

# Faith & Family News

*A Spiritual Resource For Your Family*

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Volume 4 Number 4

## Self-Deception

*by Morris Starkey*

Humans are, perhaps of all creatures in God's creation, the most prone to self-deception. We see self-deception played out in many forms in all of us, to some degree or another. The guy with the "midriff bulge" will deceive himself into thinking he still wears the same size jeans he did in high school. Granted he wears them under his stomach as opposed to wearing them over his stomach, but, hey, they still fit. The lady, as she stares through the shop windows at the beautiful outfit on the trim mannequin, can see herself looking just like that, if she could only afford the price of the dress. Now, to be sure, much of the self-deception we practice is relatively harmless and is more of a cushion to uncomfortable reality and has no eternal consequences. There is, however, a kind of self-deception that does have eternal consequences and folks practice it every day. When practicing self-deception in matters of spirituality, it can be eternally dangerous and deadly.

The world today is bombarded with dangerous advice in the area of self-esteem. We are told that with learning skills comes success and with success comes self-esteem. So, many set a course to get as much education as possible, which they hope will lead to recognition as an expert in a chosen field; that recognition, they think, will bring the healthy self-esteem they seek. Never mind that there is a warning from the scriptures that there are those who are "ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Timothy 3:7). In writing to the

*The world today is bombarded with dangerous advice in the area of self-esteem.*

Roman Christians, Paul stated that there were those "professing themselves to be wise" but that, in doing so, "became fools" (Romans 1:22). One doesn't have to look very far in any segment of society to realize the world is well-represented with educated idiots. Is it no wonder the "slower" children, the plodders, who struggle with math concepts or historical data, ad infinitum, feel inferior to their fellow classmates, when the gauge for acquiring self-esteem is based on achieving skills?

Both sexes are susceptible to self-deception. Women are under pressure to fit a set of expectations imposed upon them by society. Are they wearing the right clothing brand? Is their hair as stylish as other women's? Are they keeping an immaculate house? Are they good cooks? Are they carrying

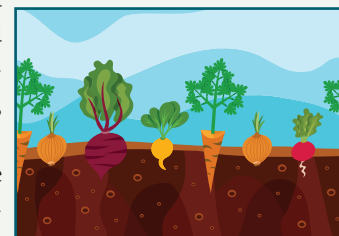
a few too many pounds? Are their kids well-adjusted and socially acceptable? Are they knowledgeable on current events? The comparisons to a set of expectations can be nearly endless. Is it no wonder that emotional dissonance is nearly disabling many women today? Many women set out to try to be all that society, as they are being told, expects. They stuff themselves into their daughter's jeans and spend a small fortune on cosmetic products. We end up with a generation of women who are nearly schizophrenic in their pursuit of acceptance through compliance to social expectations, but are only, in reality, practicing self-deception. Men are not exempt in this matter of self-deception. They can delude

**Self-Deception** *cont. on page 5*

## Healthy Fruit

*by Marlin Carpenter*

All fruits are not equally nutritious. One might assume that if two people were to grow Honey Crisp apples they would end up with fruit that would provide equally nutritious fruit. However, that is not the case! Plants do not have the ability to create nutrients. They simply absorb them from their surroundings, especially the soil. If a plant is growing in poor quality soil that lacks nutrients, then the fruit it produces will also lack nutritional value!



This is why using a high quality fertilizer that is macro and micro nutrient inclusive is so important when growing edibles. Of course, in my personal opinion, it is best to use the most natural form of nutrients as possible. Synthetic fertilizers can break down the naturally occurring enzymes in the soil that produce a nutrient-enriched aggregate. Regardless, it is an important concept to consider when growing fruits and vegetables at home with the intended purpose of producing healthy

and nutritious foods. It also stands to reason that store-bought produce may often be less nutritious than home-grown produce due to mass production and the resulting diminished control over the plants' environment. Not only will the nutrient content of the soil affect the nutritional value of the fruit, but it will also impact the size, quality, and quantity of the fruit.

So it is in our lives. The fruit that we produce is a result of what we put into our hearts and minds. Luke 6:45 states, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." You have heard it said, "You are what you listen to." Perhaps that could be expanded to say, "You are what you listen to, what you read, and what you watch." There is no question that our lives reflect what we put into them. Perhaps

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## Editorially Speaking Who Is Really Upside Down?

by Morris Starkey

Jason Allen, President of Midwestern Baptist College, in a recent blog opened with this statement by G.K. Chesterton: "A paradox is a truth standing on its head, waving its legs to get our attention." This beautifully illustrates the nature of the Biblical message. The Bible shouts out its presence in our world, but the world by-and-large doesn't recognize it. Why do you suppose this is true? May I suggest that it is because what the Bible teaches is exactly 180 degrees from what the world thinks we need.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky made this statement: "The world says: 'You have needs—satisfy them. You have as much right as the rich and the mighty. Don't hesitate to satisfy your needs; indeed, expand your needs and demand more.' This is the worldly doctrine of today. And they believe that this is freedom. The result for the rich is isolation and suicide, for the poor, envy and murder" (The Brothers Karamazov).

While the world says let us live unto ourselves to find complete contentment, the Bible says we must die to self to know the peace that passes understanding. While the world demands getting all we can from the marketplace of commerce, the Bible suggests that wealth accumula-

tion is merely an avenue for giving to the poor and needy. While the world falls over itself to acquire the latest in fashion, the Bible declares that the true beauty of the individual lies in the character of one's heart. Preferring the one who is dressed in gold and finery above the one who is dressed in simple attire is reflective of a pompous character and is grievous to God's heart. It was the powerful Methodist minister John Wesley who said it so concisely; "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." Preacher Wesley said it very well. It isn't an inward focus that best benefits society; it is an outward focus that truly makes a difference.

So what or who is really standing on its head? Is it the Bible with centuries of truth that has proved itself time and again, or a world constantly in flux in its search for happiness and fulfillment through acquiring "stuff"? Stake your trust in God, "in whom there is no variableness or shadow of turning (shifting shadows)." It's the worldly system that is upside down.

Morris Starkey  
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## It's Never As Bad As It Seems!

by George Whitten, Editor of Worthy Devotions (permission granted)

Psalm 27:4-5 says, "One thing I have desired of the Lord, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the Lord, And to inquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock."

The world these days is full of bad news, with tensions growing in the Middle East, economies on the brink of collapse, and nature constantly adding to the chaos with one disaster after another. It's a time of trouble all right, and for us believers, though it may sometimes be hard to believe, it never is as bad as it seems. Let me illustrate with a joke I like to share with my messages.

Way out west (in America, of course), a cowboy is driving down a road, his dog riding in the back of his pickup truck, his faithful horse in the trailer behind. As he takes a curve on the highway he suddenly loses control of the vehicle and has a terrible accident.

Sometime later, a State Police officer comes on the scene. A great lover

of animals, the officer's attention is first drawn to the horse. Realizing the serious nature of its injuries, he draws his service revolver and puts the animal out of its misery. Then walking around the accident he finds the dog, also critically wounded, and whining miserably in pain. This grips his heart and he quickly ends the dog's suffering as well.

