

Faith & Family News

A Spiritual Resource For Your Family

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Spring 2014

Volume 3 Number 1

Marriage Destroyers

The Devastating Effects of an Unforgiving Spirit

by Mike Ennis

In our last lesson we looked at the devastating effects of an unforgiving spirit. An unforgiving spirit, if left unchecked, has the potential to destroy any marriage. An unforgiving spirit will, at best, cause friction in a marriage; it leads to the bitterness trap, taints future problems, entrenches pride, and affects your relationship to God. An unforgiving spirit must be dealt with before it has the opportunity to destroy your marriage. But before we can deal with it there are some things that we must understand about forgiveness.

What is forgiveness? First of all, it is not forgetfulness. Some people equate forgiveness with forgetfulness. They think, "I will forgive them but I will not forget what they did." You don't have to forget the offense, in the sense of blocking it totally from your memory banks (which you cannot do), but you do have to forget in the sense of not holding it against them.

Secondly, forgiveness is an attitude, a way of life for the believer.

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses (Mark 11:25).

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another; even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you (Ephesians 4:32).

Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye (Colossians 3:13).

"If you have ought against any," "forgiving one another," and "for-

giving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any." These are general statements that indicate that forgiveness is to be the way of life for the believer. It is to be our attitude.

Forgiveness is a releasing of a debt. Pastor Charles Stanley defines forgiveness as follows:

"Forgiveness refers to giving up both resentment toward someone else and the right to get even, no matter what that person has done. Unforgiveness, then, describes a deliberate refusal to let go of ill will or your right to repay the offender in some fashion; it is based on the

unChristlike attitude that somebody has to pay for the hurt, a position for which there is simply no biblical justification" ("The Landmine of Unforgiveness," www.sermoncentral.com).

Forgiveness, then, involves three elements: injury, a debt resulting from the injury, and a cancellation of the debt. All three elements are essential if forgiveness is to take place. Most people who suffer from an unforgiving spirit do not know that unforgiveness is the root of their problem.

Forgiveness has two levels. The first level is forgiveness from the heart.

So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses (Matthew 18:35).

You need to free yourself from the bitterness of heart that results from holding on to a wrong done to you. Choosing to forgive is an act of

Unforgiving Spirit cont. on page 10

What Do I Believe?

by Jamie Purcifull

Have you ever really stepped back for a moment to ask yourself just what it is you believe, and just when and how you started to believe it, and why? Whether we are openly cognizant or vaguely aware, we have all adopted a belief system we use to guide our conduct, shape our worldview and explain life. Some of us may identify ourselves along some type of religious, political or secular lines so we can quickly abbreviate and define for ourselves and to others what our personal belief system may be.

As we go through life, we are constantly subjected to all kinds of information and ideologies vying for our attention and our acceptance as being the truth or the best explanation for it. We embrace, incorporate or discard these suppositions as

part of building our beliefs. We may even be doing this without giving it much thought or just going along with what we were taught. Some of us can probably look back and point to certain people and experiences that have had an impact and guided us in drawing the conclusions we use to formulate and expand our beliefs.

...and be always ready to give a defense (or answer) to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you... (1 Peter 3:15).

truths, and are right (or convenient) for me and should be respected, if not believed, by everyone else. We are more than likely offended, or at least bristle, when our beliefs are challenged or called into question.

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Editorially Speaking

For Everything There Is a Season

As I write this editorial, we in central Indiana have just gone through a season of record breaking snowfalls and numbingly cold weather. Spring is coming and we have begun to see the beginning of seasonal change. I, for one, appreciate the seasonal changes we experience in this part of the country. If you were to ask me what seasons I enjoy best I would say Spring and Fall are my favorites. I think a lot of people share those same preferences. Not only is it the ambient characteristics of those seasons – the scent of the earth in the spring and the leaves in the fall – but it's the escape from the extremes that are characteristic of my least two favorite seasons. Summer days, where the temperatures rise to the point of the air becoming muggy, or those winter days, when just breathing frosts up the nostrils, are not for me. But, I must face reality – that's what the seasons are all about. It's the extremes that can often hold secret benefits. Hot humid weather can make the crops grow and cold sub-zero weather can lower the insect population.

Life is similar in that it is the times when we think we can't take anymore that we can receive hidden

benefits and blessings. Extreme testing can drive us to God, friends and advisers. Faith and Family News exists, in part, to help you in the extremes of life. When a relationship is near to breaking, enthusiasm for life is waning, or you are even questioning if God loves you, we want you to know He does, and so do we. Seek out the purpose in the extreme circumstance in which you may find yourself. What could God be saying to you during this time?

We trust you will enjoy this Spring 2014 issue of our paper. It marks the beginning of our third year of publication. Along with our regular line-up of writers, be sure to catch a couple of guest articles that just might speak to that challenge you may be facing. You can find additional information and previous issues online at: vbckokomo.com/faith_and_family_news. God bless.

Morris Starkey is retired from Indiana University Kokomo and lives with his wife, Donna, in Miami County. They have two children and five grandchildren.



THE BOOK SHELF

by Jeanine Garrison



No one ever said at the end of his days, "I have read my Bible too much, I have thought of God too much, I have prayed too much, I have been too careful with my soul."

—J. C. Ryle

In the introduction of *God in Slow Motion* author Mike Nappa illustrates the premise of his book by relating the dispute over “unsupported transit.” The term refers “to the idea that a horse’s hooves while trotting must, periodically, lose all contact with the ground. The unsupported horse, as the theory went, then continued its transit slightly airborne until the hooves touched down and repeated their stride” (p. xvi). The trouble was that the horse’s hooves moved so fast that the naked human eye simply could not prove, or disprove, the theory. So in 1872 Leland Stanford—former governor of California and president of Central Pacific Railroad—hired photographer Eadweard Muybridge to take high-speed pictures of Stanford’s thoroughbred racehorse, Occident. With a series of cameras triggered to capture the images of Occident’s blurred hooves, Muybridge was finally able to settle the dispute; all the hooves do indeed simultaneously leave the ground at regular intervals within the horse’s stride. The subsequent technology that he developed to view the images gave birth to motion pictures. Nappa writes, “If Eadweard Muybridge had not determined to look underneath that horse, our modern human experience would be a vastly different enterprise” (p. xviii).

That thought caused Nappa to wonder what he was missing underneath his feet as he sped through life and breezing through his reading of the gospel. He states the purpose of his book, published by Thomas Nelson, as a “determination to look, to slow down the images in the gospel accounts. To see what discoveries God has for me when I look for him deep in the underneath things of Christ’s life and my own. To risk studying God . . . in slow motion” (p. xviii).

The book’s subtitle, *Reflections on Jesus and the 10 Unexpected Lessons You Can See in His Life*, gives the reader a strong indication of the contents. In each of the ten chapters Nappa takes one biblical scene, slows down the action, and even looks behind the scene in an attempt to help the reader to see the Scripture from a different perspective. For instance,

in the account of the woman with an issue of blood (Mark 5: 21, 24-25) Nappa fills in some extra details of how the woman would have been dealt with according to Mosaic law and some of the acceptable methods of treatment for her ailment, giving the reader a whole new level of sympathy for her plight. In another chapter Nappa provokes the reader to consider what it was like for John the Baptist, who spent his entire life outside in the freedom of the wilderness, to be caged up for more than a year in a dark, cold cell that most likely was a hole in the floor of the prison. Oftentimes the reader may find himself thinking, “Why did I never think about that before?”

