



BREAK TIME AT LIFE ESSENTIALS CENTRE

In late 2023 while in Uganda, I had a phone conversation with a good personal (and ministry) friend Waltraud (Wally) whose life was near its end. We had known each other for over 40 years when she began to support our original radio station the Voice of Hope in South Lebanon, a space now occupied by terrorist group Hezbollah.

Now at 98 years, Wally's mind was as sharp and clear as ever, but her body simply could not go on. Over many conversations, she would openly long for the moment when she could leave and be with the Lord. Of course, I told her I could not agree with that prayer...after all, our work was not done! In spite of my teasing, that day came in late November.

But two days earlier, I enjoyed one last conversation with my good friend Wally. Her last words to me were the same as they had been in every previous conversation; she wanted to hear how her support for the orange trees in Ongutoi, and the coffee trees in Kkumbya and the girls support in Nakyessa...how they were progressing. Wally's practical view on life drove her charitable efforts and she wanted to be sure people would be somehow helped to find and follow Jesus, through whatever project we were involved with.

I was amazed how Wally stood at the edge of eternity, ready to go...but before she did, she wanted to be sure those she cared for would be OK! I loved her for that. What focus!

2024

And now looking into coming months, I still find my thoughts are influenced by Wally; *if I had only ounces of energy left, what would I focus on . . . where would my remaining energy be committed?* That is not a morbid thought-it's a Wally-thought; a pragmatic perspective that sharpens focus...exactly what we need at the close of a noisy, confusing year, and at the moment when we can look ahead with clear view.

ESSENTIALS

During our November visit to Uganda, we provided Life Essentials Study Bible equipping and training for three groups; one class of pastors from three regions in Uganda, including some from the poorest villages of the nation; one class for female Christian leaders and the last class that included two from Zambia where we are just now praying about for expansion.

TRANSFORMATION

We have participated in many classes to this point but we have discovered one commonality, regardless the community, the culture or the nation. Pastors always arrive politely and tired but apprehensive...understandably.

But after the first day, we see the faces change dramatically as preconceptions fade, a reality when one focuses on the Word and nothing else. Getting God's perspective really does change everything. And by the second day, one cannot tell where cultural, denominational or personal lines are. Instead, there is deep joy, the unmistakable mark of a believer whose focus is clear.

The WORD of GOD does that.

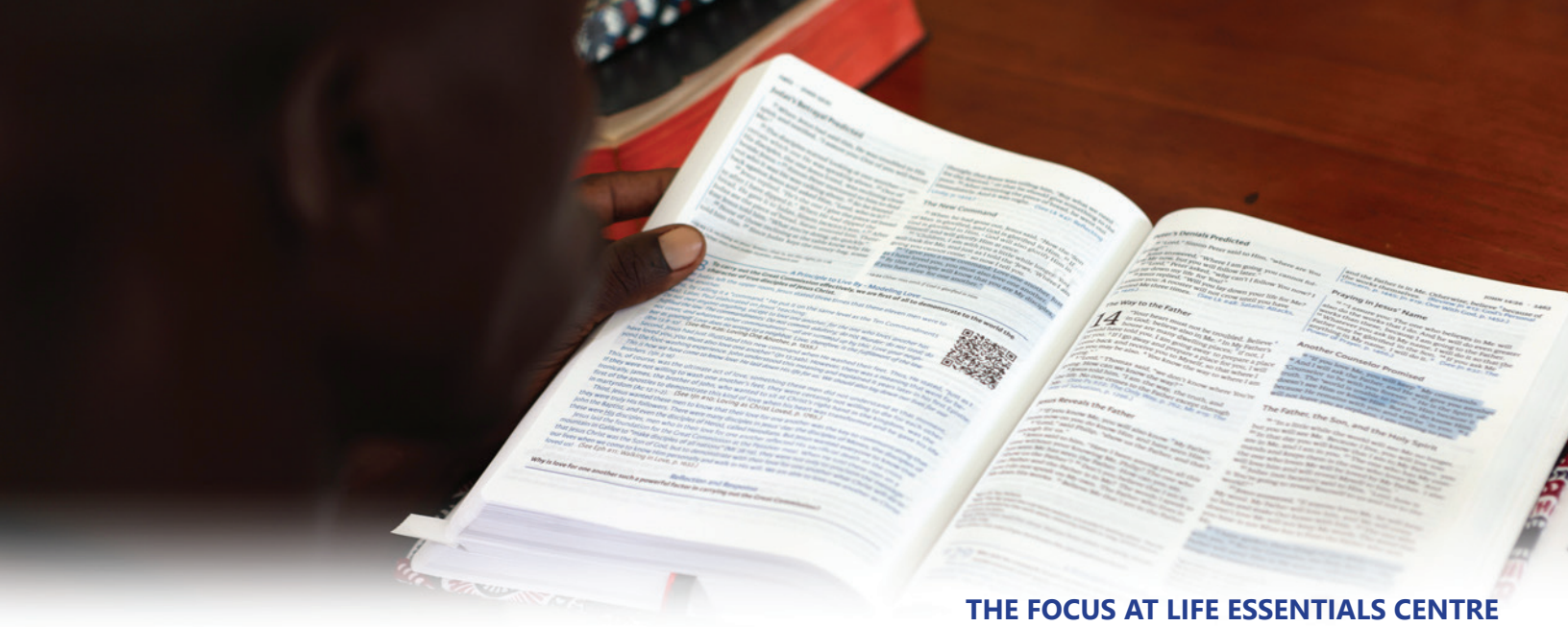


ENJOYING GREAT MEALS AT LIFE ESSENTIALS CENTRE

Life Essentials for Pastors



The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,
entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
2 Timothy 2:2



THE FOCUS AT LIFE ESSENTIALS CENTRE

The worship our team provides is excellent and inspiring; the prepared food is second to none in that country; the accommodations are best quality available and the facilities are all created and designed to respect the reason we are there while providing an atmosphere conducive to serious learning. A desire for photos in front of the fountain or the beautiful flowers testify to that appreciation. Every support facility combines to provide the best possible experience for our Christian leaders who come to learn. But they do not produce joy!

Only the Word of God can do that.

As we look into 2024, our focus is clear. The high priority will be providing **Life Essentials Study Bible equipping** for another 300 pastors (25 classes). We will also focus on continued **humanitarian projects** where preaching Jesus and bible distribution are included. We will continue to grow the many **coffee trees** which one day will be the “new donors” for Life Essentials Uganda, as we begin to focus on other nations (South Sudan and Zambia) as well as the **orange trees** for Ongutoi health care. We will continue to nurture the **Nakyessa Girls empowerment** at our centre there. We will continue to support **radio** wherever we are allowed and this year we wish to step deeper into **prison ministry** where men and women might be given Bibles and supports as they also hear about the Jesus who loves them unconditionally.

But everything we do will be Bible-centered. To that end, I would invite you to pray about supporting our focus in and for 2024. I will be sure to keep everyone informed and hopefully encouraged.

2024 may be a year of distraction for much of the world, but as for us, we have much to do with the resources we have:

Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways. Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.
Proverbs 4:25-27 NIV

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January 2024

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