*I can find a supernatural strength, and simply say, "I never felt better!"*

Finally the police officer locates the cowboy, who has suffered multiple fractures and can barely breathe. "Hey, are you okay?" he says.

The cowboy takes one look at the smoking gun in the trooper's hand and quickly replies, with unexpected energy, "Never felt better!"

We are pilgrims in this dangerous world, which will wound us at times so badly it will seem unbearable. Yet we have this promise from God—"in the time of trouble He will hide me." It's because my real life, my true life, is in Him and with Him, no matter what happens to me here. So when the world approaches me with a smoking gun ready to put me out of my misery, I can find a supernatural strength and simply say, "I never felt better!"

## The Goal in Parenting

by Mike Ennis

*And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4 KJV).*

"At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child's success is the positive involvement of parents." (Jane Dee Hull, born August 8, 1935, was the governor of Arizona from 1997 to 2003. She was the second woman to serve as governor of Arizona, the first female Republican governor of the state, and the first woman to be elected to the position.)

Most parents do not realize the power that they have to shape the lives of their children. In a recent essay titled, "We Are What We See: The Family Conditions for Modeling Values for Children", David Popenoe, PhD Professor of Sociology at Rutgers University, wrote: "In a recent poll of adult Americans conducted by *The Wall Street Journal*, 'moral

decline' was stated to be the biggest problem that America will face in the next twenty years. And when asked what the biggest change in American character has been since the 1950s, the leading answer was 'less stable marriages and families.'" I agree with these popular assessments and believe that the two issues are closely related. The available empirical evidence indicates that the deterioration of stable marriages and families has been a principal generator of moral

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decline. This is because children learn moral values mainly within their families, and mainly by relying on their parents as role models. When families are unstable, when parents are absent, emotionally distant, or preoccupied, or when parents themselves are immoral, the learning of moral values by children is greatly hindered.

At the conclusion of the essay Popenoe said, "Families today are under siege and children are being hurt.

More and more children are growing up with weak attachments, little empathy, and a weakened respect for law and order and civility. More than from anyone else children learn values from their parents, and they learn best by copying their parents' actions. Successful childrearing requires the active and continuing physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual presence of parents in the lives of their children. Those parents who spend the most time in childrearing, other things equal, will have the best child outcomes" (<http://parenthood.library.wisc.edu/Popenoe/Popenoe-Modeling>).

While I am in agreement with most of what Dr. Popenoe wrote, es-

**The Goal in Parenting cont. on page 4**

## THE BOOK SHELF

by Jeanine Garrison



*Comparison is the thief of joy.*

—Theodore Roosevelt

Several issues ago when I reviewed R. T. Kendall's book *Total Forgiveness*, I commented that eventually I would need to get around to reading his book on jealousy. Recently I decided that the time was now, a decision that has been confirmed by the Lord, judging by the number of times I have been coming across the subject elsewhere. In his Turning Point radio broadcast (November 16, 2015), Dr. David Jeremiah cited Charles Haddon Spurgeon's statement: "No one has ever come to me to confess the sin of covetousness." Indeed, the complete title of R. T. Kendall's book, published by Charisma House, is *Jealousy—the Sin No One Talks About*. I carry books that I am reading wherever I go—to work, the laundromat, etc. With JEALOUSY emblazoned across the cover, I felt like carrying Kendall's book in a brown paper bag, like a wino does his bottle. Whether we admit it, or not, practically everyone has a battle with this sin.

R. T. Kendall's subtitle, "How to Overcome Envy & Live a Life of Freedom" is depicted on the cover of Kendall's book by a red heart encircled by barbed wire. He begins with a short discussion of the difference between jealousy and envy and then, as you would expect from one who was pastor of Westminster Chapel in London for twenty-five years, explores many biblical accounts that portray the consequences of jealousy. He starts with the first case of jealousy when Satan determined to usurp God's position in Heaven. Then on earth, Satan tempted Adam and Eve with knowledge that God had and that they did not. "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 2:5). Scripture tells of the first case of sibling rivalry (anyone have trouble with that?), when Cain became murderously jealous of Abel's approval from God for his righteous sacrifice (Genesis 4). All scripture seems to be stamped with this ugly and disastrous sin, even the birth of Christ with Herod's jealousy. If the reader doubts this, he should think of Jacob and Esau, Rachel and Leah, Joseph and his brothers, David and Saul, on and on to the end of Revelation.

While delving into scriptural examples of jealousy, Kendall applies the principles to his reader and the present

problems he may face. Kendall often refers to the lessons of *Total Forgiveness* and, with the same vulnerability, reveals struggles he has had, particularly in his ministry, with jealousy. The author discusses Godly jealousy, as opposed to carnal jealousy, a concept that even many believers struggle with and that sometimes turns unbelievers away from the Bible. And perhaps most importantly, Kendall exposes the root causes behind man's tendency to jealousy and what it reveals about his relationship with God. His last chapter is called "Thirteen Ways to Overcome Jealousy" and is well worth copying and tacking to your mirror for daily review. If one struggles with jealousy at all, this book will reveal the true nature of the sin and help in dealing with it.

The second book I chose on this topic is Kay Wills Wyma's book *I'm Happy for You (Sort Of . . . Not Really)*, published by Waterbrook Press. Her book also deals with the green-eyed monster of jealousy, but as Wyma's subtitle "Finding Contentment in a Culture of Comparison" hints, she emphasizes more our proclivity to compare ourselves with others (and what they have). The book title comes from a conversation with Wyma's daughter who was commiserating about her fellow students' tendencies to compare test scores at school. Wyma told her daughter the best way to handle a situation where someone else did well or had something she wanted for herself was to use the words, "I'm happy for you." But the key, her mother added, was to really mean it.

Wyma discusses what she calls Obsessive Comparison Disorder (OCD) and how our present culture and technology foster this malady. A person may be perfectly happy with her flower bed until she compares it to the picture a friend posts on social media. With Facebook, the possibilities for comparison are endless. There are also continuous opportunities to compare one's children in the areas of education, sports, talents, beauty, etc.

In her characteristic chatty and humorous style, Wyma takes a close look at topics like keeping up appear-

## End of Life Issues, Advance Directives and Living Wills

by Rachel Irwin

Before I start this article, I want to say that when dealing with life and death, the most important thing is to know where you are going once you are gone. Do you know Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour? If not, you can today. Every issue of this paper has a section located on the last page that can tell you how; it is titled God's Simple Plan of Salvation.

Working in a hospital, I have to ask people all the time if they have a living will or advance directives. I am often surprised that people do not know what they are. They often think of a living will as "A Will," but it is very different. So I thought it would be a good idea to educate people on this subject and more.

No one wants to think about what they want done if they are ill or dying, but it is very important. We see it on the news all the time. Someone is on life support and the family is fighting about what they want to do. Or several years back, there was a case in which the girl had a feeding tube and was unable to communicate, but breathing on her own. The parents wanted to

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continue with the care; the husband wanted the feeding tube removed. They had to fight in court. This is why an advance directive is important for all adults. It basically lays out what care you want to receive in the event you are unable to speak for yourself. People say all the time, "Oh, my family knows what I want." In the event of a sudden accident, emotions play a big part and it is very HARD to be the one making that decision. An advance directive takes the pressure off the family. It is a legal document that states in detail what your wishes are.

