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# FrontLine

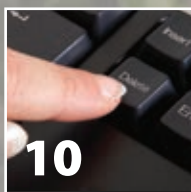
BRINGING THE TRUTH HOME



## The Law of Kindness

# The Law of Kindness

*She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.*  
Proverbs 31:26



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We would like to thank Malinda Duvall and Joy Collins for coordinating this issue of *FrontLine* magazine.

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As the editor of *FrontLine*, my dad enjoys a ministry of encouraging Fundamental Baptists to express themselves in print and to provide edifying articles from their personal perspectives for others. My parents taught me that every Christian has a "life message," over which he or she owes stewardship to God. I have heard my dad quote an old preacher who said that "preaching is truth poured through personality." In other words, our experiences and God-given personalities shape our thinking and understanding and the way we share unchanging truth with others.

The readers of *FrontLine* may be familiar with my own life story, and, Lord willing, you will soon have the opportunity to learn what the Lord continues to do in the life of the woman who was the "little girl who was burned." *More Precious than Gold* was mostly my parents' story. Now, after many years and with the Lord's help (and with Dad's editing skills!), I am excited about working on a long project to tell my own story.

Before she passed away, my mother repeatedly taught me that God had given me a message and the ability to share it with others. My father continues to tutor me in the kind of writing I will need to do in order to tell my story. In the same way, godly fathers, husbands, pastors, and missionaries have encouraged the women whose articles appear in this issue of *FrontLine*. Just as each of us has a distinct life message, every woman has a perspective that is important to those who need her ministry, not just her immediate family and friends, but fellow believers. Therefore, this issue of *FrontLine* is different from the others. For the first time in its publication history, all of the primary articles were written by women.

So, why is this issue coming out under the title *The Law of Kindness*? Because that phrase is a part of its context in Proverbs 31:26: "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." No one is as kind as my Heavenly Father. I have seen the Lord's kind-

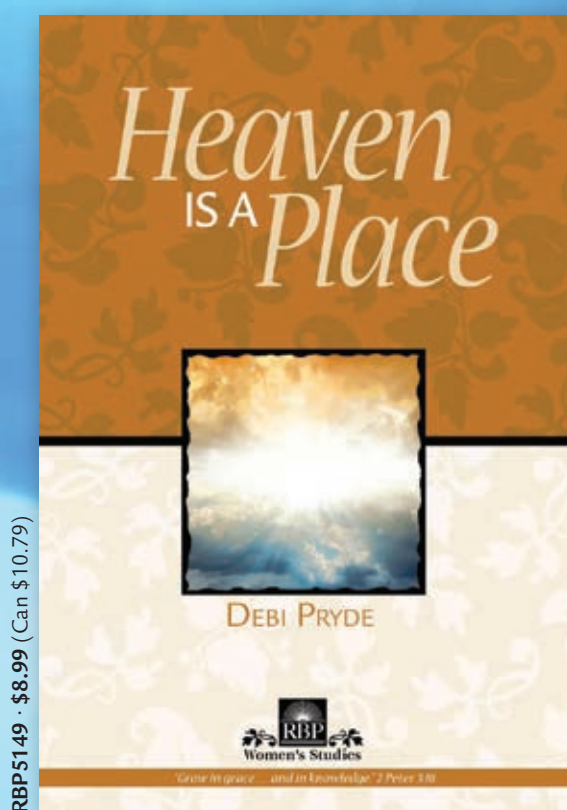
ness reflected in the kindness of my earthly father over and over again. But my mother's kindness was the kindness of a woman, and I miss that more than I could ever have imagined. At her funeral I testified that she ultimately died of complications from the injuries she sustained in rescuing me from the fire long ago—she literally laid down her life for me. Indeed, according to John 15:13, there is no greater love than that. It was the law of kindness that brought my mother into the fire to save my life. That law of kindness is the life message of every woman who illustrates the One who laid down His life for us.

Therefore, *FrontLine* has asked us to write. By grace, we hope that we have "opened our mouths with wisdom," and that "in our tongue is the law of kindness." For me, this is an opportunity to hone my gifts as I press on with the draft of a book I hope to call *No Greater Love*. For you, dear reader, this is an opportunity to glean helpful perspectives from the godly ladies who have shared their wisdom and life messages here. Surely, the managing editor of *FrontLine*, Malinda Duvall, and all the ladies she has worked with to produce this issue are examples of what is described in Proverbs 31. Their words here will edify you as they have edified me. Ladies, these articles will also touch and bless your hearts and lives. Gentlemen, you too will be blessed by what you read.



The author with Mrs. Katherine Young (Becky's former teacher at Hidden Treasure Christian School) on Mother's Day.

God has  
*sprinkled glimpses*  
of Heaven throughout  
Scripture for us to  
*discover & enjoy!*



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I am a pastor of an Independent Baptist Church in Nairobi. We have not met physically but I have "met" you on *FrontLine*. (Great articles!) Dr. Larry Ball talked to me about the idea of having an FBFI conference here in Nairobi. Of course he said that such thing would require substantial preparation.

It would be a great blessing to our churches here in Kenya and Africa at large.

*Josiah Wambua  
Nairobi, Kenya*

My pastor and I would like to provide copies of the March/April issue (focused on the Philippines) to the families of our church. It's exciting to see one of our missionaries (Joel Arnold) published in *FrontLine*, and it would be a good introduction of the magazine to many of our folks.

*Ted Graham  
Grace Baptist Church  
Hampton, VA*

*Join us for the*

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**CREATIONISM**

There is joy in serving Jesus! At age fifteen **Nancy Wilson** felt the Lord's call to full-time service. That was realized in various ministries: in Vietnam doing Bible translation, later being married to a pastor, then working in a missions office, a women's shelter, a church office, and lastly, after moving to South Carolina, working in the church office of Faith Baptist Church as a volunteer and also helping with the *FrontLine* mailing.



Saved at age forty-two, **Rose Brouhard** moved from Arizona to Bob Jones University in 1978 to work with the Unusual Tours Travel Agency. She's been a member of Faith Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina, since 1979 and volunteers there weekly, helping with missionary prayer letters and the Sunday bulletins. She also helps us in the FBFI Home Office with *FrontLine* magazine mailings.

**Joy Collins**, one of the authors featured in this issue, is the executive assistant to the John C. Vaughn Evangelistic Association, Inc. (JCVEA). Often, that role makes her an indispensable volunteer assistant to the Home Office. Coordinating the complicated travel arrangements for FBFI meetings, taking care of IT upgrades and issues, and just providing an extra set of hands when big, time-sensitive projects require help. Joy, with help from her husband Brian, keeps things on track that require close coordination between Dr. Vaughn's roles with JCVEA and FBFI.



**Larry and Mary Mullinax** moved to Taylors, South Carolina, in October 2000 and joined Faith Baptist Church. They immediately became involved in the seniors group, and one of the ministries involved helping with the mailing for *FrontLine* magazine. Because they had been involved in church ministry for forty-one years and

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# Who Are Your Counselors?





We live in an age of amazing technology—technology that enables us to read millions of words without ever turning a page; to communicate with a “friend” whom we have never met face-to-face; to hear the sermons of preachers from across the globe (and even across the generations); to carry fourteen different versions of the Scriptures—plus commentaries—in our pockets. It has never been easier than now to disciple and be discipled.

Or has it? So many resources. So many voices. So many distractions. Are all these advantages really helping us in our spiritual life—or could they possibly be distracting us from the true Source of life and His means of discipleship? God’s design for the growth of His church is the ministry of His Word through personal study, pastoral teaching, and mutual discipleship within the Body.

### Whom Are You Reading?

Just as everything we put into our mouths has an effect on our physical health, so everything we put into our minds affects our spiritual well-being. What you read (and how you read it) does matter. And that is why God has told us that we live not by bread alone but by His words.

Psalm 119 immediately comes to mind. It says that by listening to and obeying God’s Word we cleanse our way (v. 9), and by hiding God’s Word in our hearts we are kept from sin (v. 11). We learn in verse 24 that God’s testimonies ought to be our delight and our counselors. Verse 130 gives us a beautiful promise to cling to whenever we are tempted to look elsewhere for wisdom: “the entrance of *thy words* giveth light.”

Jesus Christ—the very Word of God incarnate—showed us how to battle temptation with the words of God. He taught His disciples the source of sanctification when He asked the Father to “sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.”<sup>1</sup> And since God has spoken to us in these last days by His Son, it is through the knowledge of the same that we find the treasures of wisdom and knowledge<sup>2</sup> and all that we need for life and godliness.<sup>3</sup> It is in the face of Jesus Christ that “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” finds full entrance, now completely unveiled.<sup>4</sup>

In order to be fully formed disciples we must study God’s Word diligently and believe it unquestioningly. But God does not intend for us to read His Word to the exclusion of all other books—or even blogs. (In fact, we should not leave our heads in the sand and ignore what is going on around us.) We are privileged to have access to vast resources that guide us in understanding His Word and how to live as His disciples. But we must be discerning in what and how we read. We cannot neglect the Bible for other books, or even past generations for the current one. If we will choose carefully; if we include a variety of respected, seasoned authors and generations; and if we read through the lens of Scripture, God’s viewpoint will inform and shape our worldview.

### Whom Are You Listening To?

God’s Word and fellowship with Him alone would have been enough for us, but in His wisdom He has

not left us to work out our sanctification in isolation. We know from the fact of the Trinity that God is a God of relationship. The account of the creation of man and his companion-helper, woman, reveals that He intended that we live in fellowship with Him and one another. When these relationships were disrupted by the Fall, He restored the possibility of fellowship not through decrees or demands but by sending His Son in the flesh—God on earth in a face-to-face relationship with man.

Jesus gave us a relationship with the Father, but He also gave us a model of discipleship. He was a personal friend and teacher to many, and especially to the Twelve. He showed us the value of intimate, discipling relationships—investing significantly in a few, perpetuating another generation of disciple-makers. The apostle Paul exemplified discipleship through his influence on those with whom he spent time on his missionary journeys. He gave considerable attention to mentoring young pastors such as Timothy and Titus. In Ephesians 4:11–13 he explains God’s perfect design for growth in the Body. He has given apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the purpose of perfecting His people until we achieve spiritual maturity and unity. We need the Body for growth and accountability—especially our *local* body of believers. Why? Because our particular pastors are the leaders God has placed over us and under whose watchful care we have committed to place ourselves. Our fellow church members are the ones who know and love us personally. These are the ones best suited to lead, confront, and disciple us.

This is why it is so important to be careful *whom* we listen to. We have access to world-class Bible teachers, and we can certainly benefit from their preaching and writing, but their ministry to us will not include the personal shepherding and accountability of our own pastor. Godly women have sound biblical ministries through social media, but a virtual teacher will not have the same ability to mentor us as someone who has a personal knowledge of us. The more we listen to various teachers, the more we must guard against the temptation to distrust or lose respect for our own God-given leaders.

### Whom Are You Discipling?

Discipleship ministry in the church is not just for the pastors and teachers; every relationship in the Body should be one of mutual discipleship and accountability. Paul’s writings are full of “one another” commands, and Titus 2:3–5 specifically instructs women to engage in mentoring ministry: the older women are to be “teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.”

This passage leads to the question, “When am I the ‘older woman’?” Well, in one sense, at every stage of life! There is nearly always someone younger in age and in the faith than you are. If your children are now out of the home, look for a young mother who needs some encouragement

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# The Value of Christian Biographies

My husband, Brian, is a reader. We have books all over our house. Family and friends tease him about having so many books, but I am thrilled that he is such a voracious reader. Reading has been a source of encouragement, edification, and education for both of us. In fact, for me especially, I can't overestimate the value of Christian biographies.

When I was single and on the mission field, I was once faced with a serious matter for which I needed an answer. My godly counselors (parents, pastor, siblings, and mentor) all basically told me the opposite answer to what I thought might be God's will. Thankfully, the Lord instilled in me a helpful fear of going against my counselors, knowing that "in the multitude of counsellors there is safety" (Prov. 11:14). Though somewhat confused by the outcome, I was reading *Hudson Taylor: The Growth of a Soul*, and the following quote illuminated my situation:

Do we not need to remind ourselves in these days, especially in connection with His service, of the danger of impatience and taking things too much into our own hands? If we are really waiting on God and doing His will, hindrances that are not removed are safeguards,

keeping us from mistaken courses, and bringing about the preparation of spirit necessary in ourselves before His best can be given.<sup>1</sup>

In looking back on those days, how thankful I am for the wisdom God gave to those who counseled me. They were indeed safeguarding me, keeping me from a mistaken course.

Through situations such as these I have come to delight in reading Christian biographies. They have become friends to help me along my spiritual journey. Christian biographies allow you to see biblical teaching applied in the life of a believer. Not only do I learn what God says in Scripture, but I can also see how Scripture is lived out in the life of a believer. Biographies cannot take the place of time with God in His Word, but they are an additional resource to help me grow.

There are, of course, a multitude of things to read. But time moves quickly, and I find that I often have to evaluate whether I'm spending my time on the best things rather than on merely good things. Andrew Bonar comments in his journal about the effects of reading on his spirit. He says, "Having spent a good while in the forenoon reading light things, and some things that were not right being contained in them, I felt on going out to visit some sick people a most



complete languor or slowness, a sort of restraint of heart. Whereas, when my mind has been occupied beforehand with right thoughts, generally my conversation with the people flows freely and happily.”<sup>2</sup> Since everything we read influences us, focusing our reading time on things that will influence us to grow closer to Christ is of the utmost importance. Our relationship with Christ matters for eternity.

For some people their primary issue is they don’t like to read. If you are one of those people, there is a wonderful world of Christian biographies out there for you to explore. Develop your desire for reading as much as you can. My educational background is in special education, and I realize that people have a variety of abilities even in reading. God has blessed us with many tools available to help us. If you struggle in having devotions because reading is hard for you, get the Bible on audio, and read along as the narrator reads. There are many audiobooks available (even Christian biographies), and listening to an audiobook counts as having read a book! If money is an issue, check your library; perhaps ask the librarians if they could add a certain title to their library. Sometimes you can tap into free audiobook giveaways online.