With each biblical account, Nappa tells a modern day story that parallels the truth he is exploring. For example, he likens John the Baptist’s wavering resolve about the identity of Jesus to the evolving of Abraham Lincoln’s attitude toward the Civil War. Nappa notes that “sometimes in the darkness it’s hard to believe what you saw clearly in the light” (p. 102).

God in Slow Motion is a book that grows on the reader the further he reads. Nappa writes with a conversational and often humorous tone that makes a serious subject anything but boring. At the beginning of each year, many Bible teachers recommend reading through the Bible in ninety days, an approach that certainly has its own merits for providing an overview of Scripture. However, Nappa’s style reminds me more of a cow chewing its cud—not just once, but more than once to get every possible nutrient from its food. I like Nappa’s book because his method of reading and studying makes the Scripture, especially the Gospels, come alive. He calls the reader to ask himself, “What if I had been there? What would I have thought?” What would it have actually been like if you were there when Jesus washed His disciples’ feet? How would you have felt if He had washed yours? Think about it.

Jeanine Garrison lives in Clinton County with her husband Tim. The couple has three grown children.



According to a recent poll...uh sorry... according to the Book of Matthew.

There is suffering: so many will seek salvation.

www.freechristianillustrations.com/suffering

A week before the February 2009 Bushfires, Australia's worst recorded natural disaster, fire-fighters were control-burning bushland trying to prevent the sort of tragedy that would soon follow. At the time, something very unusual happened—a koala, driven to extreme thirst, allowed a fireman to approach and accepted a bottle of life-saving water. The incident was filmed and shown around the world.



When disaster occurs, we naturally question why God allows it to happen. God knows of all events beforehand and, because of this, He is consciously aware that a greater disaster (Hell), is heading towards those who have not accepted His gift of salvation. God does not want anyone to perish. As proof of this, He took on the form of a man (through Jesus Christ) and paid the complete penalty for all sins on the cross—*so that whoever believes in Him will receive eternal-life* (John 3:16). However, God also gave people free-will and does not force anyone to accept His gift. Consequently, the greatest of all disasters is to reject the gift of eternal salvation. God does not desire any to suffer in life and He grieves at the terrible loss, yet He sometimes allows disasters to take their course so masses of people wake up to their mortality and start seeking spiritual answers. Only during such times of dire hopelessness do many people allow God to approach and accept His life-giving “waters” of eternal salvation.

**According to the American Bible Society,
based on regular Bible reading and expressed
belief in the Bible's accuracy, Chattanooga, TN is
the most Bible-minded city in America. Topping
the list of America's least Bible-minded cities is
Providence, RI and New Bedford, MA.**

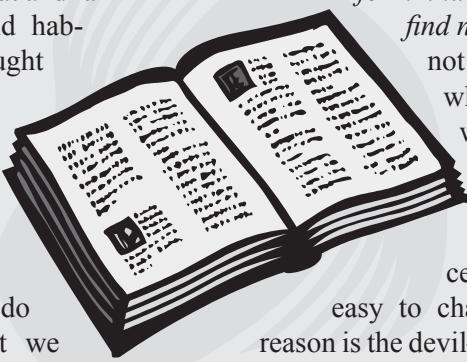
Wow 2014!!! I can't believe how quickly time flies. With the New Year comes reflection on the past year and hopes for the new one. Many of us, including myself, set out to accomplish one or many goals or resolutions. By the time you read this article many of us, including myself, will not have changed a thing. In my time of reflection I realized that my resolutions were the same as last year and many of the years before that. I set off with the same goals, and within a day I fell flat on my face.

What is crazy to me is the fact that I feel so much better when I'm

Overcoming Habits and Strongholds

by Rachel Irwin

eating right or when I'm reading God's Word. So why is it that I so easily forget that and fall right back into old habits? Then God brought to mind a passage of scripture. In Romans 7:15-20 the apostle Paul speaks of this very thing. We want so much to do what is right, but we do not. The reason is FLESH. Verse 18 says, *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,*



dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. Wow! If that is not me, I don't know what is. No matter what your resolution—weight loss, organization, smoking cessation—it is not

easy to change habits. The reason is the devil—master of deception, ruler of darkness—wants you to fail. *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities,*

accepted Christ as their Savior receive discipleship training in order to help them cultivate godly character, moral strength, and spiritual growth. Workers also promote regular church attendance.

5-Day Clubs meet for an hour and a half for five consecutive days and are geared toward children ages 5–12. Sometimes these meetings are conducted at churches or daycares, but usually they are held at the homes of individuals who are burdened for the children in their neighborhood and, therefore, have volunteered to host a club. Generally, a team of teens and preteens who have received specialized training through Christian Youth In Action (CYIA), another of CEF's ministries, conduct these clubs under the supervision of the director of the local CEF chapter. The 11-day CYIA training includes both personal and group instruction. After completing training, these young people are well-prepared to teach Bible lessons, songs, memory verses, missionary stories, and games in ways that are both fun and stimulating. More importantly, they are equipped to effectively share the Gospel with children.

The Truth Chasers Club, formerly known as the CEF Mailbox Club, is a correspondence ministry for all ages. Children and adults complete Bible lessons and send them in. Volunteers “grade” each lesson, pray for Truth Chasers and their requests, and write notes of encouragement as well. Then the volunteers return the “graded” lessons to participants along with the

Volunteers cont. on page 5

Volunteers Play a Vital Role

by Jill Garrison

In the last issue of *Faith and Family News*, I wrote about the need for mentors for America's youth. I also encouraged our readers to get involved in the lives of the young people in their communities. In this issue I would like to highlight an organization that seeks to make a difference in the lives of children all over the world. This organization is Child Evangelism Fellowship® (CEF). According to the CEF website (www.cefonline.com), it is a “Bible-centered, worldwide organization that is dedicated to seeing every child reached with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, discipled in the Word of God and established in a local church.” CEF has many ministries through which it seeks to reach children, but its three primary ministries are the Good News Club, the 5-Day Club, and the Truth Chasers Club.

Good News Clubs meet on a weekly basis in schools, homes, community centers, churches, day-cares, or any other place where it is easy and safe for children to meet. Christian volunteers who have a heart for children and have been trained how to have a club that is both instructive and enjoyable for the children conduct the clubs. Teachers use materials published by CEF Press. These materials include Bible lessons with colorful visuals, songs, Scripture memory activities, review games, missions stories, and ideas for other activities that reinforce lesson themes. At each meeting, the Gospel is presented clearly, and the children are given the opportunity to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior. Those who have already

against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians 6:12). We are in a constant battle with our flesh, which the devil can influence. The devil will use any and all opportunities to keep us from reaching our goals, because he is evil. Please don't forget that he is a liar, making what is wrong look good.

Thankfully I can say, “But God.” As Christians we have a very powerful tool to battle the devil and gain freedom from the things that

Overcoming Habits cont. on page 11

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Miracle of Life

by Marlin Carpenter

It never ceases to amaze me when the first radicle emerges from a newly planted seed and life begins anew! To watch the cotyledons, which are the first leaves, emerge from that tiny seed is like watching a miracle unfold. Though I have watched thousands upon thousands of seeds germinate and grow at our greenhouse, there is just something about it that still reminds me that life is a miracle every time I see it happen.

