



PSYCHOLOGY FOR
Living
SUMMER 2002

**Stepparenting
Strategies For Success**

PLUS : "TOP 10 MYTHS ABOUT DIVORCE," and "WHO IS AN MK?"

Serving Servants In A Troubled World

by Bruce Narramore

Did you know that more Christians were martyred in the twentieth century than all other centuries combined since the time of Christ? As I write this, we have just received word from Manila that American missionary Martin Burnham, and Filipina nurse, Deborah Yap, were killed in a rescue attempt after being held prisoners by Abu Sayyaf rebels linked to Osama bin Laden.

In Indonesia, 14 Christians were murdered and their homes and places of worship burned in one week. An estimated two million women and young girls are abducted and sold into sexual slavery every year! And Muslim extremists see the United States and Christianity as Islam's two great evil enemies which they vow to destroy.

Forty-five years ago when my uncle, Dr. Clyde Narramore, began the ministries of the Narramore Christian Foundation, there were very few evangelical Christian psychologists throughout the United States. Because of the pioneering ministry of Dr. Clyde and a few others, there are now many wonderful Christian men and women providing counseling, radio broadcasts, and Christ-centered services to meet the needs of Christians throughout the United States.


In other countries, however, the situation is much like it was in the United States 45 years ago — only much, much worse. National Christians live under incredible hardship throughout Africa, Asia, and South America. Missionaries are working in almost unbearable circumstances and suffering intense persecution. Sadly, approximately 5,000 U. S. missionaries have to leave the field unnecessarily every year because of personal, family, social, and ministry-related problems. If our troubled world is going to change, the gospel of Jesus Christ must penetrate into these dark regions and prejudiced hearts. But “how can they

hear without someone preaching to them” (Romans 10:14, NIV). And how can committed missionaries continue preaching if they have to leave their ministry due to the incredible stresses on their personal and family lives? That's where we come in.

If you have followed our ministry in the last few years, you have seen our increasing commitment to serving missionaries and Christians beyond the boundaries of the United States. Kathy and I have a special place in our hearts for God's servants who trade a comfortable life here in the U.S. for unknown pressures in countries where the gospel has yet to penetrate.

In this issue, you will meet 10 of the outstanding Christian psychologists and counselors with whom we are partnering to serve God's servants. You will also see news items on other aspects of our international outreach. And you will read our usual insightful articles on the family and Christian living.

To increase our international ministries, we will soon be making one change in our literature ministry. Beginning in 2003, we will publish only one full-size issue of *Psychology for Living* annually. Your other three issues will be a smaller newsletter, including one or two articles and updates on NCF's outreaches around the world. This change will enable us to save at least \$100,000 annually, which we can then use to better serve Christian missionaries and nationals around the world.

We will be continuing all of our current literature, web, correspondence, referral, and seminar ministries, but we will expand our international outreach even more. As the Apostle Paul put it, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news” (Romans 10:15, NIV). I trust you will join with Kathy and me and our entire staff as we do all we can to increase our services to God's servants overseas and those who need our Christ-centered counseling help the most. 

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AVOIDANT PERSONALITY STYLES:

HIDING



FROM WHAT YOU NEED THE MOST

by Paul A. Johns, M.A., MFT

“I’m sorry, I must be going,” Dave muttered after being at the party for a half hour. His hesitant excitement had turned to anxiety and he was sure that all eyes were upon him. All he could think about was whether he had worn the right clothes and why more people had not said hi. Leaving seemed like his only option.

From across the room, Julie, the party hostess, saw Dave as he hurried out. “Why is he leaving so soon?” she asked her husband Steve. Seeing the distressed look on her face, he answered, “I don’t know, but I’m sure it’s nothing you did.”

Thinking she heard a derogatory tone in her husband’s voice, Julie concluded that he didn’t think the party was fun. With that she took refuge in the kitchen and spent much of the evening complaining of a headache. Steve simply shrugged his shoulders and began mingling with the guests.

Do you know someone who consistently acts like David or Julie? Have you come in contact with people who go to social events or strike up conversations, only to seem nervous, walk away quickly or act as though they would rather be some other place? Or have you often had these reactions around people yourself? What you may have noticed or experienced could be the struggles of someone with an avoidant personality style.

The Avoidant Personality Style

All of us occasionally experience some anxiety in relationships, but our fears don’t result in the profound social inhibitions and severe feelings of inadequacy that haunted Dave and Julie. The avoidant person’s inner experience is characterized by a hyperalertness to how he feels and how he fits into his relational world. He or she is ►

extremely sensitive to the moods and feelings of others and to any hint of disapproval. The resulting hypervigilance leads him to pay attention to every negative experience and miss the positive ones that make life so gratifying and pleasurable. All relationships are likely to be experienced as difficult, even a relationship with God.