As we go through our busy lives, trials will come. As trials come, it is helpful to read about the lives of other brothers and sisters in Christ who have gone through similar—or far worse—problems. Reading about their lives helps the magnitude of my problems to be kept in proper perspective. Not that God doesn’t care about my particular problems; He does (1 Pet. 5:7). But as I get comfort and hope through the Scriptures (Rom. 15:4), I am also comforted with the comfort that God has given to these fellow Christians who have gone through problems similar to or problems greater than mine (2 Cor. 1:3–4). So as we read, we can be encouraged with the steadfast faith that Elizabeth Prentiss had as she faced multiple sorrows and hardships that came to her family. We will rejoice at the deep faith of Lady Jane Grey who at such a young age was devoted to God and didn’t turn from Him in the face of death. We will see the need for our prayer life to mature through the example of Hudson Taylor pouring out his burdens to God, knowing that God would provide all his need time and time again (and God did!).

The battle against our flesh is intense. We need the stories of these dear brothers and sisters in Christ, who, though not perfect, lived their lives to the glory of God. These stories will strengthen our faith in our daily spiritual battles.

Matthew Henry commented on the importance of reading good books when he said,

When you pick up a book—God’s Book or any other useful, good book—wait on God for His grace to enable you to make good use of it. Some of you spend a good deal of time reading every day, and I hope none of you lets a day pass without reading some portions of Scripture, either alone or with your family. Be careful that the time you spend in reading is not lost time. It is lost if you read that which is idle and vain and unprofitable. It is lost if you read that which is good, even the Word of God itself, and do not obey it, observe it, or aim to make it of any advantage to you. Wait on God, who gives you those helps for your soul. The eunuch did so

when he was reading the book of Isaiah in his chariot, and God sent him someone to help him understand what he read.<sup>3</sup>

Here’s a list of biographies that I recommend to you. Of course, this list is by no means exhaustive. Also, these titles are primarily geared for adults; there are other biographies not listed here which are geared specifically towards teens and younger children.

*A Chance to Die: The Life and Legacy of Amy Carmichael*  
by Elisabeth Elliot

*A Man of the Word: Life of G. Campbell Morgan*  
by Jill Morgan

*Andrew Bonar: Diary and Life* edited by Marjory Bonar  
*Ascent to the Tribes* by Isobel Kuhn

*Bless God and Take Courage: The Judson History and Legacy* by Rosalie Hall Hunt

*By My Spirit* by Jonathan Goforth

*By Searching* by Isobel Kuhn (There are others in this series as well.)

*C. H. Spurgeon* by Arnold Dallimore

*Elizabeth Prentiss* by Sharon James

*Evidence Not Seen* by Darlene Deibler Rose

*How I Know God Answers Prayer* by Rosalind Goforth

*Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission*  
by Mrs. Howard Taylor

*John G. Paton* by John Paton

*The Nine Day Queen: Lady Jane Grey* by Faith Cook

*Lords of the Earth* by Don Richardson

*Mountain Rain* (biography of J. O. Fraser)

by Eileen Crossman

*Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon* by Charles Ray

*Peace Child* by Don Richardson

*Selina, Countess of Huntingdon* by Faith Cook

*Through Gates of Splendor* (Jim Elliot) by Elisabeth Elliot  
*To the Golden Shore* (Adoniram Judson)

by Courtney Anderson

*Out of the Depths* by John Newton

*Samuel Rutherford and His Friends* by Faith Cook

*Shadow of the Almighty* (Jim Elliot) by Elisabeth Elliot  
*The Triumph of John and Betty Stam*

by Mrs. Howard Taylor

*William Carey* by S. Pierce Carey

*William Grimshaw of Haworth* by Faith Cook

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).

Joy Collins and her husband, Brian, attend Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina, where Brian serves as an elder. Joy is the administrative assistant for the John C. Vaughn Evangelistic Association, Inc.



<sup>1</sup> Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, *Hudson Taylor in Early Years: The Growth of a Soul* (Littleton, CO: OMF International, Reprinted 1998), 310–11.

<sup>2</sup> Marjory Bonar, ed., *Andrew Bonar: Diary and Life* (Southampton: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprinted 1984), 35.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew Henry, *Experiencing God’s Presence* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1997), 97.

# Godly Online Communication

## Finding Your Spiritual “Delete” Key

Often children blurt out what they are thinking without thinking about what they are blurting out.

For example, while drawing at the kitchen table, my three-year-old daughter exclaimed, “Look! I drew a sun!” Her five-year-old brother countered matter-of-factly, “It looks like a hotdog.” I held my breath waiting for an argument to break out, but after an uncomfortable silence my daughter giggled and said, “You’re right—it *is* a hotdog!” And we all laughed hysterically. However, not all potential preschool blow-ups in our home end that way.

At our house and yours, everyone should be “swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath”—but we know that it doesn’t always work out that way. So this admonition from James 1:19 needs to be rehearsed over and over. And it’s not just our children who need this verse, nor are they the only ones who need the grace of God to obey it. Mom and Dad may not be tempted to respond in anger over an

unsolicited critique of a crayon drawing, but we do fail to listen; we speak before we’ve really heard; we often possess a “short fuse.” Worse, we do these things for the whole world to observe online. Yet admonitions regarding the use of the tongue—speech—apply online as well.

### “Offend Not in Word”

Imagine if everyone on Facebook were suddenly quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry . . . Facebook’s business model would probably fall apart. Its very design is to provide a quick, easy platform from which to broadcast whatever is on your mind to whoever will read it. That’s quick speaking on a scale James could hardly have imagined. When James urged quick listening and slow speech, I imagine he had in mind the normal temptations to answer a matter before hearing it that come up in family and village interactions. But today we have a global village: one click, and dozens, hundreds, even millions of people can hear you. Though James likely did



not foresee this, the Holy Spirit did. Without a doubt, He expects us to allow His commands to govern our online communication.

Later in his letter, James continues the topic of the tongue: “If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man” (3:2). Yet the tongue is “a fire” and “a world of iniquity” (3:6), “an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (3:8). That’s strong language about how strong language is—words that should make us stop and think about our own speech.

As we think, what are some things we can do to develop more moderate speech? Deactivating our Facebook accounts might be a quick solution, but it won’t change us personally. We are always communicating, and if we struggle with controlling our electronic tongues, we probably have trouble with the physical ones too. Putting off ungodly online communication is not enough; we must renew our minds to find a way to “put on” edifying, godly online communication. James continues in chapter 3 with just that: “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom” (3:13). Meekness (or “gentleness”). Wisdom. That’s what we need.

A brief scroll down my Facebook feed on any given day introduces me to many different voices shouting for my attention and my allegiance to various causes. Vaccines! Organic foods! Natural cleaners! Homeopathic remedies! Childbirth styles! Childrearing/disciplining practices!—to name just a few. If I agree with a particular voice, I feel the strong urge to add my own. If I disagree, the urge is just as strong (perhaps stronger?) to participate in the dialogue. Paul’s charge to “let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” can help us here (Phil. 2:3).

Consider an “online communication” version of that verse: “Post nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility esteem others better than yourself.” Well, that was pretty straightforward! Count other peoples’ blog posts, Facebook updates, tweets, and so on to be more significant than your own. Value them. Value their opinions, even if they’re the opposite of your own (providing a foundational doctrinal issue is not at stake)—and even if they’re violating some of these communication principles we’ve been considering! Humbly start with the assumption that other people’s contributions should be esteemed better than your own. If the online comments are heating up, consider whether your contribution would add fuel to a fire. “Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth” (Prov. 26:20).

## “Meek and Quiet”

A few years ago I stumbled across an interesting article online reprimanding our tendency as Christian women to turn healthy lifestyles (e.g., organic food) into an idol. It spoke to me, and so I shared the article via the joint Facebook account I have with my husband. That night he

approached me with concern about my intent in posting the article. I was surprised; I had told myself, “This was helpful for me, and I’m sure others will find it to be so too.” After honestly evaluating myself, though, I saw I was making a not-so-subtle jab at those I perceived to be excessive in their devotion to and advocacy of healthy living. I knew my post would stir up the opposition. Subtle jabs are, after all, still jabs! (“There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health,” Prov. 12:18.) Wisdom says there are various venues in which to challenge another Christian’s blind spots, and the public one ought to be used with special care. What does a “meek and quiet spirit”

mean except that I must sometimes be silent when I want to speak? Humility says maybe I’m not “The One” to correct those perceived blind spots. In fact, in this particular instance, I needed to get the beam out of my own eye first.

Our online talk requires heavy doses of Spirit-filled self-control. The book of Proverbs is full of counsel about a wise person’s communication habits. Phrases such as “holds his tongue,” “uses words with restraint,” “even-tempered,” and “keeps silent” come up repeatedly. They are frequently directly connected to wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, as in Proverbs 17:27–28: “He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.” My willingness to bite my tongue, as it were, is a direct measure of my self-control—a fruit of the spirit. This is humbling truth. With online communication this truth is easier to accomplish since there is a delete button on our keyboards! When we speak with our mouths, we cannot take back what we say. We get no second chances. But there is a neat little button on our keyboards that we can use as we let the Holy Spirit develop gentleness and self-control in us. Seek to communicate truth with gentleness and wisdom, and if you’re not confident that you are doing so, look at the top right corner of your keyboard. Make frequent use of the delete key, and you may be taking your most important step to godly online communication.

Laura Ward is married to Dr. Mark Ward, who writes *On Language and Scripture* for *FrontLine* magazine. She’s a homemaker in Washington State.



Consider  
an “online  
communication”  
version of that  
verse: “Post  
nothing out of  
rivalry or conceit,  
but in humility  
esteem others  
better than  
yourself.”

# Loving Your Husband



*And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet [a suitable helper] for him. Genesis 2:18*

Even though we try to be loving wives, we often fall short. When God created Eve, He created a helper who was suitable for Adam, rightly arranged to his needs. Barnes's commentary says,

Beyond all this God knew what was in the man whom he had formed. And he expresses this in the words, "It is not good for the man to be alone." He is formed to be social, to hold converse, not only with his superior, but also with his equal. As yet he is but a unit, an individual. He needs a mate, with whom he may take sweet counsel. And the benevolent Creator resolves to supply this want. "I will make him a helpmeet for him"—one who may not only reciprocate his feelings, but take an intelligent and appropriate part in his active pursuits.

The fall marred that suitability. In this fallen state, God has given the older women the responsibility to teach the younger women how to love their husbands (Titus 2:3–4). Part of loving your husband is learning to be suitable to him.

## **Being Suitable Spiritually**

First, we need to be suitable to him spiritually. To be suited to our husbands spiritually, we must know the Creator and the Author of our soul. We must be believers. We need to read the Word of God to understand our true nature and how to counter it. We need God's grace (enabling power) because there will be times we do not feel like loving our husbands or children.

We need to pray. We need to pray for our husband to take on the leadership role God ordained. We need to pray he will grow in the Word of God so he will have discernment in all things. We need to pray that he will think biblically and counterculturally. Pray he will be a steadfast, Christlike example. Pray he will respond to daily challenges in Christ and walk worthy of his vocation. Pray he will like his job and not grow weary, and that his income will be sufficient for the family needs. Pray that he will endure the barbs of the Devil and be kept from temptation. Pray He will have on the whole armor of God. Pray he will have wisdom in childrearing. Pray he will be healthy in body to perform his tasks.



**"As yet he is  
but a unit, an  
individual. He  
needs a mate,  
with whom he  
may take sweet  
counsel."**

Pray also for yourself: that you will have the enabling power to fulfill your God-ordained role. Pray that you will accept spiritual truths and apply them correctly. Pray that you will think no evil and guard your mouth. Pray you will not give ungodly counsel as Eve did to Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit. Pray you will understand your husband's nature. Pray you will have and show true respect/reverence. Pray you can stimulate him and your children unto love and good works. Pray you will submit to him in all things as unto Christ. Pray you will be content with his provision and finances. Pray you will be trustworthy and dependable. Pray that you will be one in spirit, mind, and purpose. Your prayers will enable you to love him.

### **Being Suitable Mentally and Emotionally**

Second, we need to be suitable to him mentally and emotionally. In order to love our husbands emotionally and mentally we need to prefer him above all others. Spend time with him, maybe even just sitting silently at times. Be excited when he comes home. Be his biggest cheerleader and praise him personally and before others. Encourage him in his work and thank him for his provisions. Learn his cares and concerns. Know about his job and what he does on the job. Give him space to transition from work to home. Talk to him about his hobbies. Let him enjoy his hobbies or things that help him relax. Make provision for and encourage godly fellowship. Say "I love you" often.

Respect his maleness and that God ordained him to see through blue glasses whereas you see through pink glasses. Communicate lovingly, openly, and honestly. Don't expect him to read your mind or know what you are feeling. Don't think he intends to hurt your feelings. Don't disrespect him. Don't be critical about him to others. Don't focus on his faults. Don't compare him to other men. Don't bring shame on him. Don't nag him. Don't speak to or treat him like a child. Let him make the decisions and trust in them. Don't undermine his authority; this is especially important when raising children. Submit to him as unto the Lord.

Offer suggestions, advice, and recommendations in a loving manner when needed. Learn to appeal properly, the way Queen Esther did when she prayed, fasted, approached humbly, and patiently served until her husband was pleased—before she petitioned. Don't let the sun go down on your wrath. Do not give place to the Devil. Learn to be longsuffering, forbearing, and forgiving. Love your in-laws. Gently remind him to call them. Do not

make bad comments about them. Actively focus on their good. Try to enjoy time with them, and never let your children dishonor them because of you.