The three main types of advance directives are:

1. A Health Care Representative—appoints someone to make medical treatment decisions for you when you cannot. You need to choose this person, discuss your wishes with him, and fill out the simple form.

2. A Living Will Declaration – tells the physician how much treatment you want if you are terminally ill, in the process of dying, or unable to commu-

nicate your wishes.

3. A Life Prolonging Declaration – states that you want everything possible done to prolong your life, regardless of the terminal condition.

Other forms that I want to mention, but not go into detail, are Power of Attorney, Organ and Tissue Donation, Out of Hospital Do Not Resuscitate Declaration and Order, and Psychiatric Advance Directive.

It is also very important to sit down with your family and physician and discuss these issues.

I went to Chaplain services at St. Vincent Kokomo, where I am employed, to receive information for this article. During our conversation they told me of a new form that is being highly recommended. It is called Five Wishes. I must say I like it; it is detailed, easy to read, and so informative. I like how newspapers are describing Five Wishes as a "living will with heart and soul." Five Wishes is a living will that talks about your personal, emotional,

and spiritual needs, as well as the medical wishes. Life is amazing and precious and so much more than the air

we breathe. It is not just about making sure everything is legal; it's about making sure that a very difficult time is a little easier for all involved and that you get what you want and need.

The Five Wishes are:

1. The Person I want to Make Care Decisions for Me When I Can't
2. The Kind of Medical Treatment I Want or Don't Want
3. How Comfortable I Want to Be
4. How I Want People to Treat Me
5. What I Want My Loved Ones to Know

When talking to the Chaplains they stated that this is a service that they offer to the community. They gave me permission to give their number for assistance or questions. I hope that you use it. It is free and these people are AMAZING, kind and caring. I cannot say enough about them.

St. Vincent Kokomo Pastoral Care Department 765-456-5494

I hope that you have found this article useful. God Bless You! 🌸

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## Old Timer's Corner

### Finally Engaged!

by Jim Wright

I had been trying to get my girlfriend to become my fiancée for ten months. I had asked her on February 20, 1953 and again on the 20<sup>th</sup> of every month through November. And when I showed her the diamond ring I had brought with me to Las Vegas in the Cub on December 14, 1953, she refused it again.

Now it was the 20<sup>th</sup> and the Lord had finally told her to marry me. (See last Quarter's issue.) So that evening after supper at Zzyzx she said, "Can we take a walk around the lake this evening?" Of course it was all right with me, and it was a full moon night! I

took her hand as we walked, but three quarters of the way around the lake, she stopped, turned to me and asked, "Do you still have that ring handy?" It took me all of eighteen milliseconds to whip it out! Then she held out her left ring finger and asked, "Do you still want to put it on?" I took the ring out of the box and began sliding it onto her finger. I was incredulous; I could hardly believe this was happening. She had not mentioned a thing about the events of that afternoon.

As the ring passed the last knuckle, I knew that we were finally engaged and that she was really going to marry me! And then we kissed. It was

a long, wonderful, sensuous kiss—with the warm desert breeze and the bright desert moon and her loving lips pressed against mine.

Then we went in and told everyone the news, and they were all genuinely happy to have me as part of the family. It was a wonderful feeling. This beautiful girl was actually going to marry me! I was deliriously happy.

The next day the ten gallons of aviation gasoline arrived, and we flew back to Las Vegas. I tried to convince her to marry me right then and fly back in the Cub with me, but she wanted to

finish her semester at Biola and have the wedding at Zzyzx where we had gotten engaged.

So on Christmas Eve morning, I got into my Piper Cub and took off for Enid, Oklahoma. I again stayed overnight in Gallop, New Mexico and, with the strong tail winds, made it all the way to Dad's farm west of Enid by the next evening. I arrived at dusk, landed on the farm and tied the plane to the windmill. When I walked into the house, Mom did a double take and then rushed to me and hugged the stuffing's out of me! She was so happy I hadn't killed myself in the plane! Dad

Finally Engaged! cont. on page 10

But if we walk in the Light as He  
Himself is in the Light,  
we have fellowship with one another,  
and the blood of Jesus His Son  
cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 1:7



## Hypocrisy

When Sam returned to the house one evening, his wife Sarah announced that the new cleaning woman they had hired had stolen two towels.

"Yeah," said Sam very disinterested, and reclining on the sofa, "that wasn't very nice of her to do."

"You'd better believe it wasn't," Sarah said. "And they were the two best towels we had—you know, the ones we got from the Hilton Hotel while we were on vacation!" (gcf.net)

### The Goal in Parenting cont. from page 2

pecially the need for the parents to spend both quality and quantity time with their children, the one thing that is often not talked about by those concerned for families is the goal of child-rearing. In other words, parents must ask the question, "What do I really want for my children; what direction am I taking them with my parenting?"

The goal in childrearing is not that they be a great ball player or that they have all kinds of toys. The goal is not simply that they get a good education to make lots of money to have lots of things. The goal is not to raise them to be like some little pharisaic clones. The goal in childrearing is to raise children to love, serve, and be like the Lord Jesus Christ and to teach them to be a servant like Christ. In other words, the goal for raising our children should be for them to achieve Christ-like maturity by the time they leave our home. All that our children are taught and exposed to should lead to achieving this goal.

The first thing that it means is that our children must be led into a relationship with our creator God through Jesus Christ. Evangelizing our children is priority number one for many reasons, one of which is having them turn out right. No one can achieve moral excellence and character apart from a relationship to God through Christ. Moral excellence and character are far more important than making a lot of money and playing games. You cannot lead your children to where they need to be until you lead them to Christ. If you do not know what that means or how to achieve it, you need to find an evangelistic, Bible-teaching church and begin attending so that you can learn. Man's number one problem is not economic, as our culture often makes it out to be. Man's number one problem is sin. Sin takes us away from

God who is the source of all blessing. As long as our children have not dealt with the sin problem by believing on Christ they will not be blessed in this life and certainly not be blessed for eternity. Heaven or Hell depends upon what a person does with Christ. Once children come to know Christ as Saviour the next concern is to bring them to maturity in Christ.

"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4, KJV). The phrase "bring them up" means to rear them to maturity. Christ-like maturity means three things:

1) The child must be taught self-control—not being ruled by fleshly passions and emotions. It means instead of being controlled by physical appetites and lust the child is controlled by God and His Word. It means the ability to say *no* to self and *yes* to God. The child will not learn this from our self-indulgent culture. The child is born selfish and into a self-centered world, so he must be trained from infancy that the world does not revolve around him.

2) The child must be taught wisdom. Wisdom is different from knowledge. Wisdom is the proper application of knowledge. Wisdom comes from God and His Word (see James 1:5). Wisdom is the ability to see things from God's perspective.