Have you ever stood on the ground underneath a large oak tree and craned your neck until your eyes reach the top, and thought, "Wow, all of this came from a little seed within an acorn!" The acorn and the seed within seem so small and insignificant, yet they produce one of the most majestic forms of plant life that we observe. So just how does this happen?

If you were to take a bean seed and soak it in water overnight, and then peel it open you would be able to see the radicle and cotyledons that already exist within a seed even before they germinate! Plant growth occurs from the process of many biochemical synthesis reactions. A couple of the primary processes that cause plant growth are photosynthesis and respiration. Photosynthesis is the process of converting light from the sun into chemical energy which can then be used by the plant. Basically, this process produces carbohydrates, such as sugars, which can be stored or used by the plant. Respiration, which is not as commonly understood, uses the oxygen formed during photosynthesis

If you see a piece of art, do you not infer that there was an artist? If you see a watch, does it not stand to reason that there was a watchmaker? If you see Creation then, do you not understand that there was a Creator?

to break down glucose into carbon dioxide, energy, and water. The energy created, or released, during this process is essential to plant growth.

Well, perhaps that is more information about how plants grow than you ever cared to know. And this is only a small fraction of the entire process! I share this, though, just to point out how amazing life really is! There are many who believe that this was all an accident. They assert that all of these intelligent and intricately precise and complicated procedures happened out of chance and arose from nothing. It doesn't take much common sense to realize that something doesn't come from nothing, nor does order come from disorder!

Think with me for just a moment. If you see a building do you not automatically assume there was a builder? Would it not be ludicrous for one to believe that a pile of lumber, bricks, mortar, pipes, wires, windows, etc. were lying in a pile on the ground and randomly built themselves into a fully functioning building—not to mention that first of all random elements and particles would have had to assemble themselves together to make the materials that were lying on the ground. Oh, and then there would be the problem of how the chemicals and particles came into existence. (I think you catch the drift.) If you see a piece of art, do you not infer that there was an artist? If you see a watch, does it not stand to reason that there was a watchmaker? If you see Creation then, do you not understand that there was a Creator?

Miracle of Life cont. on page 5

Mother's Corner

by Ashlee Shoaff

In *Escape from Reason*, Francis Schaeffer says "People today are trying to hang on to the dignity of man, but they do not know how to, because they have lost the truth that man is made in the image of God. Adam was an un-programmed man, a significant man in a significant history, and he could change history." Humanity's notion of excellence is built on fictional media portrayals, dependence on psychological research, humanistic relations, and a global acceptance (for the most part) of a philosophical approach to life that says, "God is dead." As parents, God has granted us the opportunity to shape the programming of our child's understanding and approach to life. Though it is a daunting task, excitement also can exist. He will strengthen our efforts (2 Thess. 2:17).

Media provides access to information—visually, textually, and through sound. This can be profoundly good or devastatingly bad. Guarding our child's absorption of certain media will allow us as parents to instill the values, awareness of life's natural issues and circumstances, and understanding of how to process the media in our hands. Proverbs 4 states: *Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight, for I give you good precepts; do not forsake my teaching. When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, he taught me and said to me, 'Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth.'* By setting up boundaries, we have the power to shape our child's view of self and life events. Recall that as parents and caretakers we are told to guard our heart above all other things because from our hearts come our thoughts and actions in life (Prov. 4:23).

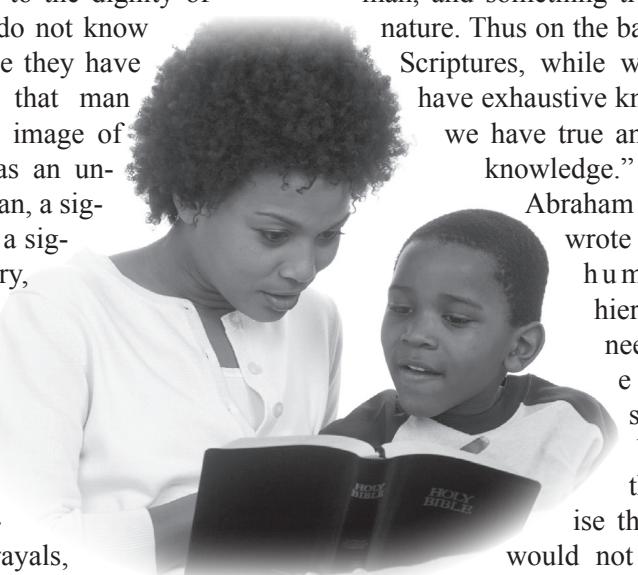
Don't shy away from the basic interweaving of sound research into your approach to parenting. You will find that, as Schaeffer states, from the Bible you realize true truth. He

continues, "In this way we know true truth about God, true truth about man, and something truly about nature. Thus on the basis of the Scriptures, while we do not have exhaustive knowledge, we have true and unified knowledge." In 1943, Abraham Maslow wrote about humanity's hierarchy of needs. His emphasis was based on the premise that people would not cycle to

the next "level" until the previous needs were met. Jesus said in Matthew 31:34-36, *Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'* A person's care for spiritual matters can be hard to see if they are in need of the basics in life. A principle to infuse into our parenting is to teach our children to care for others.

Humanism has multiple meanings. For this article, it is a value system based solely on the interests of human characteristics and behavior that are believed to be best in human beings, rather than on any supernatural authority. Instead of emphasizing the authority of Scripture, individuals maintain that the nature of man is essentially good. Humanistic relations pertain to an assertion that human dignity and man's capacity for fulfillment are dependent on reason and scientific method that has to reject religion. Though reason is a component of understanding human relations to the world, our concern should be to center our child on the accountability they have first and foremost to the Eternal Creator. In Deuteronomy 6:15 God shares that He is a jealous God, who dwells among us, and we may feel His anger when He is not the center of our life. Again, we must

Mother's Corner cont. on page 10



Cookin' Corner

by Donna Starkey

My husband loves cabbage rolls, but I don't like the process of making them. So when a friend gave me the following recipe, it was a great solution for both of us.

Unstuffed Cabbage Rolls

1 pound hamburger
1-2 tablespoon minced onion
1 can (14.5 ounces) diced tomatoes
1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pepper
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ of a small head of cabbage, chopped

Cook hamburger and onion until meat is no longer pink. Add chopped cabbage, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, then cover and simmer for approximately 20-30 minutes or until the cabbage is tender.

This serves 3-4 and can easily be doubled to serve 6-8 people.

The frosting recipe below is one that my mother used to make and is one of my favorites. It is also my daughter's favorite. It doesn't have a name, we just called it the Paste Frosting.

Paste Frosting

1 cup milk
3 tablespoon flour

Cook the above until thickened, then cover and cool in the refrigerator.

1 cup butter or shortening. I usually use $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of each.
1 teaspoon vanilla

Mix these 2 ingredients together until smooth, then gradually add

1 cup sugar

Mix well, then add the cooled paste mixture and beat until smooth.

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content (1 Timothy 6:7-8).

May this be a reminder for us to be thankful for all the blessings that the Lord has given us.

Donna Starkey is married to the Editor and lives in Miami County. She enjoys cooking, reading and spoiling her five grandchildren.



Miracle of Life cont. from page 4

If there is life, does it not demand a Life-giver?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men (John 1:1-4).

Exodus 20, verse 11 tells us that *in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is.* There was nothing made that was not made by God. He is the Creator of life itself. As you enjoy nature this spring, observe it with its Creator in mind. It shows us and points us to the Creator of our lives who loves us and cares for us because He designed us and formed us with His own hands!