### **Being Suitable Physically**

Finally, we need to be suitable to him physically. Make your home a haven; keep it clean and orderly. Be industrious and frugal. Cook his favorite meals. Establish a bedtime for the children to help with the transition from mom/dad to husband/wife. Keep yourself attractive. Be the woman he fell in love with by taking pains to look your best. Don't neglect yourself. Dress to please him in clothing, hairstyle, and makeup. Try to stay physically fit and active. Eat right and get enough rest. Also lavish your husband with love sexually. Do not let children come between you, and teach them to respect your time together behind a closed bedroom door. Do not withhold except by consent for a purpose. Do not use your love as a tool to attain or punish. Do not defile the marriage bed even mentally—for example, reading romantic fiction that can make you discontent with your husband and the life he provides. Be spontaneous. Be affectionate and desire him.

All these practical instructions might seem daunting. I have made lists that can assist in practical application. They are not exhaustive lists, and as you grow in your relationship with God and your husband you will include other additions to the lists specific to your marriage relationship.

During a sermon on Psalm 62 my pastor made a statement that greatly encouraged me: We become teachers experientially through our failures and victories. Through God's enabling grace and the example of other women who have lived before us, we can learn to exemplify the instructions to older women in Titus 2:3–5 and teach the younger women "to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." The final clause is really the most important clause. All that we do in word or deed is so the Word of God will not be blasphemed.

We glorify our Father in heaven by growing in our love for our husband, being rightly suited to him.

Kathy Perkins lives in Travelers Rest, South Carolina, with her husband of thirty-seven years. She is blessed to have four grown children and seven grandchildren, all of whom reside nearby, attend the same church, and are faithfully serving the Lord. She works as a birth doula, assisting in labor and delivery.



# Children and Scripture Memory

One of my most vivid memories of the benefits of Scripture memory happened several years ago. Our family was on deputation raising support in order to get to our field of service. During the first year of this adventure, I worked full-time at a Christian school for children with disabilities in order that our own children would have the opportunity to attend a local Christian school. As a family we were memorizing several passages of Scripture, and we would quote them together at different times. It was hard to have a routine during this time of our lives, but we did the best we could.

One particular morning my husband had been away for over a week, and we were missing him. We were having a very difficult time getting out the door in time for me to drop the kids off at school and get to work on time. By the time we were all in the car and backing out of the driveway, my oldest was slouched down and sullen, my daughter was crying, the youngest was poochie-lipped and teary eyed, and I was trying my best not to cry myself. As I backed out of the driveway, I begged the Lord for His grace for this time. Immediately it came to my mind to review our verses. We spent the fifteen-minute commute reviewing each of the passages that we had memorized, reciting out loud in unison.

When I arrived at the kids' school, an amazing thing happened. My daughter and the youngest hopped out of the car blowing kisses, smiling, and calling "I love you." As I drove around to my older son's building to drop him off, he thanked me for what I do, and he told me he hoped that I would have a good day. He also hopped out of the car with a smile on his face and an "I love you."

As I drove on to the school where I worked, I couldn't help but thank the Lord for the cleansing power of His Word. Nothing brings calm to a volatile situation like "the washing of water by the word."

One of the passages that we reviewed that day was Proverbs 3:1–12. If you are thinking that you could never do a passage of that length with your kids, let me encourage you to try. One verse a week is better than no verses at all. At this time, my children were eight, ten, and thirteen. My biggest regret in my empty-nest years is that we didn't try to do more of this important spiritual discipline.

My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Proverbs 3:1–12

Kim Melton and her husband, Tim, serve as missionaries in Japan under Baptist World Mission and are members of Faith Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina. They have three adult children.







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# Contentment

## A Prized Possession

*We were young and had just begun our family, when tragedy struck. . . . It was Friday evening, May 18, 1973, when I received a phone call while working the three-to-eleven shift at our local hospital. My neighbor's voice sounded tense as he described my husband's accident. Tom had been working with some high-voltage wires under our mobile home, had apparently lost his balance, and had fallen on a hot wire.*

Our God, who is such a loving and patient teacher, taught Paul how to be content (Phil. 4:11)—could He teach me also? Several years ago, as I was preparing to teach God's Word, He directed me to consider two well-known Bible women—Eve and Elisabeth. As I thought of these two women, I began comparing my responses to what God had ordained in my life to how they responded to the situations in their lives. And, as I did so, I began to see how God had been trying to gently and patiently teach me how to have the prized possession of contentment.

My initial lesson on contentment began shortly after my first husband went home to be with the Lord. We were just past our mid-twenties, and our daughter was two years old at the time of Tom's fatal electrical accident. I clearly remember the evening of that initial lesson: as a young widow, I was reading a short love story in a ladies' magazine. At the end of the love story, my heart was filled with a deep longing, a passion to be with Tom. This passion that I was feeling was different from the grief that I had been experiencing since his death. This passion awakened my flesh, and I found myself fighting with lust. It was the most awful feeling that I had endured since Tom's home-going. The Lord showed me that evening that it all began with reading that short love story. From that time on, I was determined that I was not going to allow myself to read any more love stories, listen to worldly music, or watch anything on TV that would awaken my flesh.

As my daughter entered her upper elementary/early teen years, she noticed that some of her friends watched things on TV that we never watched at home, listened to music that we never listened to, and read books that she was not allowed to read. I remember her saying that "so and so" read, watched, listened to whatever we did not, and "it did not seem to be hurting her." Her statement made me stop and look around at her friends. Yes, they seemed to be good Christian girls. But God in His mercy kept reminding me of the awful lust that had resulted from reading the short love story. I determined in my heart that I was not going to allow myself, and more importantly my precious daughter, to fight with the awful feeling of lust which I knew would break our fellowship with God and eventually lead to outward sin.

### **Lessons from Eve**

As I meditated on my experience in the light of Eve's life, I realized that even though Eve had a perfect relationship with God, lived in a perfect garden home, and had a perfect husband, she struggled with discontentment. And this struggle began when she listened to the Devil. As the Devil pointed out the forbidden fruit, she immediately wanted (longed for, lusted after) the one thing that God had lovingly forbidden her to have. Immediately, the Lord taught me that all of those years when He helped me to keep myself from feeding my flesh so that I would not struggle with lust, He was not only helping me to keep myself pure but He was teaching me to be content. When Eve listened to the Devil, she wanted the thing she did not have, and she lost her contentment. Then when she took a bite of the forbidden fruit, she immediately lost her relationship and fellowship with God.

As I look back on the twenty-three years that I was a widow, the things that stand out in my mind are all of



the times when I was enveloped in God's presence and enjoyed His sweet fellowship—the times when God specifically spoke to my heart and allowed me to see with my finite eyes how He truly is a “father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows” (Ps. 68:5). For instance, I remember the morning before my biopsy (and possibly major surgery if cancer was found), part of my Bible reading was from the third chapter of Philippians; verse 8 caught my attention: “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” As I read this verse, the Lord lovingly showed me that there was nothing more important than intimately knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I remember tucking this truth away in my heart. The next day, as I awoke in the recovery room, I remember my surgeon coming to my bedside and briefly saying that he found cancer and did major surgery. Immediately after he told me this, the Lord reminded me of what He had taught me the day before, and it was as if I could sense His presence surrounding me and audibly hear Him say that He loved me so much that He had hand-chosen me to know Him in a deep and intimate way. I felt so loved by God! When my daughter and I look back on her growing-up years during the times she was without her daddy, the things that we remember are the specific instances of how God lovingly cared for us and how He gave us rich blessings that many mothers and daughters never enjoy!

### Lessons from Elisabeth

As I continued meditating on the prized possession of contentment, the Lord not only brought Eve to my mind but also Elisabeth, Zacharias' wife. Elisabeth had a deep longing, and I believe the Devil reminded her of this deep longing every day because Scripture tells us that Elisabeth was called “barren” (Luke 1:36). One commentator has said

that he believes that Elisabeth was literally called “Barren” rather than by her given name. In Bible days being without child was considered a reproach from God (Luke 1:25). But instead of focusing on the fact that she was barren, I believe we see from Scripture that she consciously focused on God's Word. In Luke 1:6 we read, “And they [Elisabeth and Zacharias] were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.” The only way that I know of that Elisabeth could have walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly is if she meditated on God's Word day and night (Josh. 1:8). I wonder what Scripture Elisabeth meditated upon? Whatever Scripture it was, I know it brought Elisabeth into the very presence of God where, instead of fighting the longings of her fleshly heart, she enjoyed the fullness of joy that comes only from being in God's presence (Ps. 16:11).

In looking back on my life and as I have watched others go through deep trials, I am convinced that God wants to use the longings of our hearts (the things we have lost or the things we wished we had) to focus on Him and to meditate day and night upon His Word. As we do this, we will be enveloped in God's presence where there is such fullness of joy that there is no room for discontentment. Satan, on the other hand, wants to entice us to feed our sinful flesh—which can never be satisfied, and he wants to use the longings of our heart to get our focus off God and onto the thing(s) we don't have. This is what he did to Eve, and God reminds me often that the results were tragic.

Blanche Kaneshiro worked alongside her husband, Larry, as he pastored in Hawaii. Since his retirement from the pastorate and their move to San Antonio, she continues to minister to the ladies at Lighthouse Baptist Church.



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# The Big Three

I haven't been in the ministry for fifty-plus years. On the contrary, this year marks our seventh year of ministry. So I'm not (nor do I pretend to be) "an experienced pastor's wife." Instead, I feel like I'm just coming out of recovery from many newbie errors. Books have been written about specific ways to encourage ministry wives, so this short article cannot be exhaustive. Rather, I'll share with you three of the biggest lessons I've learned during my first seven years of ministry. If I could take any young ministry wife out for coffee—or better yet, milkshakes—these are the things that would overflow from my heart.

## 1. Be Yourself.

When my husband and I arrived at our first ministry, I was twelve days married, twenty-one years old, and one-hundred-percent insecure. Although I didn't really know the former youth pastor's wife, I continually pressured myself to "measure up" based on glowing reports of her deeds and personality. As you can certainly imagine, my attempts to replicate someone else resulted in a whole mess of failure.

But here's the thing: God didn't call me to be her. He called me to be me. In fact, He specifically chose me (with my personality, interests, talents, and, yes, even failures) to minister to this specific group of people. You see, learning to "be myself" actually boils down to what I believe about God. It means I believe He's sovereign in His choices: who I am, where I am, and when I'm there. Trusting God's sovereignty frees me from an inward focus of "I'm not good enough" and offers instead an upward focus on the "I AM" God and an outward focus to the people He's called me to serve.

Consider Moses (Exod. 3). When God called him, what was his first response? "I can't. They won't believe me. I can't talk." What was God's focus? "I AM. Focus on Me, Moses. I will carry you just as I did when you were a baby in a basket. Trust Me."

God has called you. He has orchestrated every single detail and placed you in this specific ministry on purpose. Trust His sovereignty.

## 2. Love Deeply.

Loving deeply always includes an amount of vulnerability. When we, as sinners, make ourselves vulnerable to other sinners, the result is inevitable: we are bound

God has called you. He has orchestrated every single detail and placed you in this specific ministry on purpose. Trust His sovereignty.



to get hurt. Whether intentional or not, the result remains. Afterwards, you will respond in one of two ways. You will either shield yourself from future hurt by refusing close relationships and treating kind people with suspicion. Or you will continue to give of yourself and love deeply.

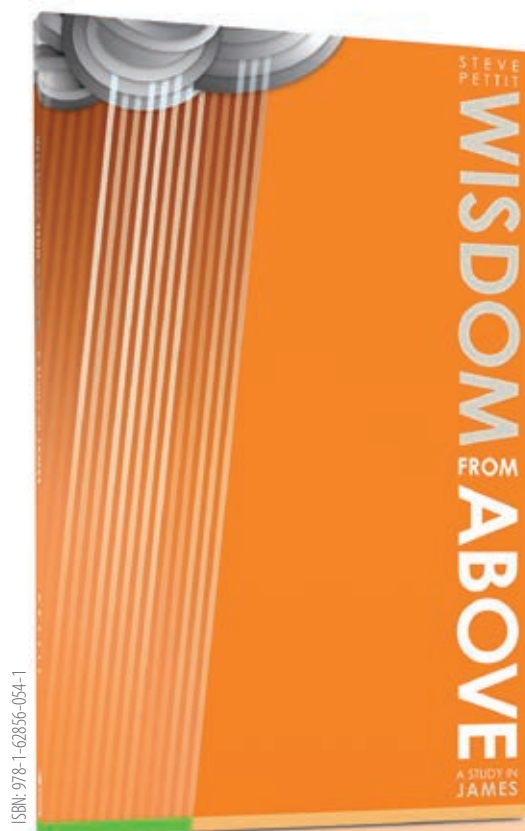
Which way did Jesus live? Did He stop giving away so much of His time or cut back on miracles? Throughout the Gospels, I'm struck again and again by His manner of life. He gave to everyone, whether they loved or hated Him. He poured His life into one who betrayed Him to the death. He pleaded with God for forgiveness for those who had just beaten and crucified Him. Do you see Jesus shielding Himself from hurt? On the contrary, He gave until there was nothing else to give. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1). Pattern your loving after God's example and trust your heart to His tender hands.

### 3. Take It to Jesus.

You know the struggles of your ministry? The details you would love to talk through with someone, but can't because of the personal nature of the issue? You know all those burdens people give you? Intimate details of their lives and tragic stories of their failures? Sometimes it's difficult to know what to do with those things. There have been many times when I've been in despair about a situation (be it someone else's or my own) and have desperately wanted to talk with someone only to find that I couldn't think of anyone to share it with. As I'm bemoaning the fact that no one is available, God's Word comes flooding into my mind: "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jer. 33:3). "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee" (Ps. 55:2). "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7). You know, it's almost as if He planned for no one to be available so that I would take it all to Him . . . like He's in control or something. Because He actually is. And all those burdens He puts into your life? He doesn't want you to hold on to them. He wants you to give them right back to Him. So for all the details, struggles, and decisions? Take them to Jesus.

Wherever these words meet you—whether you're in a ministry position or not—let them point you closer to Christ, our sovereign Savior, ultimate loving Example, and closest Friend.

