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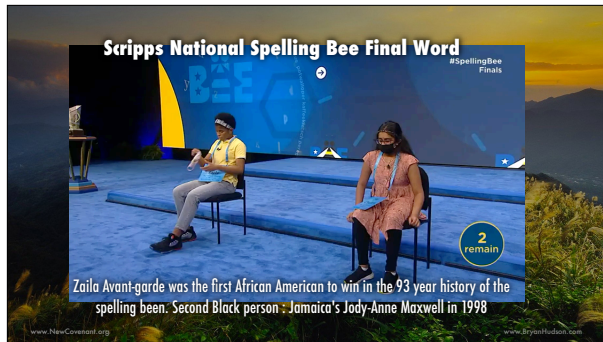
She credited her work with coach Cole Shafer-Ray, 20, a Yale student and the 2015 Scripps runner-up, as well as former third-place finisher Snehaa Ganesh Kumar and Kumar's mother, Vijaya.

Unlike many serious spellers who begin competing as early as kindergarten, Zaila discovered her talent for spelling when she was 10 after her father, who watched the national spelling bee competition, quizzed her on the winning words of years past. She spelled nearly all of them correctly.

Shafer-Ray said that Zaila has a natural talent for spelling, saying that spellers at her level are usually "well-connected in the spelling community" and have been spelling for many years.

"She really just had a much different approach than any speller I've ever seen. She basically knew the definition of every word that we did, like pretty much verbatim," he said. "She knew, not just the word but the story behind the word, why every letter had to be that letter and couldn't be anything else."

Zaila is the first African American winner in the 93-year history of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Joe Skipper / Reuters



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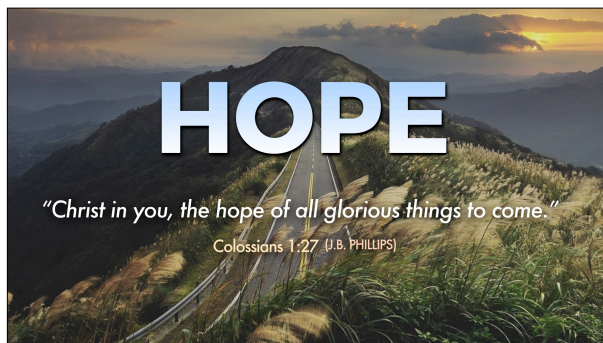
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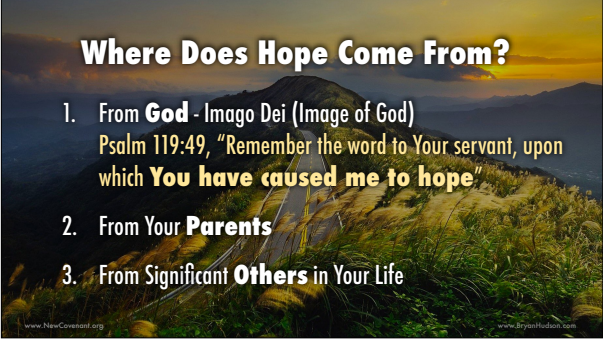


What is Hope?

1. A picture of something good that can happen (747 Jet example)
2. Confident expectation
3. Anticipation of good
4. Belief that something is obtainable

Feb. 9, 1969,
Joe Sutter led the engineering team that developed the 747. He died in 2016 at the age of 95.

In April 1966, a gentleman's agreement between two visionaries – backed by a pair of huge US corporations – created a transportation icon that would have far-reaching implications for the airline industry and travelling public alike.



Where Does Hope Come From?

1. From **God** - Imago Dei (Image of God)
Psalm 119:49, "Remember the word to Your servant, upon which **You have caused me to hope**"
2. From Your **Parents**
3. From Significant **Others** in Your Life



What is Your Hope?



For most of the 18 rounds of the Scripps National Spelling Bee, Zaila Avant-garde went through each word with ease before winning the title and making history on Thursday night.

The 14-year-old from Harvey received the Scripps Cup at the tournament in Florida after correctly spelling "murraya," a genus of tropical Asiatic or Australian trees. Her spelling bee training is intense

As one can imagine, a lot of hard work went into preparing for the national stage. In Zaila's case, a lot means several hours a day. "For spelling, I usually try to do about 13,000 words (per day), and that usually takes about seven hours or so," she said.

Zaila insists that practice routine isn't going overboard -- she has at least 17 more hours to fit in school, basketball and sleep, after all. The two proficient spellers actually knew each other before the bee. They share a tutor, Cole Shafer-Ray, a 20-year-old Yale student who was the 2015 Scripps runner-up, and even practiced together virtually for the tournament.

As for spelling, ZAG (as a friend noted, Gonzaga should offer her a scholarship immediately just for the branding) is incredibly unique among her peers in that she only started two years ago. The story of how she got there is equally as nuts as everything else we know about her:

Zaila, who just finished eighth grade in her hometown, Harvey, La., showed a prowess for spelling at 10, when her father, who had been watching finals of the Scripps National Spelling Bee on ESPN, asked her how to spell the winning word: marocain.

Zaila spelled it perfectly. Then he asked her to spell the winning words going back to 1999. She spelled nearly all of them correctly and was able to tell him the books where she had seen them.

"He was a bit surprised by that," Zaila said in an interview before the finals.

But she did not start spelling competitively until two years ago, when she asked her parents if she could compete in the regional spelling bee.

And then there's stuff like this:

In 2018, she appeared in a Steph Curry commercial that showcased her skills. She also learned how to speed read and figured out that she could divide five-digit numbers by two-digit numbers in her head, a skill she said she had a hard time explaining.

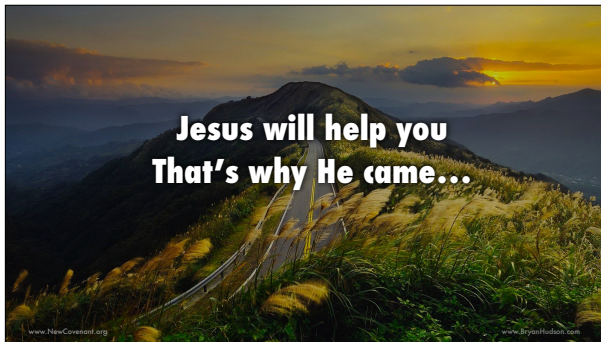
"It's like asking a millipede how they walk with all those legs," said Zaila, who has three younger brothers.

RELATED: Jayson Tatum, who went to Duke, can't spell Duke's Mike Krzyzewski's name

I want to leave you with a quote from her coach that appeared in the ESPN story and I think sums up this wunderkind better than anything else could. It's about his first meeting with her, and his shock at her skill:

"Usually to be as good as Zaila, you have to be well-connected in the spelling community. You have to have been doing it for many years," Shafer-Ray said. "It was like a mystery, like, 'Is this person even real?'"

This story is almost too good to be true, and while I don't know very much in this world, I'm very confident saying this: We have not heard the last of Zaila Avant-Garde.



Having a lot of stuff is not necessarily a sign of God's blessing. Gangsters, liars, cheaters, and people who profited off abusing other have a lot of stuff. People taking over whole countries doing that. You can even go into debt and get a lot of stuff.



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