3) The child must be taught responsibility. Responsibility is: a) personal accountability for one's actions, b) faithful and conscientious work habits, c) integrity, d) reliability. All of these are only possible when not ruled by fleshly passions and emotions. In our next article we will discuss how to shape the life of your child towards the goal of Christ-like maturity. ☺

## Clothed in His Righteousness, We Are Beautiful

by Louann Wilson

Our time on earth is filled with an ever-changing succession of seasons. Each season, having been appointed by God, is good in its time. Yet we longingly look back to seasons past or look in anticipation for a future season, never really finding full and complete satisfaction in any one season. We fail to grasp that the soul will not be satisfied until we awake in glory in the likeness of the Lord and behold the face of righteousness (Psalms 17:15). There is a season coming in glory when we, the saints who have faithfully followed Christ, will see God face to face. And we will be seen, clothed in “the garments of salvation” and covered “with the robe of righteousness” (Isaiah 61:10 KJV). Yes, we do wear the righteous robe because of Him while in the here and now, but we have a tendency to play in the dirt. Oh, but soon and very soon we will be in the throne room of God face to face with Him, a pure and Holy God who will not dwell with the sinful (Psalms 5:4). Here we are clothed in garments acceptable for the royal court and the coming marriage feast (Matthew 22:1-14). Clothed in garments tailored by the righteousness of God Himself, it is His righteousness that makes us precious and acceptable in the sight of God. It is His righteousness that justifies us before God, sparing us from the judgment wrought by sin! By His providence and divine majesty He has clothed us in the beauty of complete holiness; it is due to His mercy that the sinner saved by grace will not suffer the second death, thereby escaping permanent separation from God and the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). And this, only by the blood of the lamb! “Surely he hath borne our griefs,

and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. . . . He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth” (Isaiah 53:4-5-7 KJV).

In exact fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey with the crowds waving palm branches and crying “Hosanna” (John 12:12-19). “Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest” (Matthew 21:9). Then in only a few short days following this first Palm Sunday, Jesus brings the work of salvation to completion. It was finished according to God’s providential plan, with Jesus praying “not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). He was “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8 KJV). But death held no sway over our Lord; He overcame that grave and rose in glory. Evermore, He holds the keys to death and hell itself! With sinful man now reconciled to God, He presents those who belong to Him holy and blameless (Colossians 1:22) before the Almighty God, clothed in perfect righteousness, exquisitely fitted when seen through the perfecting blood of the suffering Messiah—the best robe for the prodigal Son. This is a garment we could never fit to ourselves. We ourselves could not make a robe that fits this well, as our tailoring

**His Righteousness** cont. on page 11

## Generosity

“A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed” (Proverbs 11:25).

If you’re seemingly always scraping by financially, perhaps it is because you aren’t sharing enough with others.

God has called you and me to generosity. If we’re not blessing others with gifts of a dinner at our home or with flowers for the funeral of a church leader’s parent or with a donation toward a neighbor child’s trip to a summer Christian youth conference, then why would God bless us financially?

He provides for us as we provide for others, so please boost your level of generosity to others.

—Martin Drummond

**“If you live in such a manner as to stand the test of the last judgment, you can depend upon it that the world will not speak well of you.”**

—Alistair Begg

**Book Shelf** cont. from page 3

ances, beauty, measuring up, the need to be known, and the inequalities of life. Periodically, the author cites the findings of a study, like the U-shape theory of life which finds that people are more likely to be happy in early adulthood and in their sixties, but for the most part, her chapters are filled with conversations with friends and family on the subjects of comparison and contentment. She intersperses in her own writing comments from those who read her *Moat Blog*. Discussion questions at the end of the book facilitate using it as a group study.

*I’m Happy for You* is truly more of a self-help book than Kendall’s *Jealousy*, which is more biblical in tone and coverage. Nevertheless, I appreciated Wyma’s book for the catchy phrases and descriptions, like “The Glimpse,”

that the reader can easily remember and use to help in battling the comparison disorder. As a wife and mother, her experiences and thoughts seem to echo my own, such as her panic when a friend opened her refrigerator door.

Both books remind the reader that scripture has much to say on the topic of jealousy and contentment. The Apostle Paul testifies in Philippians 4:11-13 to the peace and joy of being content. “Not that I complain of want; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want. I can do all things in him who strengthens me” (RSV).

## Vet Bills

While waiting at the veterinarian’s office, I overheard two women chatting about their dogs.

“What’s your dog’s name?” asked the first woman.

“Well, we used to call her Pork Chop,” answered the second lady. “But after the vet bills we’ve had for her, we now call her Filet Mignon.” (gcf.net)

**Self Deception** cont. from page 1

themselves into thinking that if they are still virile and attractive to other women, then they have some sense of self-esteem. Never mind that they are married with kids and responsibilities akin to those facts. “Mid-life crisis” in men is more than just a rumor.

So how do we avoid being a victim of self-deception? First, we shouldn’t be so concerned with self-esteem as we are with acknowledging our finiteness and imperfections. Concerns about self-esteem can get dangerously close to self-worship and self-absorption if allowed to dominate our lives. In fact, it is only recognizing that we are nothing, in and of ourselves, and that God can make us what He wishes us to be. We are fallen human beings, with all the limitations and foibles that come with it. Second, we should realize that we are created in the image of God. We aren’t “little Gods” nor do we possess in our flesh Godlike attri-

butes. If we have any value and merit, it is through His imputing to us His Spirit. It is uplifting in the spiritual sense to know that we are His creation and we are the objects of His love. The intention of those two facts is not to raise our self-esteem, but to humble us through realizing that we could not, and did not, create ourselves nor could we, or did we, die for our sins. Those two truths alone should give us reason to rejoice. We don’t need to meet man’s standards or expectations to have peace of mind and heart about who we are. We only need to fall back upon His power in creating us and His love in redeeming us.

The question we need to ask ourselves is, are we trusting in God for his eternal assurance, forgiveness and grace, or are we waiting for the approval of man to give us temporal feelings of self-worth? If the latter, we are but victims of our own self-deception. ☺

## More than “Just a Mom”

by Donna Starkey

Some of the sweetest words we can hear are—mom, mommy, momma or mother. However, the word “mom” is not always said in a sweet, loving way. Sometimes it is accompanied by the “eyeroll.”

Sometimes it is said in a tone that says “I can’t believe you said and/or did that.” Sometimes it is accompanied by an exasperated tone. A number of years ago when Morris was pastoring full-time, his hours allowed him to be home when our daughter Celinda got home from school. I was working at a bank and did not get home until around 5:30 pm. However, I was off on a weekday when Celinda came home from school. She came in the house and did what she normally did—dropped everything just inside the door. That day, however, as she dropped her backpack, books, etc., I said, “Take your things to your room.” She did—then huffed out of the house to the garage where her dad was. He asked her what was wrong and she replied, “There is a MOM in the house.”

Yes, there was a MOM in the house. We have all heard the comment “Oh, you are just a mom?” Maybe we have said, “I’m a working mom, I am a soccer mom, I am a stay-at-home mom, or I am a home-school mom.” I read something the other day that I love and am adopting. I am not “just a mom.” I am a Warrior Mom! We, as mothers, grandmothers, aunts, cousins, need to realize that we are in a warfare. We are in a battle for our families. The Bible tells us that the devil is walking around like a roaring lion,

seeking whom he may devour. And I believe that he is working harder today than ever because he knows his time is very limited. 1 Peter 5:8 says “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” That “whom” in verse 8 is talking about you, me and our families. We need to be preparing our families.