The avoidant person has continuous doubts and always expects His disapproval.

Imagine waking up in the morning and working hard to muster up the small amount of optimism that is buried beneath your social anxiety. But when you finally do interact with people, it hits you again. *Maybe it's true*, you think to yourself. You don't have what it takes to be accepted or liked by other people.

To make matters worse, the way you behave to avoid being rejected and criticized actually elicits the very responses from others that seem to validate your worst fears. In time, this pattern pervades your life. You approach potentially intimate relationships with restraint or a deep fear of being shamed or ridiculed and become preoccupied with thoughts of criticism or rejection.

The Roots of Relational Avoidance

People with avoidant personality traits were likely born with a certain biological predisposition toward introversion, hyperirritability, fearfulness, or sensitivity. They may have grown up in a family that was in some ways abusive (sometimes severely so), neglectful, rejecting, highly critical, extremely competitive, or shaming. Some combination of these family dynamics probably combined with their inborn temperament to cause them to become excessively self-critical, sensitive to

rejection, and socially anxious. This avoidant personality often first shows up in early childhood as profound shyness, fear of social situations, or lack of friendships.

Caution should be taken not to mistake normal development or unique individual characteristics for a more pervasive avoidant personality style or disorder. The desire to read a good book instead of attend-

ing a party is not indicative of avoidance. Similarly, purposefully withdrawing from people

in order to regain one's energy, experience solitude, or protect oneself from relational injustices may merely reflect responsible choices or the needs of a more introverted individual. It is only when a pattern of avoidance is anxiety driven and becomes consistent and pervasive that it is maladaptive.

What If I Have An Avoidant Personality Style?

If you see yourself in these pages, be assured that you do not have to continue living with such strong self-criticism and the fear of being ridiculed, disapproved, or hurt. The **first** step is to know that you can change. Others have done it. So can you.

The **second** step is to find a safe relationship. Find a friend or counselor with whom you feel a reasonable measure of safety and comfort. Some people are basically kind, well-adjusted, accepting, non-judgmental and tend to put you at ease. That is the type of person you need to begin sharing your struggles.

Third, be prepared to face the painful childhood experiences that lie at the root of your tendency to be extremely shy and sensitive. While it is probably most beneficial to do this with a professional counselor, you may be able to find a good friend

who can help you on this journey. This can be a frightening step, but it is incredibly relieving to find that someone can come alongside you in a way that no one did when you were growing up. The Bible says, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2 NIV).

Fourth, don't expect perfection from your friend or psychotherapist. He or she will not perfectly understand you all of the time. And it isn't essential that he does. Part of your growth will be learning that a slight misunderstanding or a temporary preoccupation was just that – not a sign of deep disapproval or rejection.

Fifth, expect to work through a variety of intense emotions. If you are continually avoiding situations, you need to come to grips with your social anxiety. Only as you work through longstanding emotions such as shame, depression, abandonment, confusion, anger or resentment, will you develop the freedom to feel good about yourself, comfortable with others, and to perceive social situations realistically.

Several forms of individual therapy have proven effective in treating the avoidant personality. The goals for therapy include increasing self-esteem and confidence in relationships, and working toward a decreased sensitivity to the perceived criticism of others. For example, if our partygoer Dave were to enter therapy, his counselor might first spend time supporting him in his struggles, empathizing with how hard it must be, and earning Dave's trust. The therapist would be able to hear both Dave's desires to have meaningful relationships and his intense fear of being criticized, rejected, or humiliated. The therapist would be able to communicate that he or she can truly understand the pain of Dave's dilemma at a deep emotional level.

As Dave begins to feel understood and safe, he can begin to explore the underlying causes of the painful pat-



Enjoy each day as a gift from God. Be aware and thank God for His blessings. Delight yourself in the Lord ... daily.


terns that led to his withdrawal. As a child Dave may have had no option except to withdraw or learn to fight. But as an adult he can find much better ways of managing and resolving his fear and his pain.