Christa Threlfall serves with her husband, Jonathan, who is the youth pastor at Bible Baptist Church in Matthews, North Carolina. Christa enjoys writing, and you can find her thoughts on faith, mothering, and other bits of life at [BrownSugarToast.com](http://BrownSugarToast.com).



"God also promises His all-sufficient wisdom for every trial. He will guide us into making right choices all along the way if we seek and pursue this wisdom . . ." —Steve Pettit

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# SOUND WORDS

HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS—2 TIMOTHY 1:13

## First Partaker

### Family Worship

God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth; as in private families daily.

1689 Baptist Confession of Faith

Most of us reading this are Baptists. We may be aware that our formal, doctrinal statements of Baptist distinctives and practices stem from the *The Second London Confession*, also known as the 1689 *Baptist Confession of Faith*, or from the *Philadelphia Baptist Confession of Faith* (1742). But there is something in both of these influential documents that may have escaped our notice entirely. Both call upon us to practice family worship daily.<sup>1</sup>

Family *worship*. That way of putting it is seldom used by us today. *Family altar*, *family devotions*, *family prayer time*, *family Bible time* and other such expressions are more common. They all amount to much the same thing, of course. But nevertheless, there seem to be some unusually powerful, spiritual connotations to the word *worship*.

For one thing, family *worship* vividly conveys a vertical (as contrasted with a horizontal) focus to what we're doing: we're worshipping God. The time is for Him, even more so than for the family.

For another thing, *worship* is a scripturally governing word that both encompasses and restricts. It encompasses everything that a family might do together that even could be called worship (prayer, Bible reading, teaching, singing, etc.), but it also limits. For instance, if a family were worshipping, they probably wouldn't be also taking phone calls or grilling steaks. It's not that they couldn't fix food and sing hymns at the same time, or quiz each other on Bible verses while they shot bas-

kets in the backyard, but they likely wouldn't call this family *worship*.

There's at least one more significant connotation to the word *worship*. It calls for a certain mood. Not necessarily formal, much less a grim, but definitely an atmosphere of intensified earnestness. You can't worship casually. As soon as you begin to really worship, things get serious.

I didn't always understand the value of a daily, family *worship* time, a time preeminently vertical, scripturally governed, and therefore generally similar in mood to church worship. Like a lot of Christian families, ours made an effort to read the Bible and sing several evenings a week—at the very least, to pray together. But in retrospect I realize that most of the time we lacked the earnest, spiritual intentionality captured in the word *worship*. I'm fairly confident that none of my children would have thought of what we were doing in that light. And it certainly wasn't a nonnegotiable from day to day. It was something we wanted to do, often did do, but fairly easily omitted if friends or family were visiting or I'd had an especially busy day, or everyone was just generally too tired.

What surprises me at this point in my life is the realization that I seldom, if ever, thought much about the subject at all. In fact, I realize now that the expression *family worship* probably struck me as kind of quaintly old fashioned; idyllic, but a sort of relic of an older time when life's pace was much slower and families had the luxury of enjoying long winter evenings closely huddled around their kitchen hearths.

But what I've discovered is that when it came to family worship, our spiritual forefathers huddled around those hearths were driven by their convictions, not their circumstances.

*"The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits"*  
(2 Tim. 2:6)

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### Family Worship in the Past

Here's a young minister, twenty-five years old, and yet to be ordained. His name is Philip Henry. Someday

he'll be known for having been the father of the famous English commentator, Matthew. But at present (1658), he's not even married. He and an older sister, Mary, have taken up their board in the spacious home of a wealthy English judge, Mr. John Puleston, in return for which Philip tutors the judge's sons. Being now a member of the household, Philip proposes that they begin daily family worship. His perspective about it surfaces in the diary entry with which he marks its beginning: *February 15 Wee began the Duty of reading the word in the Family. long omitted, lord Pardon.*<sup>2</sup>

Two things are noteworthy here. One is that Philip Henry calls what they were doing *the Duty*, and the other is that he asks the Lord to pardon the eminent family's longtime failure to include it in their daily routine.

There was a background to this earnest perspective. Just a little more than ten years earlier the Westminster Assembly had completed its work on its *Confession of Faith*. It contained an introductory admonition addressed "To the Christian Reader, Especially Heads of Families." Here is its opening sentence.

As we cannot but with grief of soul lament those multitudes of errors, blasphemies, and all kinds of profaneness, which have in this last age, like a mighty deluge, overflowed this nation; so, among several other sins which have helped to open the flood-gates of all these impieties, we cannot but esteem the disuse of family instruction one of the greatest.<sup>3</sup>

Following a lengthy paragraph of arguments for family worship, the next paragraph begins,

We should scarce imagine it any better than an impertinency, in this noon-day of the gospel, either to inform or persuade in a duty so expressly commanded, so frequently urged, so highly encouraged, and so eminently owned by the Lord in all ages with his blessing, but that our sad experience tells us, this duty is not more needful, than it is of late neglected. For the **restoring of this duty** to its due observance, give us leave to suggest this double advice. [Emphasis mine.]

This introductory admonition was signed by such justly famous Puritans as Samuel Annesley (father of Susannah Wesley), Thomas Goodwin, William Bates, Thomas Manton, and Thomas Watson. Manton wrote a further letter of introduction to the *Confession*, in which he observed, *A family is the seminary of Church and State; and if children be not well principled there, all miscarrieth.*<sup>4</sup> Manton's letter went on to urge heads of households to take seriously their responsibility to formally and faithfully instruct their children in the Lord's ways. Quoting another minister, he argued, *Families are societies that must be sanctified to God as well as Churches; and the governors of them have as truly a charge of the souls that are therein, as pastors have of Churches.*

This was the historical context in which Philip

Henry's viewpoint of family worship was framed. The family is God's institution for rearing worthy members for the church and citizens for the state. Therefore a governor's (father's) spiritual care of his family is similar to a pastor's care of a church. Therefore family worship is a duty. Failure to engage in it is a great sin, opening the door to all sorts of wicked behavior that in turn plagues a nation.

## The Apalling State of Our Nation

Our own nation has plunged to an appalling, once inconceivable, immoral low. Outside our churches American culture is now a mirror image of Romans 1:18–32. Inside our churches many professing Christians increasingly approximate Romans 2:1, *For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.* Perhaps most alarming, we are losing our young people to the world at a fearful rate. The next generation, which ought to be the sure pledge of the church's stable future, is instead its most alarming grief.

This grievous state of society is not new. In 1959, on the one-hundredth anniversary of the 1859 revival that turned the spiritual tide not only in this country but in Great Britain as well, David Martyn Lloyd-Jones preached a now-famous series of messages on the subject of revival. Even then, over half a century ago, he observed, *It is no longer merely a question of immorality. . . . The very category of morality is not recognized at all, and men and women are virtually in the position of saying, "evil be thou my good."*

Lloyd-Jones went on in that series to argue forcefully, even vehemently, that the church makes a fatal mistake when it experiments with solutions. *The man who experiments in the midst of a crisis is a fool.* What is needed, he urged, is not new programs, new worship styles, new techniques, or even new translations, but a *return!* To what? Very simply, to what always worked in the past, both in the history of God's people as recorded for us in the Bible and in their history ever since. Any reading of church history, he stated, will, I think, bring out this one principle abundantly clearly—that every time you get one of these great, and glorious, and mighty periods [of revival], you will find that in every instance it seems to be a returning to something that obtained before. . . . Every time the Church is thus revived . . . she is going back to something that happened before, rediscovering it, and finding the ancient supply. There is nothing that I know of that is more striking in the history of the Church than just that principle.<sup>5</sup>

How hopefully reassuring! How encouraging! We don't need new answers, because there are no new problems! Our problems, our churches' problems, our culture's problems are as old as humankind itself. Let's reread our Bibles and get that settled. Once we do, there'll be little need to convince us that the answer is in returning to the old wells. Lloyd-Jones used Isaac's example of returning to the wells dug by his father decades earlier. The water was down there, just as it had been in Abraham's day. But the Philistines had filled



them with trash. All that was needed was to locate them and clean them out.

What would you say are the *old wells*? The Westminster Assembly said that one of the foremost was family worship. Philip Henry clearly concurred. Could it be that they were right? Could it be that the attrition of so many of the young people who have grown up in our homes and in our pews is due, in significant part, to our neglect of a heartfelt, consistent time of daily, family worship?

## A Sample of Opinions

Nearly sixty years after the Westminster Assembly finished its business, Matthew Henry (1662–1714), Philip's son, preached a powerful, convicting sermon on family worship. It included this analogy.

When the wall was to be built about Jerusalem, it was presently done by this expedient; everyone undertook to repair over against his own house (Neh. 3:10, etc.). And if ever the decayed walls of the gospel Jerusalem be built up, it must be by the same method. Everyone must sweep before his own door, and then the street will be clean. If there were a church in every house, there would be such a church in our land as would make it a praise throughout the whole earth. We cannot better serve our country than by keeping religion in our families.<sup>6</sup>

That, of course, was just what his father and the most spiritually minded ministers of his Puritan generation had believed. Matthew was simply echoing their convictions.

Preachers in the generation following Matthew Henry continued to urge the practice upon their hearers. George Whitefield's (1714–70) sermon, "The Great Duty of Family Religion,"<sup>7</sup> was a call to the *old well* of Joshua's example, *as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD* (Josh. 24:15). *If it was ever appropriate for ministers to preach, or for people to put family-religion into practice, he said, it is never more so than in the present age. It is greatly to be feared, that out of those many households that call themselves Christians, there are only a few that serve God in their respective families as they should.*

The great evangelist went on to recover the old ideal.

Every house is as it were a church, and every family head is concerned to secure, as much as is within his power, the spiritual prosperity of every one under his roof, just as the minister is obligated to look after the spiritual welfare of every individual person under his charge.

He went on to exhort fathers to do three things for their families: read the Word of God to them, lead them in family prayer, and teach and instruct them in God's ways. Each of these he called *a duty incumbent upon every head of a house*. Fathers who failed to do them left their families open to being seduced from the faith.

Samuel Davies (1723–61), fourth president of Princeton (then called the College of New Jersey), was said by Lloyd-Jones (to the students and faculty of Westminster Seminary in 1967) to be *the greatest preacher you have ever produced in this country*. Davies had a sermon entitled "The Necessity and Excellence of Family Religion" in which he pleaded,

If you love your children; if you would bring down the blessing of heaven upon your families: if you would have your children make their houses the receptacles of religion when they set up in life for themselves; if you would have religion survive in this place, and be conveyed from age to age; if you would deliver your own souls—I beseech, I entreat, I charge you to begin and continue the worship of God in your families from this day to the close of your lives. . . . Consider family religion not merely as a duty imposed by authority, but as your greatest privilege granted by divine grace.<sup>8</sup>

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***What is needed, he urged, is not new programs, new worship styles, new techniques, or even new translations, but a return! To what? Very simply, to what always worked in the past, both in the history of God's people as recorded for us in the Bible and in their history ever since.***

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John Newton (1725–1807), in a letter inquiring as to how to conduct family worship, responded that he felt that family prayer should be *performed at least daily, and, when unavoidable hindrances do not prevent, twice a-day*. . . . *Happy is that family where the worship of God is constantly and conscientiously maintained. Such houses are temples in which the Lord dwells, and castles garrisoned by a Divine power.*<sup>9</sup>

James W. Alexander (1804–59), the son of Princeton's founding professor, Archibald, and himself a Princeton professor as well as an influential New York City pastor, wrote an entire book, *Thoughts on Family Worship*, which is still one of the most helpful sources on the subject. His assessment of the demise of American Christianity at that point in the nineteenth century was that it was due to the absence of regular family worship.

I no longer marvel that Christianity becomes a dying, empty thing in the houses of those professors (alas, that there should be such!) where there is no joint worship of God. In the rage for amassing wealth, which threatens the church among us, and especially in our great commercial cities, there is an estranging process going on which I fear is too

little observed. Such is the insane precipitation with which the man of business rushes to his morning's task, and such the length of his absence from home, often extending till the hours of darkness, so that he gradually loses some of that parental tenderness which Providence keeps alive by the presence of those whom we love. The long continuance of such habits cannot fail to affect the character. Of all persons in the world, he should be most willing to take time for family devotions who is, by his very employment, shut out from his home most of the day.

The popular evils which threaten our country arise in great measure from a spirit of insubordination; and this is caused by a neglect of parental authority . . . but I conceive it to be important to add that the conscientious observance of family devotions will go far to prevent such enormities. A nation of families worshipping God will ever be a nation of law and order.<sup>10</sup>

## ***The popular evils which threaten our country arise in great measure from a spirit of insubordination; and this is caused by a neglect of parental authority.***

Alexander has entire chapters on the influence of family worship on the church, the commonwealth, and posterity. They're powerful arguments for Christians to believe that the worship they do with their families in private each day will eventually affect every sphere of public life.

C. H. Spurgeon (1834–92) also believed that family worship was critical to our children's continuing in the Lord's ways. He said to his people, comprising the largest Protestant congregation in the world, *We sometimes hear of children of Christian parents who do not grow up in the fear of God, and we are asked how it is that they turn out so badly. In many, very many cases, I fear there is such a neglect of family worship that it's not probable that the children are at all impressed by any piety supposed to be possessed by their parents.*

He continued with, of all things (!), an account of Philip Henry's family worship practices, reinforced by a quotation from the old Puritan's son, Matthew: *They who pray in the family, do well; they who read and pray, do better; but they who sing, and read, and pray, do best of all.*

Spurgeon concluded, *If we want to bring up a godly family, who shall be a seed to serve God when our heads are under the clods of the valley, let us seek to train them up in the fear of God by meeting together as a family for worship.*<sup>11</sup>

A little window into the influence of Spurgeon's own practice upon his children is provided by a memory recorded by his son, Thomas. In January 1879, when he

was constrained to leave his church for three months in order to convalesce in Mentone, France, the ailing pastor took his now twenty-two-year-old son with him. Despite his painful suffering (from gout), Spurgeon led Thomas and a few others in family worship morning by morning in his hotel room.<sup>12</sup> Thomas recalled more than twenty years afterward, *Family worship was a delightful item of each day's doings. . . . His unstudied comments, and his marvelous prayers, were an inspiration indeed.*<sup>13</sup>

Certainly the opinions of men, no matter how highly we regard them, are not binding upon our consciences. There must be Scripture to constrain us to adopt a practice as God's requirement. I hope to present in a future column some scriptural examples and principles upon which our spiritual forefathers' convictions were founded. But let's say, just for discussion's sake, that there aren't any explicit commands in Scripture for us to have family worship. I don't think I could close this column any better than to quote again from Spurgeon, when he observed, *We may have no positive commandment for it, but we believe that it is so much in accord with the genius and spirit of the gospel, and that it is so commended by the example of the saints, that the neglect thereof is a strange inconsistency.*<sup>14</sup> ☞

<sup>1</sup> 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith, Section 22.6; Philadelphia Baptist Confession of Faith, Section 22.6.