One of the first steps in preparing our children is to teach them about the Lord and their need of a Savior. As a Warrior Mom, don’t sit back and wait for the Sunday school teacher or junior church leader to lead your child to Christ. They may be the one to do it, but you should be sowing the seed.

As Warrior moms, we need to be proactive with our children and take charge. Don’t wait for problems; anticipate them and take action. The word “vigilant” in 1 Peter 5:8 means to be keenly watchful, to detect danger, to be on guard, observant and alert! When our children are infants, we make sure that the food they are given is good for them. We don’t want to give them anything that would hurt them. The same applies to our children’s minds as they grow older. What are their minds feeding on? We need to make sure we know what our kids are reading and watching (i.e. TV or movies and even the video games they play). I have seen our daughter Celinda hear something on the TV when Reagan is watching cartoons, and say “REAGAN.” He immediately says, “I’m changing the

More Than Just A Mom cont. on page 8

## Aging Gracefully

### Making Melody in Your Heart (Part 5)

by Morris Starkey

*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord* (Ephesians 5:19).

In this fifth and final part of our series on music in the church and its relationship to the senior believer, we will expand a little on the matter of spiritual songs. Knowing the exact

sense of what the apostle was speaking of might prove to be a little difficult when we look at it from a 21st century context. We know that what are generally referred to as “spirituals” in our current context would include the songs sung by blacks to encourage themselves as they toiled in the fields. It may even include those religious songs sung by other nationalities and cultures when they had gone through particularly trying times. Those songs were sung from a cultural context. It was singing from the position of how God was demonstrating Himself to that person during that time. While we may sing of the lofty attributes and characteristics of a Holy God when we sing Hymns and Psalms, the old spirituals get down to where life is actually hurting us. It is singing to God and to others about our personal affliction. We should never be afraid to sing to God about ourselves when it is the Lord we are honoring, not looking first and foremost for the sympathy of others.

I think another understanding of this idea of singing spiritual songs might be a little different than the aforementioned, but it may capture the actual sense of the text. The church has always been faced with the temptation to be entertaining, instead of being edifying. I wrote in an earlier article in this series that even some of the earlier (especially the Reformation era) church leaders were diametrically opposed to each other in the type of music that was to be used in the worship service. Some felt it was proper to use non-religious music, so long as it didn’t suggest anything contrary to scripture. Others felt that only music that gave a clear testimony of God and

His redemptive work through Christ was acceptable. I think I would fall into the latter category as I have heard some “inspirational” songs that could have as easily been sung to one’s sweetheart as they were to God.

I think Paul is denoting a characteristic of what music in the church should be—decidedly spiritual.

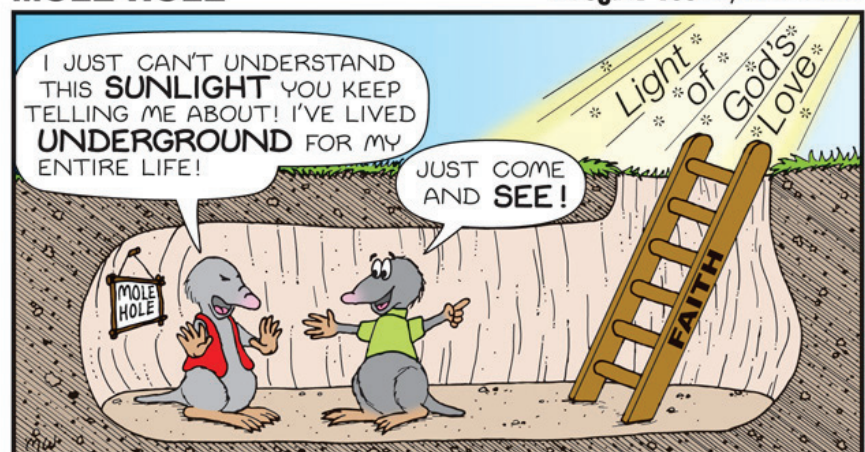
Spiritual songs, if my understanding is plausible, would definitely have a spiritual message, not just an inspirational message. The word “inspirational” in the context of music and literature can have a dual meaning. It can be spirit-lifting and giving reason to life while only appealing to the senses, or it can be unquestionably focused on God and our Savior, Jesus Christ. Inspirational speakers can cause you to leave an auditorium happy, thoughtful and enthusiastic, but still not send you home with any true spiritual information. Inspirational speaking is a multi-million dollar industry—spiritual speaking not so much. Inspirational ministers can pastor huge mega-churches, write books to no end, make you feel better about yourself than you have ever felt before, but fail in the matter of giving truly spiritual information. The church music industry can do the same. If the songs we sing are beginning to sound like catch phrases, repeated ad infinitum like cheer block yells to the team, maybe we should investigate what we are really achieving in the songs we sing. Is it raising our spiritual consciousness or simply raising our adrenalin and endorphins? Would we get the same sensation if we simply jogged?

So where does that leave us? Perhaps we should contemplate some questions as we sing in our churches. To what part of our being does the church music appeal—the flesh or the spirit? What appetite within our being is being fed—the flesh or the spirit? What thirst in us does the music assuage—the thirst of the world or the thirst of the soul? May we sing the songs that praise God, edify our souls and speak life-giving truth to those around us. ☺



### MOLE HOLE

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip.

