearts will foretell our behaviors. Sooner or later whatever is brewing in our hearts may bubble out onto the lives of others.

... let us draw near to God with a sincere heart ... Hebrews 10:22 (NIV)

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Proverbs 4:23 (KJV)

A sincere heart requires courage to look within and see our insincerity—our motives that are less than love. A sincere heart is full of love received from the Father. An insincere heart is full of the pride, greed, lust, insecurity, manipulations that dominate our lives and the world around us—even the political landscape of our day.

Consider the above image. What would it look like to have a sincere heart today? Feel like?

As we seek God for the courage to address our hearts, we often avoid receiving His loving, pruning touch. We want our hearts to be free of the burdens that insincerity harbors without the necessary hard look within. Might we fear condemnation and thus fail to receive His loving mercy?

As life unfolds for you today, how might the above passages encourage you to sincerely walk with God? What issues of life and interpersonal relationships are being impacted by the sincerity of your heart today?

Consider sharing this passage and image with someone you love and care for. How might you both encourage the other to examine your hearts with love and truth?

Unfoldings

An eLetter from Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



UNTAMED NURTURE

Tigers are seldom seen as tame, except when they are nurturing their young. Then the care and gentleness required to develop their young is apparent to all.

All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. James 3:7-10

As we seek to tame our tongues around family, friends and those we disagree with (even politicians and bosses), consider the power of words to impact the heart. What kind words of praise do you remember from years ago spoken by a parent, teacher, coach or friend? What words "full of deadly poison" do you recall? Which words speak loudest?

Put yourself in the above image. Does "ordinary" nature invite you toward the sacred works of God in your life? How might God want to tame you while still leaving you in the wild?

Personally, we find that God is "untamable" by our efforts—He is wild! And yet He nurtures our souls across the myriad of poison words that rattle in our heads. We just need to continually choose who to listen to and engage with. And we find that only through the nurturing power of the Holy Spirit can our own tongues be tamed.

As life unfolds for you today, how might the above passage encourage you to walk with God? Is God calling you to be tame or wild or both? How toxic have your words been this week? Take time in silence with God to ask Him about His agenda for you today and the taming of tongues.

Consider sharing this passage and image with someone you love and care for. How might you invite him or her to experience the untamed nurture of God?

Unfoldings

An eLetter from Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



OVERWHELMING STRESS

We all have stresses—regardless of age! Ultimately we seek a transcendent peace even if the stresses don't subside.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4: 7

To self-generate peace is a difficult task. Sometimes we can calm ourselves down under stress-filled situations through self-talk, deep breathing, vacations, long walks, etc. However, what our souls long for is transcendent peace—peace that can only originate from the One Who is beyond us.

Consider the above image. How might God overwhelm the stresses of your life with His transcendent peace? What would that look like? Feel like?

As we seek to look to God for peace, we often find that our agenda gets in the way of receiving His peace. We want our stresses to be worked out in a way that serves our agenda for our lives—not His agenda of love, humility, mercy and truth. When we resolve this agenda conflict, the transcendent peace of God often is readily available.

As life unfolds for you today, how might the above passage encourage you to walk with God? What longings or decisions might this passage impact? Take time in silence with God to ask Him about His agenda for you today.

Consider sharing this passage and image with a child or friend. How might you invite him or her to experience the transcendent peace of God?

Unfoldings

An eLetter from Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



CIRCLING AND SURROUNDING

Sometimes it's fun and exhilarating to go around and around in circles. At other time, not so much. A circle is forever—begin anywhere on it and keep going forever—until you step off. A circle also surrounds that which is inside it.

Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's **unfailing love surrounds** the one who trusts in him. Psalm 32:10 (NIV)

Circles are important symbols. They remind us that some things in life don't end, they surround us. As we circle our hearts, minds and souls around the One Who is surrounding us, we begin to live into a profound mystery—Christ in us and we in Christ.

Put yourself in the above image. When did you last feel like you were going in endless circles? Was that journey desirable, boring or tiresome? What feelings surface within you as you also consider your new year and today's agenda?