As Romans 1:20 teaches, *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.*

Take a look around you and consider how magnificent life is. Whether it be flowers, trees, animals, or newborn babies, consider the miracle of life and the Majesty of the One who created it!

Marlin Carpenter, a Master Gardener, operates Garden Gate Greenhouse at 500 S and Hwy 19 in Miami County. Stop by for all your gardening needs.
egardengate.com



“If there were no gratified hearers of ill reports, there would be an end of the trade of spreading them.”

—Charles H. Spurgeon

Volunteer cont. from page 3

next lesson. The purpose of this club is to disciple believers. According to the CEF website, the Truth Chasers Club has reached over 499,000 since February 1999.

While CEF has many full-time people all over the world, it still requires a vast number of volunteers to attain its goal of reaching children worldwide with the Gospel and discipling them. Here are some ways that you can play a part in the above-mentioned CEF ministries:

- Pray for a Good News Club and/or 5-Day Club in your area.
- Talk to your pastor regarding church sponsorship of a Good News Club or a 5-Day Club.
- Become a Good News Club or 5-Day Club teacher or helper.
- Host a 5-Day Club.
- Drive a 5-Day Club ministry team to club locations.
- Apply for CYIA (teens and pre-teens only).
- Volunteer to “grade” lessons for Truth Chasers Club.

- Financially support a 5 Day Club summer missionary or missionary helper, a local Good News Club, or your local CEF chapter and its staff.

To find out more about these or other ministries of CEF check out www.cefonline.com or contact your local CEF chapter. If you do not know the contact details for your local CEF chapter, use the CEF Chapter Finder on the website to find the information you need. Through CEF, you can play a vital role in bringing the Gospel to children, helping them grow spiritually, and establishing them in Bible-centered churches. Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.’ (Matthew 19:14, ESV). Prayfully consider how you can help children come to Him. Then put feet to your prayers.

Jill teaches a preschoolers class at VBC and currently works in a public library. She has taught in a Christian school in England.



Thomas the Church Mouse

by Terry Seagraves

Today has been a very busy day for all of us. We are back to school after the holidays and all are excited to bring their new toys for Show and Tell. If you were really good and got some delicious cheese, we call that Show and Smell, because one day my friend Toby brought some cheese that smelled so bad that our teacher had him take it outside. Of course he ate most of it before he got to the door.

Toby has been my best friend since we were baby mice. He is different from most of us: you see, he got his tail caught in a trap and now it is shorter and bent really bad. He also has a learning problem, so it takes him a little longer to catch on to things.

Momma says we all need to help Toby and be a good friend. Jesus doesn't want us to judge others because they are different. Toby and I are best buds; we have scavenger hunts and play explorers. He is so much fun to be with. Toby's Momma lets him have sleep-overs with me on the weekends, and we have fun playing with my brothers and sisters.

There was one day that I got really upset at school, and if it wasn't for Poppa and Momma teaching me to never fight, I sure would have given Horrible Harry a good lashing with my tail. We were outside for recess and Horrible Harry and his buddies were teasing Toby. They were calling him terrible names and laughing at him. Poor Toby was in

tears and no one was helping him.

When I saw what was happening, I ran up to Toby and stood right in front of him. "Harry," I said, "you are the meanest mouse I know." I let him know that the Bible says we are to love our neighbors and treat others as we want to be treated. Then I thought of a message we learned in Sunday school, Proverbs 18:24—*A man who has friends, must himself be friendly.* And 1 John 4:20 says, *If someone says: I love God: and hates his brother; he is a liar.* So I asked, "Do you hate Toby?"

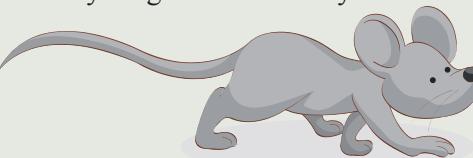
Harry said, "No, I just like to tease him."

I told him, "When you tease Toby, you are hurting him, and when you hurt Toby, you are disappointing Jesus."

Harry got very upset with me and I thought for sure he was going to punch me in the nose. But as he stepped closer, he looked around at everyone watching.

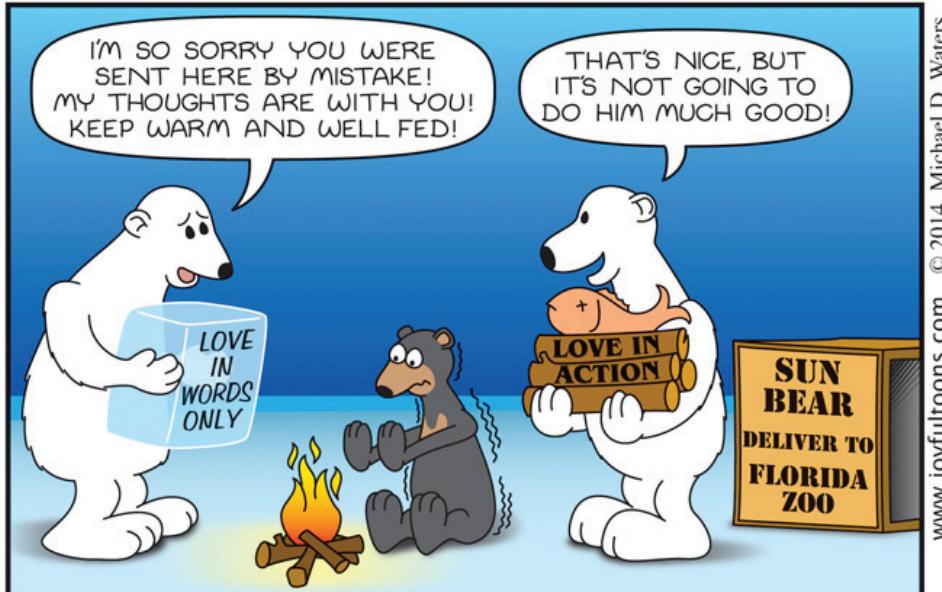
"I am so sorry Toby, I was just having some fun. I didn't stop to think how you felt. I hope you will forgive me."

Toby didn't know what to do, so I told Toby that it was okay and we can all be friends. Toby was so happy; he shook Harry's hand so fast that we all laughed, even Toby. Everything turned out okay and this



Church Mouse cont. on page 8

POLAR BEARS



Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

- 1 JOHN 3:18 NIV

Old Timer's Corner

Balloon Adventure — Part 2

by Jim Wright

I was dropping from 3500 feet with all three burner cans going full blast, with one hand holding the balloon edge rope and the other ready on the red rope. The red rope opens the top in case the balloon should be damaged when it crashes into the trees and then tries to pop out again. This could happen if I had burned a lot more than necessary to stop the descent, a mistake motivated by desperation. And of course I was praying on the way down, "Lord, please slow me down. And help me do whatever is necessary to fit into Your plan." As I watched the trees getting closer and closer and repeatedly tapped the face of the vertical speed

indicator in the instrument box hanging on the inside wall of the wicker basket, the 700 feet per minute drop rate gradually decreased. It was approaching zero as the distance to the trees approached zero.