— JOHN 1: 45–46 NIV

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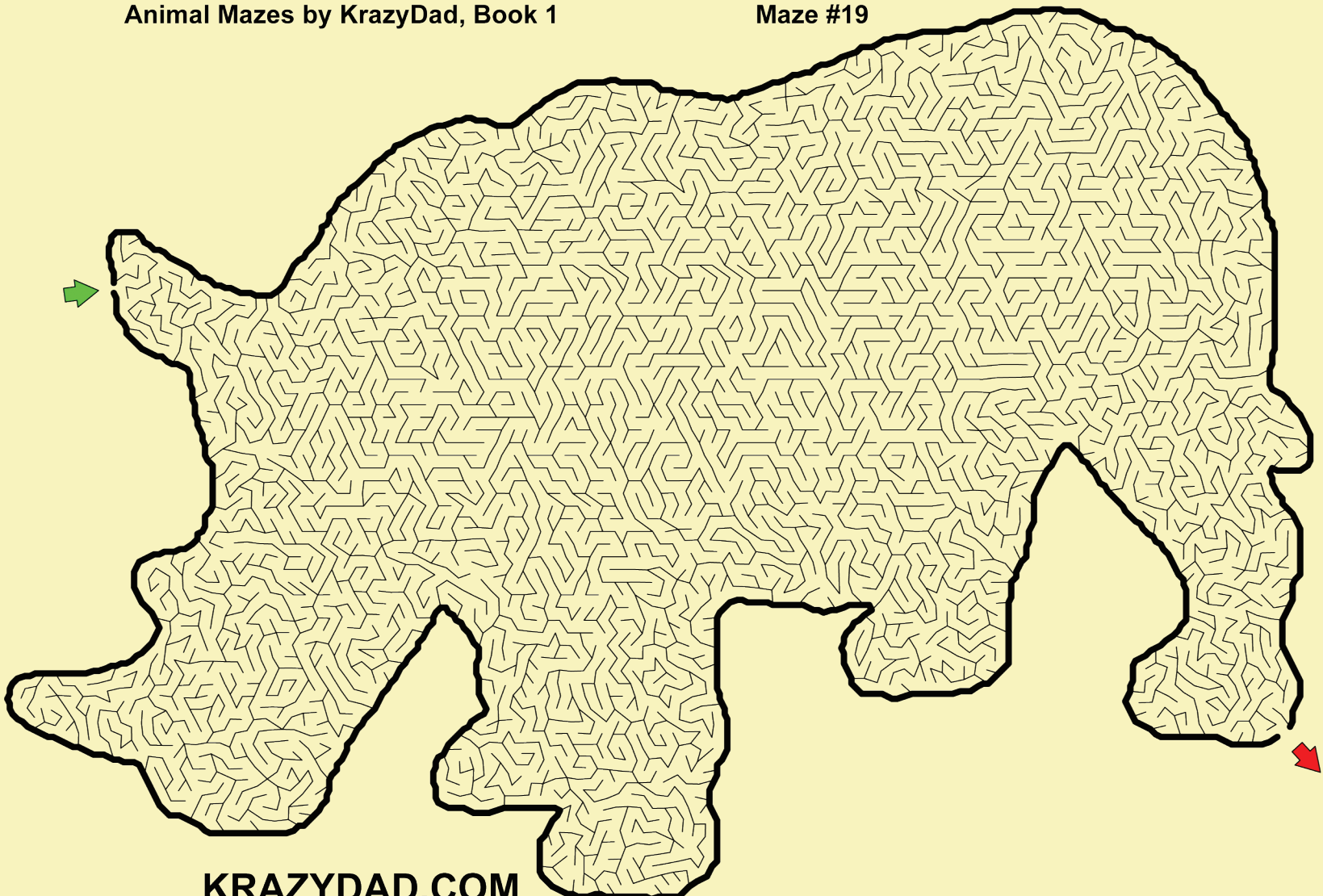
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## Perspective

by Emily Pier

“Don’t even knock,” I say firmly, shutting my bedroom door and locking it. Sometimes a mom just can’t. I curl up on the bed for a moment to escape another emotional outburst of today’s two brokenhearted girls. My own heart is a mess trying to process this emotional roller coaster called adoption.

We are all trying our best here. On some days hearts are happy and satisfied; on some days hearts are broken. Being thirty-six gives me some advantage to these littles. I can take a deep breath; I can see just enough of life through my little window to know we are all in process. I can rely on the promises from God. I know that my 7 and 8-year-olds can only see at this moment what they need, or want, or feel.

ENTER stage right: next life struggle.

Delays in houses, or contracts at work, or sickness, or vehicle troubles—any old combination of trouble will suffice in revealing that I myself am a little girl with limited perspective and a sometimes short-sighted kind of faith. I am, at times, my girls.

I riffle the pages of my Bible for a couple of my favorites. The pages are well-creased, easily separating for me to find truths. Even well-loved, easily-quoted, true promises need to be reread and reread in times of troubles. I think that’s how we can live in James chapter one: “Count it

all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” For me anyway, it seems to be like that. To find joy in my trials, I have to reread and hold close those truths that I, just moments before, had been tempted to think I knew so well. However, new trials bring fresh emotions. New opportunities for truth

become real as we abide in Him.

First Peter writes encouragement as well:

“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” This verse takes me back to a few years ago during a crisis of faith. It was a time in my life when I knew God was real, but I wasn’t too convinced that I liked Him. Typing that today makes me cringe. However, when my working definition of the

goodness of God was based on how comfortable my life was, I struggled. In this verse I caught a glimmer of hope because, even though I was indeed grieved by various trials, faith remained. Even with my view of God askew and my hope placed emotionally in any old place I could put it to survive my days, my faith existed. I could not abandon God; by His grace, I was sustained. My faith was small and fragile and sickly, but it was. I was so thankful. In the years since,

“So we do not lose heart  
... For this light momentary  
affliction is preparing for you an  
eternal weight of glory beyond  
all comparison...”

that seed has grown and flourished.

I do have times of struggle

still. As I mentioned, sometimes I look like my girls. But with truth living and growing in my heart, my faith is not so fragile or sickly at this time. Thanks be to God. Today as I read that verse, my prayers for the praise and glory and honor of God refocus my eyes on the “Author and Finisher” of my faith. It makes it possible to choose to believe in eternal truths and let those preserve me through whatever trouble comes.

Finally, I am thumbing to Second Corinthians. It is one of my truest comforts. Chapter four is to me

a cherished, hallowed, resting place for my heart. The whole chapter is precious to me. Today, however, I start with verse seven: “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.” What treasure is this? Verse six sings to my heart: “[God] has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” What a truth! In this little old, completely imperfect jar of my life, is kept the light—the light of the knowledge of the glory of God—and it was given to me in Jesus. O, the wonder of it all! Then Paul’s letter goes on and shows me the ways that Jesus gives life in my hardship. Truth only continues to encourage.

Finally, one of my sacred life verses of late is at the end of the chapter. “So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for you 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.”

My heart is invited to rest. So, Heart, be still and trust. Abandon your short-sighted faith for the reassuring, eternal promises of God. ☺

### More Than Just A Mom *cont. from page 6*

channel.” They have discussed what he can and cannot watch. I have had Reagan tell me that he doesn’t watch “such and such” because they have bad words. If what they are seeing or reading is contrary to the Scripture, or inaccurate, be sure to talk to them about it. They often get something in their minds and then see it as “truth.” This is one of the reasons that I very seldom read Christian fiction about Biblical characters. The lines between fact and conjecture can become blurred.

Know what your kids are being taught in their schools. Know their teachers; check out their textbooks. Know who their friends are and have rules as to where they go and when they will be home. The opposite of vigilant is to be indifferent or unaware, so don’t be caught unaware. Again, be proactive. Know

what is going on!

As I stated earlier, we are in a battle. Never before has the family been so brutally attacked by western culture. Godly men and women are being ridiculed and persecuted around the world. We need to stand firm! Ephesians 6:10-13 says, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

Be a Warrior Mom! ☺

### Healthy Fruit *cont. from page 1*

as a child you sang the song, “Oh, be careful little eyes what you see...oh, be careful little ears what you hear”. That children’s chorus promotes a legitimate warning that we would do well to heed. If the fruits that our lives are producing are rotten, small, sparse, or non-existent, perhaps we should consider what we are pouring into our lives. As Christians, if we are to produce healthy fruit we will need to create an environment that is enriched in prayer and God’s Holy Word.

Have you ever bitten into what appeared to be a delicious looking fruit only to find it utterly distasteful? Christians are often well-versed in the ability to produce fruit that looks good on the outside but lacks sincerity and godly motive and inspiration. This is counterfeit fruit. Sincerely loving God and loving others is the mark of good fruit (cf. John 15:9-17).

Jesus made it clear what would be

necessary if we desire to produce good fruit in our lives. He said, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:4-5). And if we do abide in Him, verse eight goes on to show the marvelous outcome of the type of fruit our lives will produce, “By this My Father is glorified, **that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples**” (emphasis added).