As we live into the circles of life, certain rhythms begin to form. We find that including prayerful silence with the triune God brings much meaning to our circles in a way that encourages us to perceive His surrounding love.

As life unfolds for you today, how might the above passage encourage you to walk with God as your day unfolds?

Consider sharing this passage and image with others. How might you encourage others to circle their hearts, minds and souls around the One Who is surrounding us in His loving kindness and mercy?

Happy New Year!

Unfoldings

An eLetter from Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



ARRIVALS

Arrivals can change the status quo. Announced arrivals imply intention and purpose. Unannounced arrivals are surprises that can bring joy or consternation.

During this time some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem and said, "Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." Matthew 2:1-2

Jesus' arrival impacted different people differently. After nine months of pondering the intention of God, Mary knew the birth of Jesus was imminent. The wise men also expected the king baby's arrival. However, Herod was completely surprised and angered. And another question surfaces, did Jesus expect his own arrival?

Put yourself in the above image. What might it feel to be that small again? Or to have one's feet held tenderly? What might Jesus have experienced as The Infinite arrived within The Finite?

I find that looking forward to Christmas, to the arrival of another celebration of Jesus' birth, can bring joy of His Presence and consternation for our culture which drains meanings from the glorious.

As life unfolds for you today, how might the above passage encourage you to walk with God as your day unfolds? What perspectives or attitudes might this passage impact your day?

Are you a parent, mentor, friend or grandparent? Consider sharing this passage and image as a way to encourage others to walk with God as life unfolds for them today.

M E R R Y C H R I S T M A S !

Unfoldings

An eLetter from Ralph and Jennifer Ennis



FIRST TIME SEEING

Seeing for the first time often excites amazement and awe and contemplation. What a glory to find something new! How can these things be?

**The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
Lamentations 3:22,23**

God's mercies are new each morning. Are we seeing them for the first time each day? Without seeing anew, we humans tend to become bored—bored with the mercy of God. Even to say such a thing seems highly incongruous. A heart of mystery is required to keep seeing for the first time.

Put yourself in the above image. What does it feel like to see for the first time and contemplate the meanings of these new things?

I find that seeing new every morning requires a discipline of the heart to expect newness in experiencing God. He is the same day to day, yet my experience of Him can be new each morning and all day long—if my heart stays open to Him.

As life unfolds for you today, how might the above passage encourage you to walk with God as your day unfolds? What longings or decisions might this passage impact?

Are you a parent, mentor or friend? Consider sharing this passage and image as a way to encourage others to walk with God as life unfolds for them today.

Unfoldings

An eLetter from
Ralph and Jennifer Ennis

Welcome!

Instead of controlling our lives through our plans and efforts, **life often unfolds before us with God's agenda evident as we take time in silence to perceive his presence and work.**

This eLetter is designed to explore some of the unfoldings of our lives with Scripture, images and questions. We will always try to keep the attached PDF to **under 300 words**. These short reflections will hopefully be an encouragement throughout your unfolding day.

We encourage you to share these passages, images and questions with your friends, children, grandkids, and others as appropriate. If you would like, please forward this email to others. Anyone can sign-up, be removed from this eLetter or download previous eLetters by click on the Unfoldings tab at:

www.ralphennis.com

Enjoy your unfolding day!

Ralph and Jennifer Ennis

Under
Development

Unfoldings

Ralph and Jennifer Ennis

THANKFUL HEARTS

The art of thankfulness is wrapped a discipline to see the mercy of God. Much of life can seem thankless – filled with pain and suffering. Mercy changes everything!

As we view the sufferings of Jesus to bring us the mercy of God, we may not understand everything in life, but our hearts to be thankful.

How might God's view of poverty and riches encourage and challenge your heart today? How might giving thanks in all things apply to riches and poverty?

Granted Boldness

Heb: come boldly before the throne of grace.

Not assumed boldness or entitled boldness

The boldness of a King's child to enter the presence of the king unbidden because we have been granted boldness