<sup>2</sup> *Diaries and Letters of Philip Henry*, M.A. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1882), 43.

<sup>3</sup> *Westminster Confession of Faith* (rpt., Glasgow, Scotland: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1976), 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Revival* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1987), 14, 24, 28–29.

<sup>6</sup> "A Church in the House: A Sermon Concerning Family Religion" (April 16, 1704), *The Complete Works of Matthew Henry*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 262.

<sup>7</sup> Available at numerous Internet sites.

<sup>8</sup> "The Necessity and Excellence of Family Religion," *The Sermons of the Reverend Samuel Davies*, Vol. 2 (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, n.d.), 86.

<sup>9</sup> "To Theron, on Family Worship," *The Works of the Rev. John Newton*, Vol. I (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co.: 1820; rpt., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1988), 154, 158.

<sup>10</sup> *Thoughts on Family Worship*, 29–30, 95.

<sup>11</sup> "A Pastoral Visit," *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. 54 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1908; rpt., Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1978), 362–63.

<sup>12</sup> W. Y. Fullerton, *Thomas Spurgeon: A Biography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919), 85.

<sup>13</sup> C. H. Spurgeon's *Autobiography: Compiled from His Diary, Letters, and Records* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1900), IV, 4.

<sup>14</sup> "Restraining Prayer," *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. 51 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1905; rpt., Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1978), 327.



# Bring . . . the Books

## *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment* by Jeremiah Burroughs

Every preacher, indeed, every child of God experiences times of grief, discouragement, and despair. It was during one of these seasons of ministry that I discovered *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2002).

Jeremiah Burroughs (1599–1646) was born in the East Anglia region of England. Burroughs studied at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, taking a Master of Arts Degree in 1624. At the outset of his ministry Burroughs came into conflict with the demands of the Church of England. In 1631 Burroughs became rector of St. Margaret's Church in Tevitshall, Norfolk, with additional responsibilities at St. Mary's church in the same parish. As he ministered, he refused to conform to the dictates of Bishop Matthew Wren. By 1636 continued conflicts with Anglican authorities led to his suspension, and in 1637 he was discharged from his ministry. Burroughs felt that he could not remain in England, and with a heavy heart he sailed for Rotterdam in 1638.

This was a trying period for Burroughs. He was away from his native country, his ministry was limited, and there was infighting among the leaders of the church. In spite of the testing, Burroughs demonstrated a spirit of contentment. This life-lesson would be significant for his future ministry when he preached a series of sermons on the subject of contentment, which would later become his greatest published work. "This book was no theoretical discourse. The topic was not speculated upon in vacuum detached from his personal experience. Rather, Burroughs was a living sermon, he simply preached on what he himself had lived and learned."<sup>1</sup> In 1640 Burroughs returned to England and became one of the most popular Puritan preachers in London. He regularly preached to three congregations—Stepney, St. Giles Cripplegate, and St. Michael's Cornhill. As his reputation increased he became a member of the Westminster Assembly and preached before the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

It was during his ministry at Stepney that Burroughs preached a series of messages on contentment. Using Philippians 4:11 as his text, Burroughs began his work with these timely words: "This text contains a very timely cordial to revive the drooping spirits of the saints in these sad and sinking times." (17). Though times were difficult for dissenters, especially dissenting preachers, the sermon series on contentment came during the most fruitful time in Burroughs's ministry. The congregation at Stepney was, for the most part, made up of wealthy individuals. But Burroughs had a specific motivation for preaching on the subject of contentment.

Burroughs knew that the times were uncertain. Things might not turn out as people hoped, and this may have tempted them to be discontent about the prevailing political landscape. He also understood

that the condition of any member of his parish could change at any time. Life was full of uncertainties. . . . If they could learn contentment, they would have a steadiness of spirit regardless of circumstance.<sup>2</sup>

“. . . when  
thou comest,  
bring with thee  
. . . the books”  
(2 Tim. 4:13)

The thesis statement for Burroughs's work is simple yet profound. Burroughs wrote that "to be well skilled in the mystery of Christian contentment is the duty, glory and excellence of a Christian" (19). Burroughs lays out four lines of argument to support his thesis: (1) The nature of this Christian contentment: what it is. (2) The art and mystery of it. (3) What lessons must be learned to bring the heart contentment. (4) Wherein the glorious excellence of this grace chiefly consists.

The focus of Burroughs's work centers on his definition of Christian contentment: "Christian contentment is that sweet, inward, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposal in every condition" (19). In the first part of *Rare Jewel* Burroughs discusses each phrase of this description in detail. This statement is one with which Christians would heartily agree, but most believers would have to admit this description of contentment is extremely difficult to practice. Yet believers have an obligation and, as Burroughs states, a duty to live a life of contentment. The apostle Paul states that contentment is not a natural characteristic but one that must be "learned." At times Burroughs writes very pointedly regarding the obligation of Christians to learn contentment:

Those who have unsteady, disturbed spirits which have no steadfastness at all in them are not fit to do service for God, but such as have steadfastness in their spirits are men and women fit to do any service. That is the reason why, when the Lord has any great work for one of His servants to do, usually He first quiets their spirits, He brings their spirits into a quiet, sweet frame, to be contented with anything, and then He sets them about employment. [126]

The political and social issues may be different from the time Burroughs faithfully heralded God's Word, but the necessity of Christian contentment is desperately needed; indeed, it is a duty for all of God's servants. ☞

<sup>1</sup> Phillip L. Simpson, *A Life of Gospel Peace: A Biography of Jeremiah Burroughs* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011), 80.

<sup>2</sup> Simpson, 147.

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# Straight Cuts

## Are We Following “the Great Commission”?

As a US paratrooper, every time I jumped out of an airplane or helicopter I was commanded to do so by the Jump-Master. I often think of these jumps and the command to “go” when I participate in our church “soulwinning” ministry. Very early in my Christian walk I was taught to participate in personal evangelism. Matthew 28:19–20 were given as the foundation on which all Christians were to evangelize; failure to do so was disobedience to the Lord and unloving toward our fellow man.

For many years I have practiced personal evangelism (some seasons more white-hot and some seasons more lukewarm), taught others to do so, and preached it from the pulpit. As taught, I based these efforts on this text but was bothered in the back of my mind. To whom exactly was the Great Commission given and what particularly were they commanded to do? A less-than-casual reading reveals that the Great Commission was given directly to the eleven apostles; Matthew 28:16 testifies they were with Jesus on the mountain. Two questions must then be asked. If the Great Commission was given to them alone, (1) does the Great Commission, as given, apply to me and, if so, (2) what exactly am I commanded to do? The answer varies depending on whom you ask, but it does seem that there is a difference between what the New Testament presents as personal evangelism and what Jesus commanded His apostles to do in what we commonly refer to as the Great Commission.

For those believing our text is a command for universal personal evangelism, we should ask ourselves if we are keeping that command. Common reasons for those who don’t do so include busyness, lack of eloquence (one of Moses’ excuses, Exod. 4:10), fearfulness, or lack of time. The list could go on and on. But we must confront the reality that, if this is indeed a universal command, we are under its obligation. Anything less is disobedience.

Some believe it was primarily to the apostles. If so, it seems that throughout their lives they did exactly as the Lord taught. Others may note that they were being spoken to in the role of a disciple (Matt. 28:16) and hence the command is for all disciples. A good argument could be made for both of these views. But we still have to ask what the apostles were being told to do.

There are four distinct parts of the Great Commission: to “go,” to “teach” (make disciples), to “baptize,” and to “teach” (instruct). Each element of the Lord’s instruction is a participle except the first “teach.” Though each of these can be taken as a command, the only imperative is to “make disciples.”


Can we practice disciple making without “go[ing]”

to another nation? Must we leave our hometown in order to fulfill Jesus’ teaching here and throughout the New Testament? I’d suggest we can obey Him by following some precedent-setting texts that embody what He is teaching.

It is clear that personal evangelism was practiced during and after the Lord’s earthly ministry. Jesus was hardly in His earthly ministry before we find that Andrew evangelized Peter (John 1:41), and the Samaritan woman heralded the good news to her community (John 4:29). During Jesus’ ministry He taught His disciples to publish the Christ’s arrival (Luke 10:1; interestingly, Jesus’ “go” here is an imperative), and afterward personal evangelism seems to have been a common practice as evidenced by the scattered believers of Acts 8:4, the freshly converted Paul (Acts 9:20), the persecuted believers in Acts 11:19, the corporate church in 1 Thessalonians 1:8, and the demon-possessed man who obeyed the Lord’s command (again an imperative) to evangelize his community (Mark 5:19–20).

Personal evangelism has always had resistance from within and without. Our culture has lately been increasingly satisfied with skirting the difficulty of personal evangelism and settled for coffee-shop Bible studies, pizza parties and praise bands, and a host of other no-hazard religious activities that look like evangelism but are as inoffensive as they can be made. We need not be unnecessarily provocative with the gospel, but we must obey our Master as well, and He has made it clear that we will be rejected and hated like He was. Overall, the teaching of Scripture is that we share the gospel with sinners whether they be local, abroad, family, friend, or foe—when it is easy and when it is difficult. Welcome to the ministry!

Jumping out of an aircraft involves going to Airborne School, and there is fear in every jump. But jumping is exhilarating too. Anyone who practices personal evangelism will tell you the same thing. We need to be well prepared, and there is often fear in sharing with those who may be against us. But to see a soul come to Christ brings great joy. Failure to share the gospel is not only disobedience to our King but is the spirit of the men in 2 Kings 7:9 who “do not well” by withholding food from their starving brothers, and it incurs the guilt of the watchman in Ezekiel 3, both of which are contrary to Jesus’ intent.

So we should ask ourselves afresh, are we following the Great Commission regardless of which view we hold and what part of the Lord’s command we most emphasize? Be ready, and make disciples! 

*“Rightly  
dividing  
the Word  
of Truth”  
(2 Tim. 2:15)*

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One thing that every human, believer and unbeliever, has in common is that we will all go through times of suffering, pain, and loss. Suffering is a tool that scoffers use to bolster their arguments against God's being a loving God. At the same time, for the believer, trials are God's tool for shaping His children into the image of Jesus.

Many of our beloved hymns and gospel songs reflect the heart and experience of authors who have personally suffered tragedy.

### God Leads Us Along (George A. Young)

In shady, green pastures, so rich and so sweet,  
God leads His dear children along;  
Where the water's cool flow bathes the weary  
one's feet,  
God leads His dear children along.

Sometimes on the mount where the sun shines  
so bright,  
God leads His dear children along;  
Sometimes in the valley, in darkest of night,  
God leads His dear children along.

Though sorrows befall us and evils oppose,  
God leads His dear children along;  
Through grace we can conquer, defeat all our foes,  
God leads His dear children along.

Away from the mire, and away from the clay,  
God leads His dear children along;  
Away up in glory, eternity's day,  
God leads His dear children along.

Refrain:  
Some through the waters, some through the flood,  
Some through the fire, but all through the blood;  
Some through great sorrow, but God gives a song,  
In the night season and all the day long.

### How Firm a Foundation (John Rippon)

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!  
What more can He say than to you He hath  
said—

To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

"Fear not, I am with thee, oh, be not dismayed,  
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;  
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to  
stand,

Upheld by My gracious, omnipotent hand.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;  
For I will be with thee thy trouble to bless,  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

"When through fiery trials  
thy pathway shall lie,  
My grace, all-sufficient, shall  
be thy supply;  
The flame shall not harm  
thee; I only design  
Thy dross to consume and  
thy gold to refine.

"The soul that on Jesus doth  
lean for repose,  
I will not, I will not, desert  
to his foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to  
shake,  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.

### "Karolina Sandell-Berg

Karolina Sandell-Berg (1832–1903) knew well the heartbreak of trials and loss. At the age of twenty-six, she was traveling with her father Jonas Sandell, a Lutheran pastor, on a boat trip. During the trip the boat lurched, and her father fell overboard and drowned as she watched. She would later pen this well-known hymn ([popularhymns.com](http://popularhymns.com)).

### Day by Day

Karolina Sandell-Berg

Day by day, and with each passing moment,  
Strength I find to meet my trials here;  
Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment,  
I've no cause for worry or for fear.  
He whose heart is kind beyond all measure  
Gives unto each day what He deems best—  
Lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure,  
Mingling toil with peace and rest.

Every day, the Lord Himself is near me  
With a special mercy for each hour;  
All my cares He fain would bear, and cheer me,  
He whose Name is Counselor and Power;  
The protection of His child and treasure  
Is a charge that on Himself He laid;  
"As thy days, thy strength shall be in measure,"  
This the pledge to me He made.

Help me then in every tribulation  
So to trust Thy promises, O Lord,  
That I lose not faith's sweet consolation  
Offered me within Thy holy Word.  
Help me, Lord, when toil and trouble meeting,  
Ever to take, as from a father's hand,  
One by one, the days, the moments fleeting,  
Till I reach the Promised Land.