Is it worth the work of providing an optimally nutritious environment? John 15: 16 says, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain.” Fruit born in righteousness will have eternal benefit! ☺



## The Benefits of Youth Sports

by Matt Turner

I must begin this article confessing my bias. I have been involved with youth sports practically my whole life and am still actively participating in several different ways. My life has revolved around church, school, and sports, and I believe it has been greatly enriched by each. Furthermore, I believe youth sports is one of the most wholesome blessings God has bestowed upon this great, dying culture in this country.

It's important to point out that you can substitute many things in place of "youth sports." My main point is that you should have your children engaged with others competitively in order to develop necessary social skills. Whether it is music, drama, photography, science fairs, chess, or debate, please find some things your child likes to do and encourage him in those activities.

Also, I must state what should be obvious. The proper order of importance is church, school, and sports. After all, our entire purpose is to glorify God, and we do that best as a member of a local assembly. Furthermore, I certainly

hope you put your child's education before their high school sports career.

Furthermore, let me address a growing attitude towards entertainment as a whole. Yes, our modern culture is drunk on entertainment; therefore, preachers are right to warn us of the dangers inherent in making our lives all about recreation. However, let's not misdirect our energy on the wrong things. Youth sports are not the problem. As a matter of fact, I think it could be part of the solution.

So you are thinking, "What is so great about youth sports?" Well, I'm glad you asked. Everyone needs to learn how to be a gracious winner and a gracious loser. I know there is a move towards eliminating the labels of "winners and losers." I believe this is most unfortunate. Some of life's most important lessons are made real to us through the experiences of winning and losing. We do not need to get rid of championship trophies in place of participation ribbons for all. We need to recommit ourselves to the values we used to hold dear.

There are lessons to be learned

from both experiences. Winning is a great feeling. However, we must teach our children to be gracious winners, having respect for their opponent, officials, fans, and the game as well. Losing, although sometimes difficult, is also a great experience. If properly handled, losing should drive a person to work even harder in order to win the prize. We all need to learn how to properly handle failure. I have been involved as a player, umpire, coach, and fan in nearly every level of youth baseball, and I have noticed a common theme in each organization's motto. They all mention the part about being a gracious winner and gracious loser. Sportsmanship is becoming one of those lost arts.

Also, youth activities are wonderful ways to teach children how to work with others for the common good under the direct authority of leaders

whom they must follow. The field, stage, or court of competition is an ideal way to learn how to function together as a unit. The whole process of practicing and becoming a tight-knit group ready to battle is a foundational lesson

everyone needs to learn. Everyone should learn to dedicate himself to the group by submitting to the game plan of his coaches.

Do not think that I am talking about giving up your individuality either. Just because you put your team before your individual interests, that doesn't mean you lose all your individuality. As a matter of fact, it's the diversity of individuals which makes every team unique!

Please, don't miss the big point here! We should want our children to grow up with a servant's heart— one ready to sacrifice himself for the sake of others. There isn't a better place to teach a child these things. Again, I concede there are other ways to teach these principles, but you must agree that competitive sports are a viable option.

Unfortunately, I know many of the good qualities I am speaking about have been perverted by those who try to win at all costs and those who are not gracious in victory or defeat. But again, just because there are several

**Youth Sports** cont. on page 10



## Cookin' Corner

by Donna Starkey

There are times when you walk into the kitchen and do not have a lot of time to spend and need to be able to make a meal quickly. The two recipes that I am including in this issue could not be easier. The Eggroll in a Bowl recipe is from my husband's niece, Sue Starkey, and I found the No-Bake Pumpkin Cheesecake online and adapted it for our low-carb lifestyle. I hope you enjoy trying these recipes.

### Eggroll in a Bowl

#### Ingredients:

- 2 pounds of ground pork
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 bag of coleslaw mix (found in the produce department)
- 4 tablespoons soy sauce (regular or low sodium)

Brown the meat and then add the minced garlic, onion powder, coleslaw mix and soy sauce. Simmer a few minutes so that the coleslaw is not too crunchy. Serve and enjoy.

You can make a few changes to the above if you prefer. You can replace the ground pork with ground beef and it works great. My husband also likes Chinese vegetables, so I used half of the coleslaw mix and added a can of the Chinese vegetables. It was a big hit both ways.

### No-Bake Pumpkin Cheesecake

#### Ingredients:

- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese
- ½ cup Splenda or sweetener of your choice
- 1 cup canned pumpkin (pure pumpkin, NOT pumpkin pie mix)
- ½ teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1 tub (8 ounces) whipped topping

Beat together the cream cheese, Splenda, pumpkin and pumpkin pie spice. Fold in 2 ½ cups of the whipped topping. Chill and garnish with the rest of the whipped topping.

If you are not following a low-carb diet, use regular sugar in place of the Splenda. Also, if you do not have any pumpkin pie spice in your pantry, you can replace it with cinnamon. This has been a big hit at our Family Day dinners at church.

"O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise Him all ye people. For His merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth forever. Praise ye the Lord." (Psalm 117 KJV).

## Cooking Tips for Soup or Stew

If a soup or stew is too salty, add raw cut potatoes. Discard them after they have cooked; they will have absorbed the salt.

If a soup or stew is too sweet, add salt. If a main dish or vegetable is too sweet, add a teaspoon of cider vinegar.

**Youth Sports** *cont. from page 9*

things which need to be addressed within youth sports, we should not do away with these programs. We should simply address those issues.

Even if your child is placed on a team which never wins a game, and he has a terrible coach, he can still learn all the life lessons. However, if he doesn't participate in some form of competitive activity, he may not. I would even argue, parents should insist their children do something which teaches them to be part of a group under the direction of appointed leaders. Children need to know life is not all about them.

Before I end, I should address something that has bothered me for a while. I'm afraid many people, including Christians, believe Jesus was a sissy. They act as if He was always passive and gentle. That's not at all how I see Jesus. I believe He was tough

when He needed to be. I'm convinced He struck that elusive balance in every area of life. On the one hand I wanted my son to grow up and be meek and gentle; however, I didn't want him to grow up being afraid to be aggressive if the situation called for it. I believe youth sports provided the perfect environment to train my son how to find that balance. Youth sports provide the opportunity for a child to learn to play hard within the rules while learning to be a gracious winner and loser.

Even though there are several issues in youth sports which need to be addressed, overall, competitive sports can be a tremendously positive experience for our children. A child's physical, mental, social, and yes, even spiritual skills can be sharpened, expressed, and developed within the context of competitive youth sports. ☺

**Finally Engaged!** *cont. from page 4*

congratulated me on the safe flight and the engagement. I asked how he knew about that. He said Lolly's Dad had called and spilled the beans and told Mom and Dad how happy he was to have his daughter marrying their son. Well, blow me down!

Now to set the date. I had applied for Helicopter Pilot School and was awaiting orders. We agreed that when they arrived we would get married on the leave embedded in the travel orders. This required a flexible wedding date. When my orders arrived it was April 1954, and the schedule put our wedding day on the 18<sup>th</sup>, which was Easter Sunday that year.