Ten feet above the treetops the balloon stopped descending and started back up! I cut the burners as I whispered, "Thank you, Lord; now help me get down safely." I had burned so much on the way down that I had enough heat in the balloon to pop back up to about 2000 feet. When I finally started back down again, I burned at intervals to maintain a controlled descent and finally found myself approaching a clearing big enough to land the balloon. At about 50 feet above ground I gave it a short blast of flame for a flare to the landing. But instead of continuing on down, my Picard made a right turn and started rising again! Great Scott, here we go again! I was caught in another thermal—a rising column of air so prevalent on beautiful days with puffy clouds. So this is why they don't fly balloons in the middle of the day! Why didn't someone tell me that instead of saying, "Because it's too windy."

Well, this time I burned periodically on the way up just to keep some heat in the balloon for when I got

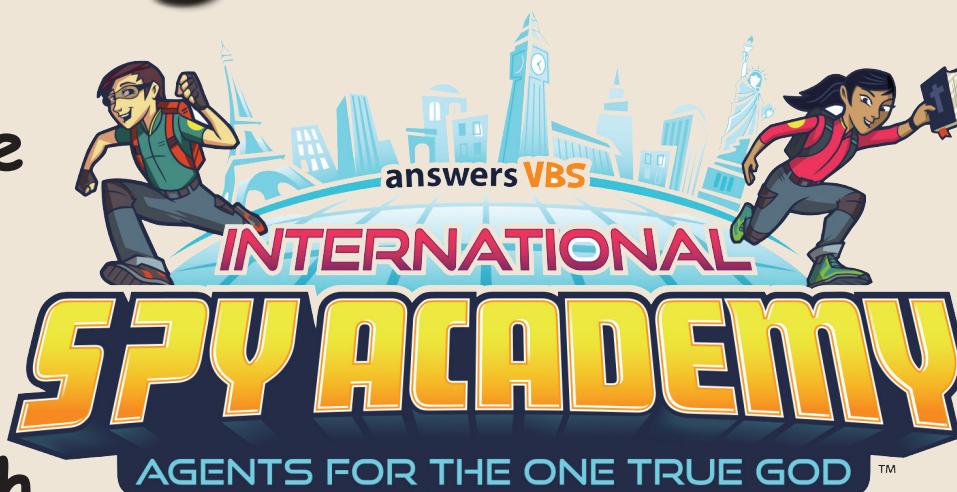
dumped out at the top of the thermal. And when I came down again, the same thing happened. Now I began to be concerned that I would keep up this crazy dribbling until I ran out of fuel. Then I would not be able to stop my descent and would crash land wherever I happened to be—trees, power lines, houses, who knows? I began to put together a plan. The next time I approached a field, I would not slow down. I would just crash land in the field, pull the red rope as fast as I could and hope that I could open the top quick enough to keep from being caught in another thermal. I tried to think: how fast in miles per hour is 500 feet per minute? At

this point my engineering training and experience failed me completely. I couldn't do the conversion! I just knew that if I hit the ground in an airplane while descending at 500 feet per minute I would prang (damage) the plane. I had better sit down on the bottom of the basket when I hit!

After the fourth or fifth thermal ride, I finally found myself approaching an open field beside a road going from the valley (called coulee in that area) to the bluff top. As I was headed straight for it at 500 feet per minute drop rate, I panicked and did a short burn which slowed me down to 300. I did not burn again. As I saw the balloon start a right turn towards yet another thermal, I sat down on the bottom of the basket. The basket hit the ground. The burner plate continued on down and hit my crash helmet. I saw blue fabric coming down. I saw white fabric coming down. I saw white fabric going up. I saw blue fabric going up. The burner plate was jerked off my head. I stood up fishing for the red rope while the basket was pulled off the ground and headed for the road. There was a Chevy and a Volkswagen stopped along the road and the two drivers were out and running towards me. "Hey, could you give me

Balloon Adventure cont. on page 11

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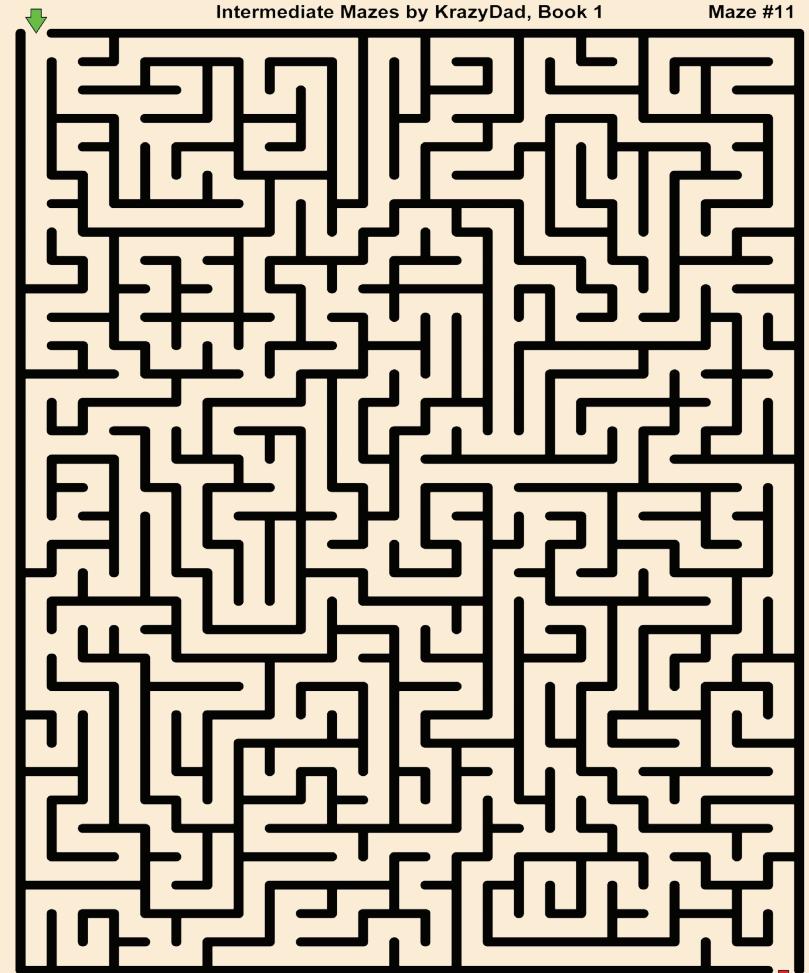
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The Fundamentals – Part III

by Matt Turner

I am always puzzled when I hear someone say, "Doctrine is boring." In my opinion, doctrine is everything! It helps us make sense of the world in which we live.

Have you heard someone, or perhaps even wondered yourself, why or how a benevolent God could allow all the pain and suffering in the world? Another common question is what happens to a person after death. Do they simply cease to exist, does everyone become angels and float around on a cloud playing the harp, or is there an actual Heaven and Hell?

Unfortunately, most people tend to ignore questions of this nature in lieu of what's happening in the world of sports, entertainment, Hollywood, or politics. I am also concerned about those things as well; however,

I try to keep things in their proper perspective. Things dealing with eternity are simply more important than the trivial matters of this world.

This installment of my series will deal with these big questions. Before we do though, I think it would be appropriate to review the points covered in previous issues. The first fundamental is the Bible is the final authority on all matters pertaining to this life and eternity. Although it has been attacked for thousands of years, it still stands!

We have also dealt with the second fundamental: there is an Almighty, Creator God Who created mankind for His pleasure and glory. Although we can know there is a God from creation alone, it is important to understand that we can't get to know Him in an intimate and personal way simply by experiencing the wonder and awe of this universe.