*"To every preacher of  
righteousness as well as  
to Noah, wisdom gives  
the command, 'A win-  
dow shalt thou make in  
the ark.'"*

*Charles Spurgeon*

## Horatio G. Spafford

In 1873 Horatio G. Spafford and his family were scheduled to travel from the United States to Europe. Because of business obligations, Spafford sent his wife and daughters ahead. Mrs. Spafford and the girls were sailing on the French liner *Ville du Havre*. During the voyage the ship collided with the English ship *Locheam* and sank in just twelve minutes. Spafford's wife was saved, but his daughters perished. After arriving in Wales, Mrs. Spafford sent a message to her husband. The message simply stated, "Saved alone." Spafford then left by boat to meet her. Near the tragic scene on the high seas he wrote the text of the hymn "It Is Well" (hymnary.org).

### It Is Well (Horatio G. Spafford)

When peace like a river attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,  
"It is well, it is well with my soul."

Though Satan should buffet, though trials  
should come,  
Let this blest assurance control:  
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,  
And has shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!  
My sin, not in part, but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more;  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

O Lord, haste the day when my faith shall  
be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;  
The trump shall resound and the Lord  
shall descend;  
"Even so," it is well with my soul.

Refrain:  
It is well with my soul;  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

## Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Saints through the ages have known deep grief and pain. We can read their stories in biographies and autobiographies. Lewis Drummond, in his biography of Charles Spurgeon, describes a literal fire in the life of the Prince of Preachers. (Excerpts of the following incident come from Lewis A. Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1992], 239–44).

After a few words of greeting came a prayer and a hymn. Then, in his usual style, Spurgeon read the Scriptures with a running commentary. He always did this in his New Park Street services; it was a common procedure in many Nonconformist churches. The congregation sang another hymn and Spurgeon began his long prayer. After the "Amen" it happened. "Fire! Fire! Fire! The galleries are giving way! The place is falling! The place is falling!" came shouts from several areas in the vast crowd. Pandemonium

broke loose. Terrible panic ensued as people fled from all over the building. They trod upon each other, crushed one another, jumped over the rail of the galleries, while the banisters of one of the stairs gave way and many were trampled over. . . .

Later the grisly facts were revealed to Charles and upon hearing the devastating news, he virtually collapsed. . . . Emotionally prostrated, he pined away in deep depression.

Seven people were dead and twenty-eight had been seriously injured.

Charles became so seriously depressed over the tragedy that he almost wished himself dead. The thought that he had in some sense occasioned the death and injury of several people absolutely devastated him.

Perhaps the most poignant description of his grief and pain comes from the pen of Spurgeon himself.

My thoughts were all a case of knives, cutting my heart in pieces until a kind of stupor of grief ministered a mournful medicine to me. . . . Here my mind lay, like a wreck upon the sand, incapable of its usual motion. I was in a strange land, and a stranger in it. My Bible, once my daily food, was but a hand to lift the sluices of my woe. Prayer yielded no balm to me; in fact my soul was like an infant's soul and I could not rise to the dignity of supplication.

We often wonder why God allows trials and why some trials never seem to end. Spurgeon's "fiery trial" was ongoing and excruciating. It seemed no good could come from the horrible event and that there was no end of his suffering.

Drummond describes in glorious detail God's gracious work of bringing peace to Spurgeon's troubled heart.

One day, strolling very forlornly in his friend's garden with Susannah, weeping with the dew, suddenly God's gracious Spirit flashed a Bible passage into Charles' sad, depressed heart, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9–11).

The Word of God thundered in to his depressed soul. He suddenly stopped and turning to his wife with the old light once again in his eyes, he exclaimed: "Dearest, how foolish I have been! Why! What does it matter what becomes of me if the Lord shall but be glorified?" This sudden realization burst like light and joy into his anguished spirit.

Drummond sums up this dark time with these words: "The mist had cleared; the sunshine of God's grace shone into the very depth of his heart and mind. He saw, as never before, it mattered not what happened to Charles Haddon Spurgeon so long as Jesus Christ was exalted." ☞





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Missionary service was not all giving out. Often lessons of deepest import were learned from some of the humblest [Chinese] Christians. —Rosalind Goforth

Moses did not send the spies into the Promised Land to critique or second-guess God. —Theron Crawford

If eternity is not secured before time is spent, I am undone in both. —James Meikle

If you think before you speak, the other fellow gets in his joke first. —Ed Howe

What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace. —Blaise Pascal

Before a missionary can be greatly used, he must go through a "missionary baptism." —Rosalind Goforth of China

Depart from me, ye rivals of my God. —Abraham Booth

The man who knocks at the door of the brothel is looking for God. —G. K. Chesterton

The soul must overflow  
If thou another soul would'st reach;  
It needs the overflow of heart  
To give the lips full speech.  
—quoted by Rosalind Goforth

A cheerful look makes a dish a feast. —George Herbert

The armchair American, untrained in brutality, will find palpable the honeyed lie of the False Prophet. Neo-Orthodoxy will be the rage, church union the patriotism, God the common topic of conversation, but not Paul's orthodoxy, nor Christ's church, nor my God. —Elisabeth Elliot

It's a gray day. Yes, but dinna ye see the patch of blue? —Scottish shoemaker

I learned then effectually that my strength was to sit still. —Hannah Whitall Smith

Many a waiting hour was needful to enrich the harp of David. . . . What was the preparation of the son of Jesse for the songs like unto which none others have ever sounded on this earth? The outrage of the wicked, which brought forth cries for God's help. . . . Every sorrow was another string to his harp; every deliverance another theme for praise. —Anna Shipton

People are strange: they want the front of the bus, the back of the church, and the center of attention. —Unknown

Faith's most severe tests come not when we see nothing, but when we see a stunning array of evidence that seems to prove our faith vain. —Elisabeth Elliot

Compiled by Dr. David Atkinson, pastor of Dyer Baptist Church, Dyer, Indiana.



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# "Little Is Much, When God Is in It"

So go the words to the hymn written by Kittie L. Suffield in 1924.

"Does the place you're called to labor, Seem so small and little known?" continues the song. I certainly was imagining a bigger field of service when my husband, Edward, and I started out together thirty-one years ago. The rural community we live in was not very welcoming. The small Bible-teaching church we attend is twenty miles away.

Perhaps you, like me, long for a brighter spotlight in a ministry. You may work in the nursery of your church year after year. Or after directing Christmas programs with angels, shepherds, and sheep all pushing and shoving down the church aisle, you have decided, "No more." Maybe the homeschooling shine has worn off (and that didn't take long for me!) and you aren't sure why you are still teaching a gym class (or art class or Spanish class or even—gasp—math!) when your children aren't thankful and heaping on the praise.

Let me encourage you, dear Christian woman. Your work is not in vain. God's plan is long term. Your work with your husband, family, community, and church will not be seen (completely) in your lifetime, but it will not go unnoticed either. And every now and then, God grants us a view of what He has been doing while we were faithfully toiling away.

## Opportunities for Ministry

I didn't want to homeschool my children initially: I had an education degree and had some small inkling of the enormity of the job. In our area, there were no other options. I am glad I did it. I ended up becoming the local leader in a statewide homeschool support group, leading a gym program, and allowing my children to play together with forty-five of their friends once a week. I have learned how to play soccer, basketball, juggle, bowl, and I can do a push-up.

I was doing all that activity so that my children would have a good school experience. It wasn't until after years of soccer and jump-roping that I realized what a ministry it was to *other* moms and their kids. I have encouraged lots of moms over the years to pay attention to their children's

hearts, to keep going when they were weary, to be patient when they felt they had no more patience, to "not be weary in well doing" (Gal. 6:9). And recently I received a card from a former gym student: "I appreciated your instruction, but also your friendship."

My children have at times expressed their appreciation for my efforts. For example, "I think I'm actually pretty well prepared for this class at college." (What did they think I was working toward all those years?) Even the ladies at the library know they can give my name out when a person inquires about homeschooling. How did they know that? They saw our family at the library week after week. I bet your family is that same way—going about

your life wondering whether anyone is noticing. They are. Your testimony matters.

## The Empty Nest

After homeschooling my four children, I was dreading an "empty nest." After twenty-two years at home, I was thinking that the transition time into a new phase of life and a quiet house might not be pretty. The Lord graciously provided a part-time job with very flexible hours during my youngest daughter's senior year of high school.

What a change for me to be out in the work world

again. (I have a new appreciation for my husband's faithfulness in his occupation.) As a Christian I openly talked of my church, the Bible, and my relationship to the Lord. Just as in my "mom" days, I use "teachable moments" to share my faith with my coworkers. One morning at the office was particularly stressful: it was a snowy winter day, most of us had slid in to work, the plow guy was hollering at the bookkeeper about someone else's bad parking, the phone kept ringing with one problem after another, and I said, "Of all mornings, we should definitely pray over this day."

"Sounds good to me," said the program director.

"I need all the help I can get," said another. And so said each one in my office, saved people and unsaved. So I bowed my head and prayed out loud for each one and for God's wisdom for the day. Wow! That caught me by surprise! It doesn't happen every day, but it still happens.

In church, I have taught Sunday school, but mostly I have worked in the nursery. I love children, but I particularly feel for the mom who needs a break from childcare. So year after year, I have played with blocks and fixed lunches



The author (right) with coworkers for whom she prays.

Continued on page 37



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## THE STORY OF DAVID, PART 3:

The details in this chapter of David's life may not be as familiar as the Goliath episode, so if you're serious about getting a bit more out of this column I suggest you take five or six minutes and read 1 Samuel 20 now. To pack this pericope into a pecan shell: the plucky youth who slew the giant, defended the honor of God, saved the nation's face, and got the king out of a tight spot suddenly finds himself *persona non grata* in the royal court—at least when Saul's around. But he's won the respect and admiration of the king's son, Jonathan (probably David's senior by a decade or two). Something profoundly theologically significant and far-reaching happens between them in this chapter: they seal their friendship with a covenant.

Why, exactly, does David go to Jonathan? His question is not, "Do you think your dad is upset with me?" He already knows that "there is but a step between me and death" (20:3). His question is "Why? What have I done? How have I offended?" (20:1, 8). For his part, how could Jonathan be ignorant or doubtful or denying of Saul's intent toward David? For one thing, the last time we saw Jonathan, he played advocate for David and seemed to be successful in making peace between David and Saul (19:1–8). But Saul has grown increasingly irrational and unpredictable; some might even say bipolar. But why does David feel safe going to Jonathan at all? When you feel in danger from the king because you are perceived as a threat to his kingdom, it's not normally smart to appeal to the king's heir for aid.

### Dissecting the Story

The story breaks neatly into four scenes: (1) a meeting between friends (20:1–11); (2) in the field (20:11–24a); (3) at the feast (20:24b–34); and (4) in the field (20:35–42). But there is a kind of parenthesis—a break in the flow of the story. Can you find it?

**Plot Center.** In 20:10, David asks the big question weighing on his mind: "How will I find out if Saul has it in for me?" Jonathan suggests that this conversation would be better continued somewhere else, so they go out to the field (20:11). But he doesn't answer David's question until 20:18. That means 20:12–17 could be left out and the story would go on. (Try jumping from reading 20:10 to 20:18 and you'll see what I mean.) Our concern with a story is, "Okay, then what happened next?" But when you have a break in a narrative like this, it's a signal that what happens here is more important than finding out "what happens next." If you leave out 20:12–17, you miss the soul of the passage.

**Characters.** The previous column suggested that it's helpful to understand not only who the characters are in a story, but exactly what their relationship is to each other and to the story itself. There are two main characters, David (named 25x) and Jonathan (named 28x), but is one of them predominant? David speaks to Jonathan four times (20:1, 3, 5–8, 10), but Jonathan speaks to David nine or ten times (20:2, 4, 9, 11, 12–15, 16, 17, 18–23, [37–38,] 42). By far, Jonathan does most of the talking, but that doesn't mean he's the protagonist rather than David. I'd suggest that they are co-protagonists; the story is as much about Jonathan as it is about David.

The antagonist is clearer: Saul (mentioned 23x by name or title), who also functions as a foil in graphic contrast to Jonathan. And there are two other persons mentioned, both "agents"—that is, persons whose actions are crucial to the story. The obvious one is Jonathan's young, unnamed servant whose role in fetching the arrows unwittingly telegraphs vital information to David. Perhaps less obvious at first glance is the role that the Lord plays in all of this, but He is mentioned 13x (20:3, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 42).

**Subject.** We've established *who* the story is about. But *what* is the story about? That's answered in a single word: *covenant*. That becomes even more apparent if you trace the comparative frequency of that term both before and after this chapter (18:3; 20:8, 16, 17, 42; 22:8; 23:18). This is a reconfirmation and extension of the covenant relationship that already existed between them, prompted by Jonathan's admiration for David and his apparent belief that David was God's choice to be king after his father Saul (18:3–4).

We think of covenants as contracts, but that loses some of the nuance inherent in most of the biblical uses of the term "covenant." We don't make a lot of "covenants." If we want to be friends with someone, we just are; the "loyalty" aspect is understood; in fact, we would be suspicious if our friend insisted that we "swear" our loyalty (as Jonathan did with David). But there are times when we *do* insist on that. When? And why?

Elements that prompt a "covenant" include when there is (a) some unusual degree of loyalty or love that motivates the commitment, which clearly motivates the Jonathan-David covenant; (b) some potential threat or danger that might interfere with the intended exclusivity of the relationship or commitment (we think immediately of marriage, but this idea is behind even many commercial contracts); or, (c) some possible or potential threat to maintaining the loyalty of that commitment. When that's



## COVENANTAL SECURITY (1 SAMUEL 20)

the case, covenantal assurances are a two-way affair, as this covenant is: (1) “I promise that I will or won’t do such-and-such” (20:12–13), and (2) “Promise me that you will or won’t do such-and-such” (20:14–15). In this case, what is the potential threat being guarded against? Jonathan is the king’s heir who would naturally want to guard his right to the throne and be loyal to his father. David is the anointed one who would naturally want to solidify his rule when he gets the throne.