Dad gave me the '39 Chrysler that his Dad had owned, and I drove it to Zzyzx to marry my lovely girl. The place was decorated with a profusion of oleanders and tamarack. We memorized our vows because we figured that since we really intended to keep them, we should be really familiar with them. The reception was replete with cake, punch, fruit, goat's milk and I don't remember what all.

The car was all packed up, but when we got ready to leave, it wouldn't start. So since it was a stick shift, we had all the guests get behind and push. I let in the clutch and it started right up, and off we drove. The people in the cars passing us on the highway were all waving, honking and smiling, since our families had decorated our car so nicely. We got as far as Ashfork, Arizona before we burned a rod. I had a screw driver and a pair of pliers and not much money. The man at the ga-

rage wouldn't lend me any tools until I agreed to pull it into his fenced-in back yard (think junkyard!) so he could lock the gate behind us. But by the time I had the pan off and the bad rod identified, we had become good friends, and he even helped me that evening after his work was done.

We had taken out the cross bracing between the back seat and the trunk and put a mattress in. So we spent some of our honeymoon sleeping in a junkyard! We had the crankshaft re-ground, got some new bearings, put it all back together, and continued on our way.

As we were approaching Albuquerque, the speed was being limited by what I thought was vapor lock. It wasn't. When it wouldn't go fast enough to get up the hill past the river in the middle of town, I stopped and discovered that the fuel pump was falling out. I got another bolt from the junk box in a gas station where they let me use a 7/16 box wrench, and we were on our way again.

Then in Pampa, Texas the transmission slipped out of gear and wouldn't pull the car! It was Saturday evening and everything was closed. I rolled to a stop at the curb, and took out the transmission. I managed to figure out a way to cripple a temporary fix using a block of wood that I found down the street and worked on the car until 3:00 in the morning.

Oh, I'm out of space again. I'll have to finish my honeymoon story next time. ☺

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*Redeeming the time . . .*



*. . . because the days  
are evil.  
Ephesians 5:16*

**His Righteousness** *cont. from page 5*  
is more than faulty for we are all as unclean things, and all our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). We are clothed in garments without wrinkle, without spot (Ephesians 5:27) because of Christ and His atoning sacrifice, made righteous by the blood that cleanses from sin. Behold the beauty clothed in his righteousness!

There is a season coming in glory that will last an eternity when we *will* behold His face in righteousness and we *shall* be satisfied (Psalms 17:15). This is the eternity set in our hearts by God which the soul longs for (Ecclesiastes 3:11 and Psalms 63:1-20). It is more than a duration of time. It is a time spent in infinity embraced by, consumed by perfect goodness and boundless love! Therefore, the ambassadors of Christ beseech thee "Be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:20-21 KJV). You need only believe with the heart and confess with the lips "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (Romans 10:10-11 KJV).

"Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:54-55). "Thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57). ❧

## The Power of Choice

*by Mike Ennis*

"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:14-15, AV).

Choices lead to the outcome of your life. I am dealing with this subject because I hope it will help you avoid making wrong choices. Choices often determine the outcome of our lives. Choices lead to life. We make choices, then our choices make us. The point is that the choices we make are important. It is important to get them right.

The choices that we make are based on priorities and motivation. If we have the right goals and desires, we will make the right decisions. If, for example, your overall goal in life is to put God first and to please Him, you will make entirely different choices than the person whose goal is their own pursuit of possessions and/or pleasure. In other words, we are looking at the possibility of people making the wrong choices because their priorities and motivations are wrong. An example of a right choice flowing from a right desire would be Moses: "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Hebrews 11:25-26, AV).

The choices we make determine our life. There are exceptions to this of

course. The grace of God often overrides our stupid choices (thank God for that) but generally speaking, we reap what we sow.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:7-8). We can make good choices in life which will lead to our success, and we can make bad choices which will lead to our demise.

We are free to choose but we are not free to determine the outcome. American pastor H. E. Fosdick says, "He who chooses the beginning of a road chooses the place it leads to. It is the means that determine the end." Galatians 6:7-8 makes it clear that you are free to jump off a ten-story building, but you are not free once the law of gravity takes over; you will have no choice once you have jumped.

We need to make wise choices. Some choices can be put off, some choices don't really matter, but some really matter. One choice that is of the utmost importance is what you do with Christ. Mark 10:17-22 illustrates this truth: "And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou

lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions."

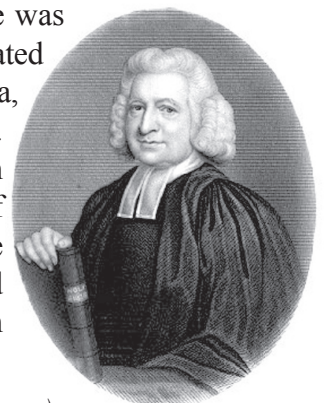
This man made a decision that we suppose cost him Heaven. We can suppose that he is in Hell right now living with the consequences of that decision. What will you decide? Christ or riches? Christ or \_\_\_\_\_? You are free to decide. You may choose, but you cannot determine the outcome of that decision. If you reject Christ, Hell is your fate. If you accept Him, Heaven and eternal life is yours. If you choose to put off your decision, you have chosen. To wait is to reject Christ. Now is the time. 2 Corinthians 6:2 says, "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"

I hope that you do not find this too preachy or offensive. I tell you this because I care about you. I know that this is America and that we pride ourselves on our freedom. I would not try to force you to do anything; you are free to choose. However, I must try to warn you to make the right decision concerning Christ. Friends don't let friends go to Hell. Please consider this all important decision. If you choose Christ, that is if you pray and ask Him to save you, you can be assured of eternal life. If you choose to reject Him you can be just as assured of eternal separation from God in Hell. Don't take my word for it. Read the Bible, God's Word to us. In it you will find the way to Heaven. Choose wisely, my friend. ❧

## Charles Wesley

Charles Wesley, the son of Samuel Wesley, was born at Epworth, Dec. 18, 1707. He was educated at Westminster School and afterwards at Christ Church, Oxford, where he graduated M.A. In 1735, he took Orders and immediately proceeded with his brother John to Georgia, both being employed as missionaries of the S.P.G. He returned to England in 1736. For many years he engaged with his brother in preaching the Gospel. He died March 29, 1788. To Charles Wesley has been justly assigned the appellation of the "Bard of Methodism." His prominence in hymn writing may be judged from the fact that in the "Wesleyan Hymn Book," 623 of the 770 hymns were written by him; and he published more than thirty poetical works, written either by himself alone, or in conjunction with his brother. The number of his separate hymns is at least five thousand.

—*Annotations of the Hymnal, Charles Hutchins, M.A., 1872 (by permission Hymnary.org)*





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Prayer & Praise Hour..8:00 a.m.

Faith & Family Hour...9:00 a.m.

Worship & Word .....10:00 a.m.

(Carry-in dinner every 4th Sunday of the month)

**Wednesday**

Adult Bible Study..... 7:00 p.m.

Children's Class..... 7:00 p.m.

(Ages 3 - 6th grade)

Teens' Class ..... 7:00 p.m.

(7th grade - high school)



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### God's Simple Plan of Salvation

**The Bible says there is only one way to Heaven.**

*Jesus said: I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me (John 14:6).*

**Good works cannot save you.**

*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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