In the last issue I covered the third fundamental concerning Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. It is ONLY through Jesus Christ that one can have a personal relationship with God. Our prayer is for everyone who reads this paper to become a child of God through the finished work of Christ on

Calvary.

I remember my philosophy teacher in college telling the class that since no one has ever seen God before, we can't really know if He exists. My teacher didn't quite know how to handle my response. I told her everyone who saw Jesus saw God in the Flesh. There is more to that story; perhaps I will relate the whole experience in a future article. Let's just say that was one of my favorite classes in my college career. Yes, I like a good argument!

That brings us to the fourth fundamental of the Christian faith: I believe in the fall of man, the need of regeneration by the operation of the Holy

Spirit on the basis of grace alone, and the resurrection of all to life or damnation.

T h e

Fall of

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Although

Satan was the first rebel against the authority of God, it was Adam who introduced sin into the world. God had created a perfect environment for Adam and Eve. Adam was given instructions concerning their only prohibition. They were not to eat of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

God clearly related to Adam the consequence of disobeying—death. The act of eating the forbidden fruit corrupted mankind and all of creation. I know there are many who feel God has been unjust in following through with such a terrible punishment. They say it is not fair God would condemn everyone born because of the act of one man.

However, they are not looking at the entire picture. Yes, death, disease, and corruption have had a devastating effect on the world. However, just as one man brought death and destruction, one Man, Jesus Christ, offers to all the gift of eternal life! Unfortunately, it is our nature to focus on the negative instead of the positive.

At the same time God confronted Adam, Eve, and Satan about their sin

The Fundamentals cont. on page 9

My Very Present Help

by Emily Pier

Seeking out a quiet moment, a quiet corner in the bustling hotel lobby for reflection. Desiring not only quiet for my ears, but a quiet for my heart as well. The past month has seemed in many ways like a bad dream. Trouble upon trouble seemed to be heaped upon those we love.

Sorrows. Trials. Troubles. The Word is full of them. Life is full of them. Thankfully, *God is our refuge. God is our refuge and strength a very present help in trouble* (Psalm 46:1). Ahh . . . I breathe deep and feel relieved. He is my help in trouble. Although, when I continue reading the next two verses, they do not seem at first to comfort.

Therefore we will not fear though the earth give way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling (Psalm 46:2-3).

No promises of the trouble-free life I want there. In fact it's an extreme situation—a calamity—the psalmist offers in illustration. Though the earth give way.

There's been more than once when I felt like the earth of my life was giving way: husband's years of illness and hospital visits, the crushing diagnosis of infertility, parents' divorce, death of a dear friend. Some bad theology and a little bit of life can

swallow you up in the giving way of life's earth.

However, what I found as I sifted through the Word in the midst of my complete sense of loss as hardships collided—there was God. There He was—not leaving. There He was—not forsaking. There He was giving purpose to my pain. There He was promising that He indeed was enough.

It felt strange to me as I began to find comfort in His promise of troubles. *I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world, you will have tribulation. But take heart, I have overcome the world* (John 16:33). His promise of goodness (followed by a list of hardships) gave me hope. *He who did not spare His own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?* (Romans 8:32). His instructions to look toward eternity started to take root and grow in my heart. *For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal* (2 Corinthians 4:17,18).

It was amazing to me that after years of worry, anger, sadness over our own continued troubles, I began

Present Help cont. on page 11

**"For we brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of the world (1 Timothy 6:7).
There are no U-Hauls behind hearses."**

-John Piper

Church Mouse cont. from page 6

weekend we are all going to get together and build snow forts before the snow all melts.

Being Bullied

If you know of a child being bullied at your school, please help them. You don't have to get involved, but you can help by telling a teacher or the principal. Being picked on is not fun; it hurts and that hurt does not go away. We are to look out for one another and treat others the way we want to be treated.

Some kids think it is funny and cool to tease and torment someone but trust me, it is not. The children being teased and tormented will carry scars with them that will not

go away, and it is our job to help. They are afraid to tell anyone, and many have ended their lives because of being bullied.

We have to stop this now. So if you see anyone being picked on, please run to a teacher or an adult right away. You could be saving that person from future torment, and you could have just made a new friend. You can never have too many friends.



Terry lives with her husband in Howard County and teaches a children's class at Victory Baptist Church.

Lessons From Little Ones . “She Could Live in the Garage”



by Brenda Howard

From the time our daughter was just a few months old, it was obvious that she loved animals and animals loved her! When she was three years old she begged us for a cat. At the time I was very allergic to cats, so my husband told her, “No, we can’t have a cat because they make Mommy get sick.”

“She could live in the garage,” she pleaded!

“The cat?” my husband asked. “A cat wouldn’t be happy living in the garage!”

“No, Mommy!” she replied enthusiastically.

I have to admit that was definitely not one of my most rewarding moments as a mother! In her defense, however, our garage was newly built, and I have never seen anyone keep a garage as neat as my husband kept that garage! I suppose in her three-year-old mind it was a pretty nice place to stay. After all, it was clean, I would still be close enough to take care of her needs, and she could come and see me whenever she wanted!

How often have I put God in the “garage” of my life? I want Him close by to meet all of my needs. I want to go to Him often, but sadly there are other things this world has to offer that take an awful lot of my time and attention away from Him. God’s Word says, *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might* (Deuteronomy 6:5). This verse is repeated in the Gospels when Jesus tells His disciples that this is the most important commandment.

There is a chorus that I learned as a child that says, “After all He’s done for me, after all He’s done for me, how can I do less than give Him my best and live for Him completely, after all He’s done for me?”

My desire is that I would, by God’s grace, grow to love Him more and give Him first place!

Brenda and her husband Bruce live in Kokomo, Indiana. They have one married daughter and one grandchild.



What Do I Believe cont. from page 1

Conflicts arise when different belief systems clash because they are mutually exclusive and incompatible. This in and of itself may not be all that bad if it causes us to evaluate and defend our beliefs by producing and explaining with what evidence, validity and faith we have come to accept them. In other words, if you can answer for yourself the question proposed at the beginning of this article, then you have the basis for your testimony concerning your beliefs.

How important is it to have a valid testimony for your beliefs such that all you have to do is expose, rather than impose, those beliefs to give them traction? Consider the early church, or more specifically the apostles and the first Christians. They had no way to artificially impose their beliefs. They had no government or military to force or further their reach, no political, religious or educational institutions to support them, no motives for deceit, guile or personal gain. All they had was the testimony of what they were eye witnesses to and how that changed them. In their minds, they didn’t have to try to impose anything on anyone; they were the messengers of the facts that spoke for themselves. There was no blind faith required, no manipulation needed and no coercion applied. They appealed to what was already known and experienced by

themselves, and those around them (concerning Jesus). They founded the early church based on the evidence and validity of their testimony, while everything that could have helped them impose their beliefs was working against them. Even those that were against them could not refute or disprove their testimony; they just chose not to believe the necessary and obvious conclusions.

Is it possible for us to grasp the significant uniqueness of these events on this side of two thousand years later? It would be easy for us to be skeptical, but careful historical investigation reveals an unprecedented trustworthiness and reliability to the record that warrants our attention and interest. If so, then the credible weight and impact of this testimony can still speak to us and, just as it did two thousand years ago, should challenge each one of us to ask ourselves, “What do I believe?”