A relationship takes the formalized form of a covenant in order to verbalize one’s commitment to the other party, to solemnize one’s commitment before God, and to guarantee the security of that commitment and relationship (when there is some reason for doing so, some potential development that could threaten the exclusivity or loyalty of commitment or relationship).

This is a chapter about “covenant.” But it goes a little deeper than that. What motivates this covenant is not mere safety or self-interest, but love (18:1, 3; 20:17). What is at the core of this covenant is expressed in one of the most important OT concepts, especially in connection with covenants: *chesed* (20:8, 14, 15). The term has reference to relational or covenantal loyalty that manifests itself in acts of kindness (hence the classic KJV translation of “lovingkindness”). It is a quality that God particularly prizes and looks for in people (Micah 6:6–8). In the case of the Jonathan-David covenant, it involves mutual loyalty to each other’s person (vv. 13–14) and family (vv. 15–16) forever (23, 42). “The order is: love gives itself in covenant and gladly promises devoted love in that covenant; the covenant partner then rests in the security of that promise and may appeal to it, as David does here” (Davis).

*Chesed* doesn’t just mean you promise not to slit the other person’s throat. It’s not bare, letter-of-the-law fulfillment of a contractual obligation. “Loyalty” can sometimes lose an important nuance. There is an element of duty, obligation, responsibility because of the covenant. But there is also an element of love—and *expression* of that love—in the term. As archaic as it may sound, “lovingkindness” is a richly textured and highly perceptive translation—acts of kindness that are rooted in and spring out of a chosen commitment to love. That is what David and Jonathan express here, and it’s what David demonstrates so beautifully to a crippled man named Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 8–9. Covenants aren’t just about duty; they are about love, loyalty, kindness, and security.

Apart from *observing* the loyal covenant love expressed in this chapter, what exactly are we supposed to *do* with

it? Here’s the message of this chapter. *This story models the security that characterizes a true covenant relationship and the beauty and rightness of honoring one’s covenant commitments and relationships—particularly those made on the basis of what we believed to be God’s will—even in the direst of circumstances and despite potential personal loss.*

### Applying the Story

If you are a believer, you are in a covenant relationship with the Lord. The night before He was crucified, Jesus took the cup of the Passover meal and said, “This is my blood of the new testament [covenant], which is shed for many.” Paul calls himself and his fellow apostles “ministers of the new testament [covenant]” (2 Cor. 3:6). He says that to Gentiles in connection with the nature of his ministry to them. That means that even though the new covenant was not made with us originally, it has been extended to us explicitly—at least its internal, spiritual features. Significant aspects of that new covenant *must* still be fulfilled for and in those to whom it was promised (Israel), or else God is not a covenant-keeping God. But the NT describes the promises of the New Covenant to which we have been granted access. Ransack that covenant and take your refuge in it. That’s where your ultimate and certain security lies.

If you are married, your marriage covenant was an expression of loyalty and commitment, rooted in love, freely made in the presence of God and under the conviction that it was His will, and in Jonathan’s words, “while yet I live” (20:14). My father had long since broken his covenant with my mother—vociferously and with hostility—before the Lord broke through his pride and self-sufficiency and made a covenant with him, in spite of everything he had done. My father was a changed man, and from then on he did all he could (under his changed circumstances) to see to it that his now-Alzheimer’s-stricken ex-wife was taken care of. He did what he could to fulfill his covenant promises to her. Not many people may notice the quiet, nonsensational, unglamorous acts of covenant loyalty in a marriage covenant relationship. But they are noticed and hailed in heaven, because they display the image and grace of God at work in fallen people. They glorify God, and they testify that there is something higher, and longer-lasting, and more important than *me* and *now*.

## Who Are Your Counselors?

Continued from page 7

(and maybe a babysitter!) and teach her how to make God's Word and her family a priority. Are you single? God has given you the freedom from family responsibilities to be able to mentor a college student or teenager as she navigates life's changes. Perhaps you are a stay-at-home mom of young children. Don't be discouraged that you have no time or energy left to mentor someone—you have your own little discipleship group right at your feet. Don't be deceived into thinking you are doing nothing for the Kingdom by staying at home—you are training arrows to be thrust out someday for God's glory! And if you will faithfully study God's Word and fulfill your God-given responsibilities as a wife and mother, you will find that others are watching your life, and discipleship opportunities may begin to come to you.

### **"Lord, I Believe; Help Thou Mine Unbelief"**

Likely no true believer would dispute that God's Word is His primary means of perfecting His children. But do we really *believe* that? Do we really believe that His power, which comes through the knowledge of His Son, provides all we need for life and godliness?<sup>5</sup> Are we willing to stake our spiritual lives on

that promise? What would happen if we set aside all other reading, browsing, watching, and listening for a time just to steep ourselves in the Word of God *alone*?

Consider Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount: "Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them . . . He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock" (Luke 6:47-48). A wise woman is one who listens to and believes *His* words. Only then is her foundation strong and sure amid a myriad of voices.

Cherith grew up in a pastor's home and now supports her husband in his role as dean of students at Bob Jones University. She is a stay-at-home mom of four children and is involved in ladies', college, and music ministries at her local church.



<sup>1</sup> John 17:17

<sup>2</sup> Colossians 2:3

<sup>3</sup> 2 Peter 1:3

<sup>4</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:6

<sup>5</sup> 2 Peter 1:3

## News From All Over

(Continued from page 5)

twenty years in Christian schools, setting up mailings was something with which they were both familiar. Both were retiring from full-time Christian ministry as pastor and pastor's wife, but their hearts have never retired from serving God. They have enjoyed helping with *FrontLine* magazine and continue to serve at Faith wherever possible. Sharing the gospel with the lost and encouraging the saved with God's Word is their continued desire and calling.



**Rick Fox** pastors Mt. Carmel Community Church and Christian school in Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania. His church is seeking a servant-minded couple to help in the ministry with teaching Sunday school, music, visiting, occasional preaching, children and youth, Bible study, and coaching. A rent-free, two-bedroom apartment and free tuition for children are available. This is not a request to fill a paid position; however, the church will likely need a church and school secretary and two elementary school teachers for fall 2016.

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## Shame and Suicide

Hackers of the Ashley Madison website (a site created to arrange dates with non-spouses for people who are already married) have successfully leaked the personal information of tens of millions of site users. Government officials from the US and Great Britain as well as high-end executives from Europe and North America have been exposed for their involvement.

The scandal seems to be touching people everywhere—including those who are followers of Christ. A Canadian law firm has filed a \$578 million class-action lawsuit for Ashley Madison's failure to protect the private information of its clients. Law enforcement officials are making public threats to the hackers, and Avid Life Media (the parent company of Ashley Madison) has offered nearly \$380,000 as a reward for information on the hackers.

While Scriptural admonitions against hypocrisy, adultery, and vain attempts of covering sin are clearly borne out in this situation, there can be little room for a self-righteous response. The One who bore our shame is once again being overlooked. Reports have indicated that several suicides have followed in the wake of the public exposure of some people's shame.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/several-suicides-reported-after-ashley-madison-affairs-leak-texas-police-chief-takes-own-life-143653/>.

## Temple Mount and Jewish Prayer

A magistrate court in Jerusalem issued an historic ruling that implements various previous court rulings: Jewish prayer must be permitted on the Temple Mount.

Israel reclaimed the Temple Mount in 1967 but immediately granted stewardship of the Islamic holy sites and all of the Temple Mount to the Waqf. Since that time Jews and Christians have been restricted in their activities on the Temple Mount.

In 2011 Rabbi Yehuda Glick was televised praying on the Temple Mount in a Channel 10 program. For his infraction Israeli police banned him from ascending the Temple Mount for two years. Subsequently he was seriously injured when an Islamist terrorist attempted to assassinate him. The recent court decision awarded Rabbi Glick 500,000 NIS for loss of livelihood and 150,000 NIS for damages. His court expenses were to be paid by the Israeli police. But more importantly the ruling insisted that Israeli police "ensure that Jews are able to pray on the Temple Mount, and not to act sweepingly to prevent Jews from praying on the Temple Mount."

This article can be referenced at <http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/31715/israeli-judge-rules-people-faiths-must-allowed-pray-temple-mountain-jerusalem/#IH2K1D6qgoazrgWP.97>.

## Public Schools and Team Prayers

The Hall County, Georgia, public school district will be forced to pay \$22,500 to pay the legal expenses of the American Humanist Association (AHA). This judgment is part of an out-of-court arbitration that demanded the school system pay the legal fees and agree to host religious-neutrality training sessions for all school employees. School authorities maintain that employees did not violate any state or federal laws.

According to the litigation, coaches were alleged to have led in prayer during practices and games. It was also alleged that Scripture verses were printed on gym bags and used as team motivation material.

AHA Executive Director Roy Speckhardt sees the results of arbitration as a victory. "When public schools remain secular, they uphold the rights of all students to learn, free from unnecessary religious intrusion."

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/georgia-school-district-forced-to-pay-atheist-group-22500-in-lawsuit-over-coach-led-team-prayers-141972/#UjMF-HJt28qPYRrf3.99>.

## An Atheist Minister's Fight

Gretta Vosper, a minister in the United Church of Canada, is now fighting to keep her ordination credentials. Vosper came out as an atheist in 2001. According to her own account, "After I spontane-

ously preached a sermon in which I completely deconstructed the idea of a god named God, rather than fire me, the congregation chose to step out on an unmarked path."

In May the UCC general secretary submitted a ruling that presented the council with a process for reviewing the effectiveness of Vosper's ministry. Vosper is appealing both the secretary's ruling and the motion to review, which was made by the Toronto Conference sub-Executive Committee.

At this point there is no official decision against her. She will, however, be asked to review and reaffirm her ordination.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/atheist-minister-continues-fight-to-remain-ordained-in-united-church-of-canada-142493/#8kl0ycZugXhl3KA.99>.

## Planned Parenthood and the Center for Medical Progress

On the July 26, 2015, *This Week* program, ABC's George Stephanopoulos interviewed Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards. Richards overtly attacked the Center for Medical Progress (which has recently released a series of videos critical of Planned Parenthood's practices) as being "part of the most militant wing of the anti-abortion movement." She asserted that the organization is linked to the people who bomb clinics and murder doctors. And she insisted that the videos were highly edited.

In spite of the fact that CMP has brought horrifying information regarding Planned Parenthood's practices to light, the group itself is under attack: House Democrats have called for an investigation of CMP.

Meanwhile, the US government continues to fund Planned Parenthood, the nation's number-one abortion provider, to the tune of \$500 million every year.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/planned-parenthood-president-cecile-richards-compares-pro-lifers-to-murderers-141968/#LRokMTW5Ex5Hize.99>.

### Christian Colleges and Employee Benefits

In the wake of the June 26 Supreme Court Decision recognizing gay marriage as a civil right in all fifty states, two Christian colleges have gone on record saying they will extend employee benefits to same-sex spouses.

Hope College (Holland, Michigan), a small liberal-arts college associated with the Reformed Churches of America, indicated that their decision was consistent with their previous policies. Hope president John Knapp stated, "This is a continuation of Hope's longstanding commitment to our employees' health and well-being, and a reminder that Hope is best served by recruiting and retaining people based on their ability to contribute to the life of the college and its Christian mission."

Belmont University was formerly associated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention until 2009. After disassociating with the TBC, they offered same-sex benefits as of 2011. Belmont's vision statement asserts that Belmont "welcomes men and women

## NOTABLE QUOTES

**N**ot only has society rejected truth, but it also no longer believes in consequences.—Warren Wiersbe

**C**ommit your life to God, see vision, do the work that's nearest, the work He appoints, truly and well and faithfully, and die knowing that you have started delicate influences, dynamic forces which will proceed through every succeeding generation until they gather up the harvest of glorious result about the throne of the Eternal. The man of God has not finished his work in the world when they put him in a coffin.—G. Campbell Morgan

**C**ompassion will cure more sins than condemnation.—Henry Ward Beecher

**H**ow far you go in life depends on you being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and the strong. Because someday in life, you will have been all of these.—George Washington Carver

**T**here are times when solitude is better than society, and silence is wiser than speech. We should be better Christians if we were more alone, waiting upon God, and gathering through meditation on His Word spiritual strength for labour in his service. We ought to muse upon the things of God, because we thus get the real nutriment out of them. . . . Why is it that some Christians, although they hear many sermons, make but slow advances in the divine life? Because they neglect their closets, and do not thoughtfully meditate on God's Word. They love the wheat, but they do not grind it; they would have the corn, but they will not go forth into the fields to gather it; the fruit hangs upon the tree, but they will not pluck it.—Charles Haddon Spurgeon

**W**e can easily manage if we will only take, each day, the burden appointed to it. But the load will be too heavy for us if we carry yesterday's burden over again today, and then add the burden of the morrow before we are required to bear it.—John Newton

from diverse backgrounds . . . upholds the dignity of all and fosters an atmosphere of respect for civil expression and divergent perspectives."

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/two-christian-colleges-extend-employment-benefits-to-same-sex-spouses-141404/#2oZ84rkcb3O1T6FJ.99>.

### BSA and Another Historic Change

The National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America has ratified the unanimous recommendation of the executive committee to end the ban on openly gay adult leaders.

This decision is a compromise that allows individual troops to set their own policies and individual scouts and families to choose the troop that best fits their particular perspective. Church-sponsored troops will be permitted to uphold the ban. Some churches have chosen to cut ties with the BSA nonetheless.

BSA president Robert Gates set the tone for this change nearly a year ago when he stated, "I am not asking the national board for any action to change our current policy at this meeting. But I must speak as plainly and bluntly to you as I spoke to presidents when I was director of the CIA and secretary of defense. We must deal with the world as it is, not as we might wish it to be. . . . We can act on our own or be forced to act. But either way, I suspect we do not have a lot of time."

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/boy-scouts-vote-to-end-historic-ban-on-openly-gay-adult-leaders-church-sponsored-troops-allowed-to-keep-ban-141494/#gyoQAJ3TCAUILRIC.99>.

*Newsworthy* is presented to inform believers. The people or sources mentioned do not necessarily carry the endorsement of FBFI.