And be always ready to give a defense (or answer) to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you (1 Peter 3:15).

Jamie Purcifull is married to Lori and they have two daughters. Jamie works as a respiratory technician at Community Howard Hospital.



I NEVER MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE TWICE. I MAKE IT FIVE OR SIX TIMES, JUST TO BE SURE.

The Fundamentals cont. from page 8

and pronounced the curses upon each of them and the physical world, He also presented the way of reconciliation. Genesis 3:15 presents the good news that someday a Savior will come to remedy the consequences of Adam’s sin.

That brings us to the second part of this fundamental belief. Everyone needs to be saved by grace alone. Adam and Eve realized there was nothing they could do to undo what had been done. They simply had to trust that God was going to make everything right. Yes, there are horrific consequences to sin. However, hope can be found throughout God’s Word.

The Old Testament is the record of God preparing the way for the Savior to enter this world to defeat Satan and to reverse the effects of sin. Adam and Eve and their descendants simply had to trust God was going to take care of the problem they in-

stigated. I believe they understood there was nothing they could do to remedy the calamity they caused.

The New Testament is the record of Jesus Christ, the Promised Savior, and the work He did to make the way of reconciliation possible. He said, *I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father except by Me* (John 14:6).

Yes, the Bible is clear. Anyone who wants to live forever with God in Heaven must come to Him on His terms. You must confess you are a sinner by birth and by choice. You must understand there is nothing you can do about that. (Grace means “unmerited favor.”) However, the good news is God did send the Savior, just as He promised Adam and Eve He would, to do for us what we can’t do for ourselves.

The work of the Holy Spirit is to convict and convince us of our sin, and to help us understand that Jesus

is the only way to be reconciled to God the Father. If you will repent, turn from your sin and turn to God, His Holy Spirit will regenerate your soul and you will be adopted into the family of God.

If not, you can expect God will do what He said He will do—send you to a place of eternal punishment that was created for Satan and his rebellious angels. Don’t blame God if you choose to disobey His Word, as Adam and Eve did, and you suffer the consequences. Please, run to the Savior and throw yourself at His feet for the grace and mercy only He can provide!

Matthew Turner is principal of Victory Christian Academy and co-founder of the Kokomo TEA Party. Contact Matt: vcamatt@yahoo.com.



**IN prosperity,
GOD TESTS OUR
gratitude;**

**IN poverty,
OUR contentment;**

**IN darkness,
OUR faith;**

**AT ALL TIMES,
OUR
obedience!**

Aging Gracefully “What’s On Your Timeline?”

by Morris Starkey

The popular social-media website, Facebook, organizes significant events of your life on what it calls your “Timeline.” From birth through your education experience, marriage, children—all the events you, as the account holder, include in your Timeline are listed in chronological order. As a Facebook participant, I have observed things about Facebook’s Timeline feature as compared to real life.

Our Facebook Timeline can be restricted as to who can see it. With just a few clicks of the mouse you can adjust your Timeline to be seen by the general public, family and friends or nobody at all. I’m not sure why anyone would set it such that nobody could see it, but the option is there. Real life, on the other hand, doesn’t always give us those options. An old pastor-friend of mine would quip that he could tell a lot about a person’s spiritual life from what he read, or didn’t read, in their obituary. Sometimes what isn’t written is more revealing than what is. Our real life is, to a great extent, out there for all the world around us to see, which brings me to my next observation. It is who God knows us to be.

Our Facebook Timeline is a selective record and, as such, focuses on the pleasant things in our lives. I don’t think I have ever seen a person’s Timeline that included the dumb things they have done. Remarkable examples of those, however, can sometimes be seen in status updates. Just our achievements that demonstrate a conformity to societal expectations are listed. It says, “Hey, look what I have done.” “See how much education I have.” Note all the cool places I have lived.” During the wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel, as seen in the Old Testament of the Bible, God often called upon them to set up a monument to some event in their wanderings. Likely as not, these would serve to remind them of the stupid and faithless things they did as much as the things they did

to please God. What would our real Timeline look like if we factored in all the wrongs we committed and the failures we experienced due to willful actions on our part? Not an easy matter to think about. Our mind, unfortunately, prefers the Facebook version of our life over what could be the real life version.

Our Facebook Timeline can change as our life changes. It can even change when our life doesn’t change. In fact, it can even be completely revamped as many times as one wants to revamp it. Yes, it can even be faked. It is totally at our discretion what is posted on our Facebook Timeline. Does he really have that PhD from Harvard? Is that rather youthful picture of her how she really looks now? Who knows? Some would even add, “Who cares?” It is an artificial record of one’s life in a cyber world that may or may not reflect reality. Lest one think the previous words seem too cynical, rest assured that I have enough faith in my friends on Facebook to accept the information they post as a fair record of who they truly are. If it should not be, it is really of no consequence to me.

We all have a Timeline of sorts, not on Facebook, but in the period of time from our birth to our death. My hope is that one of the monuments that has been erected in our real-life Timeline is one that testifies that we have been to Calvary, that we have accepted Christ’s sacrificial death for our sins. Amongst all the other events in our lives, the dumb things, the failures and the successes, must be the event of all events – the moment we accepted Christ. It is only this event that can enable us to live Gracefully.

Morris Starkey is retired from Indiana University Kokomo and lives with his wife, Donna, in Miami County. They have two children and five grandchildren.



Marriage Destroyers from page 1

your will. When you make that choice, your heart is then open and ready for the Lord’s cleansing. Choosing not to forgive is also an act of your will. But the door of your heart is then shut and God will not do His cleansing work.

When an unforgiving spirit lives inside you, it isn’t bothering those who have wronged you. They’ve gone on their way. But you are still holding on to something that has taken control of your thoughts, actions, and words. It eats away at you like a poisonous cancer, and you find yourself bound, with no peace. In reality, you are punishing yourself. It may not be practical or advisable to speak to someone who has wronged you in some way. Nevertheless, you can release the debt in your heart without having a relationship with someone.

The second level of forgiveness is functional forgiveness. This is the level of forgiveness that must take place in a marriage in order to grow in oneness. Forgiveness at this level is for the purpose of maintaining, re-establishing, or lessening the strain of the relationship.

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift (Matthew 5: 23-24).

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother (Matthew 18:15).

At the functional forgiveness level there are some things that prevent the re-establishment of a relationship. Desertion or adultery are two examples. If a spouse leaves, you might release the debt in your heart for your own sake, but you would not have control over the relationship. Likewise, if a spouse was in an adulterous relationship, functional forgiveness would not be required. To do so would be to sanction a sinful lifestyle. The errant spouse must be confronted and dealt with by church restoration attempts.

A lot of people do not understand this kind of forgiveness because they do not know God’s forgiveness. On the last page of this paper you can learn of God’s forgiveness under the heading “God’s Simple Plan of Salvation.” In our next lesson we will look at what forgiveness is based upon and how we can learn to forgive.

Mike Ennis serves as Pastor of Victory Baptist Church. A native of Kokomo, he has pastored for 30 years. He and his wife, Joan, have 4 married daughters and 8 grandchildren.



Mother’s Corner cont. from page 4

center our brood on the first and greatest commandment—to love, admire, respect, commune with, and seek the LORD God (Matthew 22:34-37).

And God said, *I AM that I AM* (Exodus 3:14). Yahweh is Spirit. But Nietzsche said, “God is dead.” Nietzsche, a man that battled severe health problems, died at a ripe age of 55. His statement haunts the fiber of the 21st century generations. His desire ensued to be the antiestablishment, against religious institutions and social norms as a whole. God called humanity out of the dark clouds of shame, guilt, and death. He called us to freedom in Christ to pass that release of burden on to our children. This notion is the opposite of Nietzsche’s approach to feed self with any natural desires that arise. We must assist our children in putting to death therefore what is earthly in them: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness (Colossians 3:5); those are the natural inclinations of humanity. God grants

us the flexibility of Romans 12:2. *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.* Allow the Spirit of His Word to consume and direct your dealings with your children, and He will sort out the good and bad for and with you.

Someone will indeed program your child. Whether it be you or a collection of “them” out in the wide world, you get to decide. Enjoy and meditate on Colossians 3:1: *If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, with Christ, at the right hand of God.*

Ashlee and her husband, Stan, have four children. She is currently working on an advanced degree, lives in Howard County and serves our Lord at Victory Baptist Church.



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My Prayer

To be a better person in my mind and in my heart,

To rid myself of bitterness that is tearing me apart,

Lay behind the bad stuff, building on the new,

Knowing where the difference lies,

and knowing what to do.

by Terry Seagraves

Balloon Adventure cont. from page 6

a little help here? Just grab the basket and keep it from going towards the road and the power lines on the other side.” I’m sure they thought it would be an easy job. After all, a balloon is a light thing that you can tap around with one finger, right?

They came running, grabbed the basket which dragged them both down into the ditch beside the road, taking out a “No Trespassing” sign on the way. They held the basket in the ditch while the balloon continued to swing over the road, stopping three feet from the power lines on the other side. About that time I finally got a hold on the red rope. But it was too late to pull it. I just used the vents on the side to deflate as we walked it back away from the road and laid it down. As they were helping me and the chase crew (my wife and kids who found us pretty quickly) fold up the envelope and put it back into the basket, I was telling them about the Lord answering my prayer for safety. But I don’t

think they appreciated the gravity of the situation. The Lord did indeed take care of me and accomplished His plan, which, it appears, included leaving me with a great story to tell! Especially when I’m giving ballooning instruction, a true story like this makes a far more long-lasting impression than just telling a student pilot, “Don’t fly in the middle of the day!”

The best thing about it all is belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ and knowing that He will take care of me. If I stay in His will, everything that happens to me will be for my good, as He promises in Romans 8:28. What an adventure this life is!

Jim Wright earned his MA in Engineering from Oklahoma State, is a Certified Flight Instructor, and is retired from EDS. Jim is a Deacon at Victory Baptist Church.



Did You Know?

- Dreamt is the only word that ends in mt?
- The names of all continents start and end with the same letter?
- Each time you see a full moon you always see the same side?
- M&M's chocolate stands for the initials of its inventors, Mars and Murrie?
- The internet was originally called ARPANet (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network) designed by the US department of defense?
- A giraffe can clean its ears with its 21 inch tongue?

Overcoming Habits cont. from page 3

keep us down. I absolutely believe that if your resolution follows God’s plan for your life, then He will help you get there. You may say that God doesn’t care if you save more money, lose 10 pounds, or whatever it is that you’re resolved to do. Well I’m here to tell you, you are wrong. Jeremiah 29:11-13 says, *For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

So unless you have some evil or pointless resolution, you have God on your side and He loves you. *What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life,*

neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:31-39).

Right there in front of my face in God’s amazing Word is the answer. Most of my articles focus primarily on health information, but I felt compelled to share what I’m learning. So two weeks into the new year I have shifted my focus. First, by working on my spiritual growth and allowing God to work through me to accomplish the rest. My dad always says, “Keep the main thing, the main thing.” How can I overcome anything if I lack my most powerful weapon? Second, by asking God to work out the timing and trusting that He will help me get where He wants me to be.

I can’t tell you how much or how little you should do at this point. Go to God and seek Him first and ask Him to help you work out the details. I myself have vowed to get in Scripture every day, even if for just a few minutes.

May God bless you in whatever you set out to do. When I pray for myself, I will pray for all my fellow Christians.



Rachel Irwin is married to Justin and has two children. She is a practicing RN in Howard County.

Present Help cont. from page 8

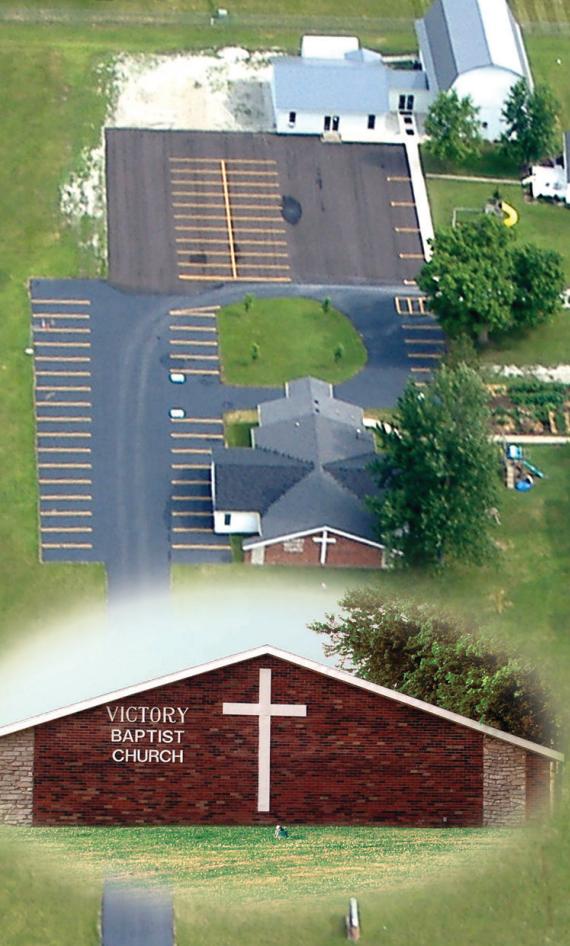
to experience real freedom by focusing on Him and trusting in Him. As He worked miracle after miracle in my heart, my life exploded, and I began to experience what I would call an abundant life. The kind of life where the rivers of living water flow freely from “your belly” and not from simple head knowledge. The kind of life where the belief that ALL things being created for Him sustains a trust in Him that defies natural human inclination. The kind of life where troubles are a key to a door to God. The gift of understanding my dependence on God coupled with His sustaining grace has been invaluable as His answer continues to be a painful “wait” in areas of our lives. I know Him bet-

ter and long for Him more than ever before. The trials remind me that this life is not my home and that the promise of eternity holds the promise of a pain-free life.

Reading the rest of that Psalm with this wholehearted trust in Him is then very reassuring. Now I can see the whole of it, “Let the worst come, and I will be your refuge and your very present help in that trouble.” And that, indeed, is comforting.

Emily lives in Howard County with her husband and has been actively involved in community outreach, such as Kokomo Urban Outreach, Bridges Outreach, and New Leaf Mentoring.

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*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
Not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).*

Admit you are a sinner.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

Be willing to turn from sin (repent).

Jesus said: I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish (Luke 13:5).

Believe that Jesus Christ died for you, was buried, and rose from the dead.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

But God commendeth [demonstrated] his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved (Romans 10:9).

Through prayer, invite Jesus into your life to become your personal Saviour.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:10).

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:13).



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