Compiled by Robert Conduct, FBFI Executive Board member and pastor of Upper Cross Roads Baptist Church, Baldwin, Maryland.



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# ON LANGUAGE & SCRIPTURE

I personally never witnessed any of what historians call "the 1970s." But I've read about them, and I'm now convinced, despite the outlandishly impossible outfits people allegedly wore, that the 1970s really happened. One of my earliest memories of reading about the polyester decade—call me strange—comes from an old book of comic strips in which a male character made a disparaging reference to "Women's Lib." I had no idea at the time (1987?) what "Women's Lib" was; now I know that 1970s feminism was part of the so-called "second wave" of feminism. Feminists felt they were being "liberated" from the strictures of a patriarchalist society.

One front in the battle of the sexes since that time has actually been lexicographical: a not-insignificant number of feminists have proposed that "woman" should be replaced with "womyn," and "women" with "wimmin." Why? According to a feminist at Michigan State,

By taking the "men" and "man" out of the words "woman" and "women" we are symbolically saying that we do not need men to be "complete." . . . The re-spelling of the word "woman" is a statement that we refused to be defined by men.

This comment shows that behind the lexicography lies some theology—or rather some anti-theology. It's not as if there's some divine law that all languages must form their word for "woman" off of their word for "man." Greek doesn't, and God never objected to using *gune* (woman) and *aner* (man) in the New Testament. But Hebrew does, and it's interesting that the Bible says there is meaning behind this lexicographical point: "She shall be called Woman [*ishah*], because she was taken out of Man [*ish*]" (Gen. 2:23).

Because of the vagaries of its history, English just happens to have a near-perfect parallel to Hebrew's *ish* and *ishah*: "man" and "woman." Enjoy it while it lasts, as I suspect it will far past our lifetimes.

But I suggest we not get hung up on spelling, that we "strive not about words to no profit" (2 Tim. 2:14). The realities are more important than the symbols, and we need to know those realities: the Bible repeatedly makes the point that the order of creation—man, then woman—is significant (Gen. 2:18–25; 1 Cor. 11:9; 1 Tim. 2:13). We shouldn't go beyond the Bible, restricting women in ways that implicitly deny their equal status as divine image-bearers. But we shouldn't be nervous about proclaiming that a truly liberated woman—like a truly liberated man—gladly accepts everything Scripture says about the complementary relationship between man and woman.

Dr. Mark L. Ward Jr. is a Logos Bible Software expert in Bellingham, Washington.



# Regional Reports



## Pacific Rim Regional FBFI Report

*John C. Vaughn*

The sixth Pacific Rim FBFI Regional Fellowship was held May 26–28, 2015, in conjunction with the eighteenth Asian Independent Baptist Bible Mission Conference, hosted by Grace Baptist Ministries, in Singapore. Guests attending represented over a dozen different countries, including Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan, Japan, the Philippines, Australia, India, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Nepal. Technically, some of these countries are not on the Pacific Rim, but attendees were close enough to join us.

The plenary session speakers were Drs. P. D. Cherian, David Innes, Bob Jones III, Peter Maruyama, Steve Pettit, and John Vaughn. Breakout session speakers included Mr. Sam Cherian, Dr. Phil Kamibayashiyama, and Dr. Ron White. Mrs. Beneth Jones and Miss Becky Vaughn spoke in the ladies' sessions. Interestingly, a session on reaching the Facebook generation was offered by Melbourne, Australia, pastor Rev. Robert Apps.

The meeting was well attended, the delicious and

generous buffet meals were greatly enjoyed, and both the preaching and conference music were outstanding. Many words of praise and appreciation were heard both at the meeting and in follow-up correspondence. Having held six Pacific Rim Fellowships beginning in Japan in 2004, we believe the Pacific Rim and other countries represented by this vast area have the leadership in place to hold regional meetings within more appropriate and limited regions that are still quite large. Plans are underway to host a Philippines Regional Fellowship in 2017 (inviting everyone from the Pacific Rim).

Discussions are also ongoing for the development of a region to include Japan, Taiwan, and Korea as well as a region involving most of the countries in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which includes Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and India—all of which were represented at this year's Fellowship—and others. In addition, discussions are also underway regarding those states in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN states) which







includes Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore. We might even see an FBFI Fellowship reaching Australia and New Zealand in the near future. Leaders willing to host meetings and work with others from their areas discussed possible meetings in the next two-to-three years. Going forward, we hope to have regional directors from each of these major areas hosting periodic Regional Fellowships within the Pacific Rim and nearby countries.

## Alaska FBFI Regional Fellowship

*Earl Barnett*

This was the twenty-fourth annual meeting for the Alaska Regional Fellowship. The meeting was held at Hamilton Acres Baptist Church in Fairbanks. Dr. Hugh Hamilton's vision of an Alaska FBFI meeting became a reality after attending the FBFI Annual Fellowship in Denver.



This was the first time Dr. Kevin Schaal has been with us and the third time Dr. Walt Brock has been in our meeting. We did not have a theme for the meeting, but both Kevin's and Walt's messages dovetailed together to challenge our hearts. Kevin's theme for his messages was "Changes" and Walt's was "Challenges." What a blessing to all to see how God used those messages! Pastor Bruce Hamilton preached on "Influences" in life and the people whom God has brought into his life to direct his ministry. This was Pastor Aron Schrepfer's first time at our meeting, and he challenged our hearts from the Scriptures on Tuesday. Mrs. Betty Brock spoke at the Ladies' Session on Tuesday morning.

We are looking forward to our twenty-fifth annual meeting next year at Maranatha Baptist Church in Anchorage, hosted by Pastor Charles England. Our speakers will be Drs. Will Senn and Mike Harding.





# PWOC: A Unique Ministry to

When my Army chaplain husband and I were first married, I had the naïve thought that we would be among some of the only believers in a predominantly secular military environment. After the blessing of growing up in a Christian home and attending Christian schools all my life, I wondered where I would find a place to minister and “belong” in this challenging environment. Would I make good Christian friends in the Army world? During that first year of marriage in 1998, I realized very quickly that my assumptions were all wrong. One of the first places my husband suggested I go was the women’s Bible study group called PWOC, and it became a tremendous source of ministry and fellowship.

PWOC, one of numerous military acronyms I’ve been introduced to over the years, stands for Protestant Women of the Chapel, and its motto is “Workers Together for Christ.” PWOC sounded like a strange name for a ladies’ Bible study to me at first, but I soon grew to love it. During my first year of involvement at Ft. Benning, Georgia, in 1998, I quickly realized this was not your typical local-church Bible-study group. Founded in Germany in 1955, PWOC groups across all five branches of the Armed Forces provide support to chaplains and commanders by offering opportunities for spiritual growth and fellowship for the women of their installations.

Because of the unique needs of our military families, PWOC is unique as well. Most meetings begin with singing followed by announcements, a devotional, and prayer. Next are fellowship and food. Finally, ladies break up into small-group Bible studies led by carefully chosen teachers or facilitators. So each meeting includes corporate time as well as small-group Bible studies. Although overseen by a chaplain “sponsor,” each PWOC is led by a group of military wives who serve as board members and work





# Military Wives

Kara Bullock

with the chapel program to provide support. Chapel-funded childcare is provided at most PWOCs, allowing young wives to have a much-needed break, especially during deployments.

As a young mom at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, I dropped my children off at a well-staffed nursery and enjoyed the company of godly ladies for Bible study. Later, as my children grew older, I had ministry opportunities as well. In PWOCs across the country I served as a newcomers' liaison, song leader, spiritual life vice president (choosing the Bible studies), Bible study teacher, and, currently, as president here at Ft. Gordon. In some places I've been more active than in others. PWOC is a rewarding ministry opportunity and avenue for my own spiritual growth. Many ladies come who have no spiritual leadership in their homes and are desperate for fellowship and Bible teaching. God has blessed this ministry for sixty years and counting.

The four aims of PWOC are to **LEAD** women to accept Christ as personal Savior and Lord; to **TEACH** women the history, beliefs, and programs of the church, all built on a solid foundation of worship and Bible study; to **DEVELOP** in women the skills of prayer, evangelism, stewardship, and social service, against a background of personal spiritual development; and to **INVOLVE** women in the work of the Chapel, in keeping with their abilities and interests (<http://thehubpwoc.net>).

Retiree wives, contractor wives, as well as active-duty wives from all branches can attend. If a person can get on post/base with a military ID card, she can come! Older women are encouraged to mentor the younger, and new wives benefit from their expertise in spiritual matters as well as military questions. This is a unique group of women who have the military life in common and know how to help each other through unique challenges.

This is from a PWOC leader, Jenn:

As the mom of a newborn and a three-year-old, and brand new to the Army way of life, the summer of 2009 found me searching for understanding, purpose, and meaning as our family tried to settle in at our first assignment. Thankfully, the Lord led me to PWOC. There I found women who were in the same proverbial boat as I was and who loved Jesus with all their hearts. PWOC provided a godly community for me to make connections and experience personal spiritual growth. The Bible studies led me to study Scripture more deeply and know my God better. As the months went on, it also provided the grounds for me to walk into positions of women's leadership. I taught a Bible study class, served on the board, and led singing. Thank God for the women and ministry of PWOC!

Would you pray for women like Jenn who are searching for meaning and purpose in their lives? Would you pray for the PWOC at Ft. Gordon, Georgia, as well as other installations around the world? It is a tremendous organization that brings women to Christ and helps them grow!

Kara is the wife of CH (LTC) Scott Bullock and serves with him at Ft. Gordon, Georgia, with her two children, Jonathan and Jinnea. For more information about PWOC go to <http://thehubpwoc.net> or contact Kara Bullock at [scottkara15@gmail.com](mailto:scottkara15@gmail.com).

## The Law of Kindness— In Uniform!

This picture of Carly Koehn and husband, Chaplain Chris Koehn at his recent graduation from CH-BOLC (Chaplain Basic Officer Leader Course) at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, captures the importance of wives who are called to serve alongside their husbands in chaplaincy ministry. These special ladies not only serve their husbands in their ministries, but they also serve the wives of those who serve our country and women who serve in uniform. Just as the missionary wife is as much a missionary as her husband, the chaplain's wife is prepared and positioned to fulfill the unique role of missionary to the military community. Often, her ministry is like that of the pastor's wife in a local church.





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## "Little Is Much, When God Is in It"

Continued from page 24

with plastic food with the two-year-olds. I sing a lot with them, getting in Bible truths as I am able. But the real joy is knowing that the moms got some refreshment, so that they will be able to "keep on keeping on" for another week.

Whatever your ministry, Christian woman, do not be discouraged. Year after year of work in church, work outside the home, in your community, and in your family will soon become a legacy of faithful service.

When the conflict here is ended,  
And our race on earth is run,

He will say, if we are faithful,  
"Welcome home, My child—well done!  
Little is much when God is in it  
Labor not for wealth or fame;  
There's a crown and you can win it  
If you'll go in Jesus name."

Elizabeth Estelle is a wife, homeschool mom, gym teacher, and now a housing counselor for a local non-profit.



# Making Decisions That Lead to Ruin (Part 2)

In the last article we took a look at men who made decisions that led to their ruin. The first man we studied was Saul, who was ruined by his disobedience, and the second man was Samson, who was ruined by his lust for women.

We are now going to study another man who faced a similar fate of ruin based on a wrong decision—Moses. This man's life is truly a marvel to behold. His life was miraculously spared from a decree of Pharaoh that all male Hebrew babies be killed. He was hidden in an ark made of pitch, discovered by Pharaoh's daughter, and raised in Pharaoh's palace with his own mother as his nursemaid. When Moses was forty years old, God appeared to him in a burning bush and told him he was chosen to deliver the children of Israel from Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Moses stood before Pharaoh and declared in Exodus 5:1, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." Pharaoh denied their request; so the Lord, through Moses, proceeded to devastate Egypt with ten horrific plagues. Then the Lord revealed more of His power by opening the Red Sea so the Israelites could escape from the Egyptian army. Pharaoh, furious for letting the Israelites go, hotly pursued them. Seeing the dry path through the Red Sea, he commanded his soldiers to follow them; when they did, the Lord caused the walls of the sea to crash down on them, drowning the entire army.

But this was just the beginning of God's miracles. He then fed the children of Israel in the wilderness with manna. Psalm 78:25 says, "Man did eat angels' food." He also gave them meat by sending quails into their camp. Not only did God give them food, but He also provided water. The Lord said to Moses in Exodus 17:6, "Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel." Now all of this history that I have given is crucial because it leads up to the decision Moses made that ultimately led to his ruin.

All throughout the wilderness journey, the Israelites were a difficult people to lead. The Bible tells us over and over again how they complained and murmured against Moses and ultimately against God. As they pressed on toward the Promised Land, the children of Israel quarreled

with Moses. We read in Numbers 20:3, "And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord!" They complained to Moses because they had no water; and here we come to the climax in the life of Moses. The Lord heard the complaining of Israel and spoke to Moses in Numbers 20:8: "Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink." Here was the clear command of the Lord to Moses: "Speak ye unto the rock before their eyes." But look what Moses did instead in Numbers 20:10–11: "And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also." Moses was instructed to speak to the rock. But Moses, in his anger, hit the rock twice with his rod—a direct violation of the Lord's command. Moses made a decision based on anger, which cost him the privilege of entering the Promised Land. The Lord said in Numbers 20:12, "Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." How sad it is that a man who was so faithful to the Lord would be deprived of his greatest desire, all because he made a rash decision based on anger! Moses pleaded with the Lord to let him enter the Promised Land, but we read in Deuteronomy 3:26, "The Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter."

There is a profound admonition for all of the Lord's people in these three true-life accounts: Saul, who was ruined by his disobedience; Samson, who was ruined by his lust for women; and Moses, who was ruined by his anger. First Corinthians 10:11 says, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Evangelist Jerry Sivnksty may be contacted at PO Box 141, Starr, SC 29684 or via e-mail at [evangjsivn@aol.com](mailto:evangjsivn@aol.com).





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