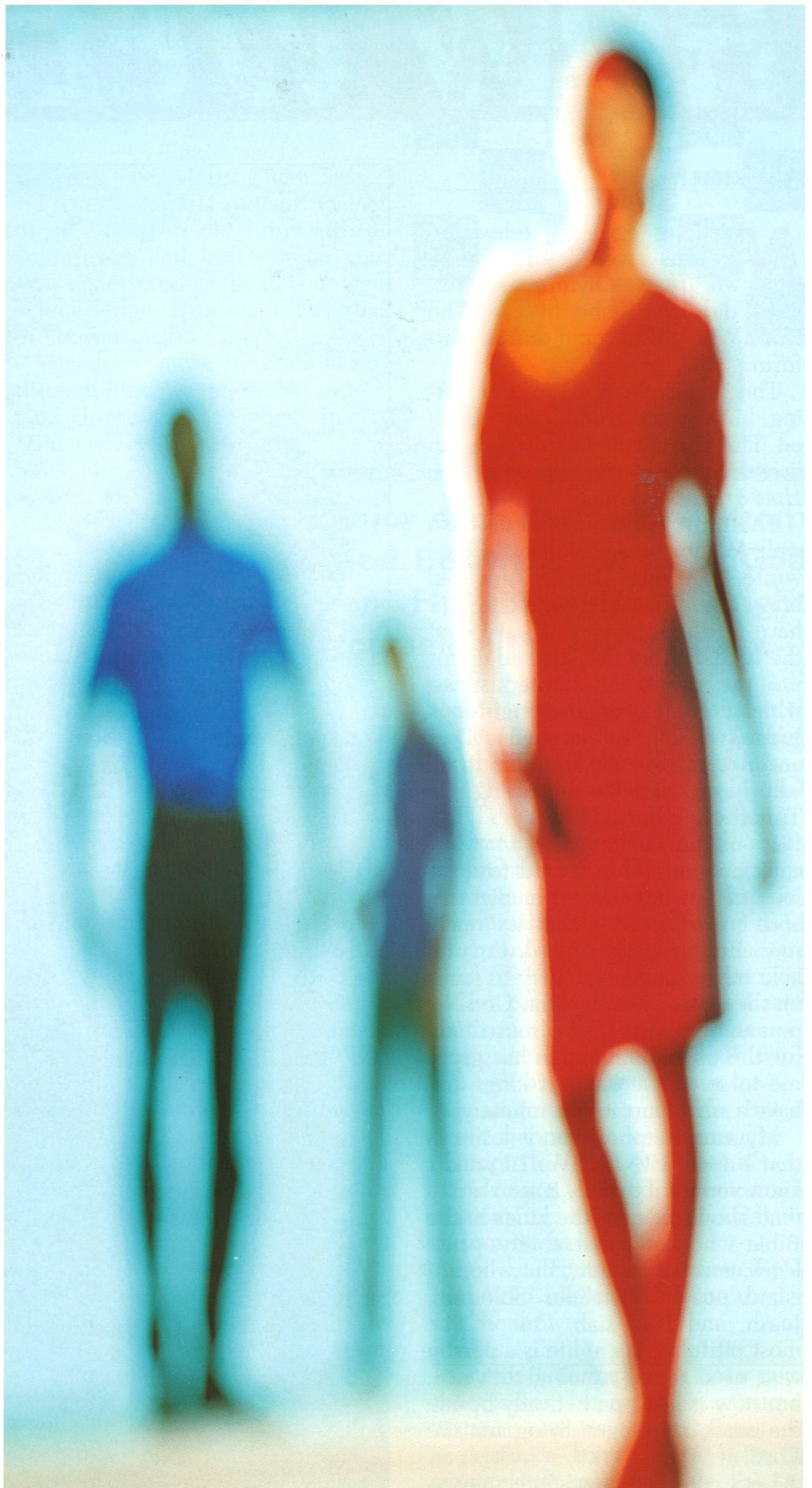
With a foundation of safety and acceptance, the therapist can begin to sensitively challenge Dave's distorted thoughts. If Dave joins a counseling group with others who have similar avoidant struggles, he may see and hear in others what he may not be able to see and hear in himself. Dave might also join a family group or have some counseling with his spouse if he is married. This would provide him with relational experiences and insights with those closest to him.

In terms of the length of treatment, the current trend of brief therapy may be somewhat helpful, especially if family and friends are willing to participate and support Dave in his therapy. But due to the avoidant person's hesitancy to trust and disclose, longer-term therapy is more likely to be helpful.

Both while in counseling and out, Dave's relationship with God can be an incredible resource. The Bible tells us God will never fail us. "When my mother and father forsake me, then the Lord will take me up" (Psalm 27:10). And the Apostle Paul reminds us that we are "accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:5, 6, *NKJV*). A major portion of our identity should come because we know we are God's loved, forgiven children. No matter how harmful our earthly parents or friends may have been, or how critical or condemning or rejecting, God is our perfect, loving, forgiving, encouraging heavenly Father.

Conclusion

Deep needs for love and relationships are at the core of us all because every person is made in God's image. And even though it is harder for those with avoidant personalities, they can, in time, learn to feel safe and connected with friends and family. 



HOW WELL ARE

by Dr. Gordon P. Elliott

Not long ago our television screens were filled with world-class Olympic athletes. How did he or she finish? Who won? Who got to stand on the platform to receive a medal?

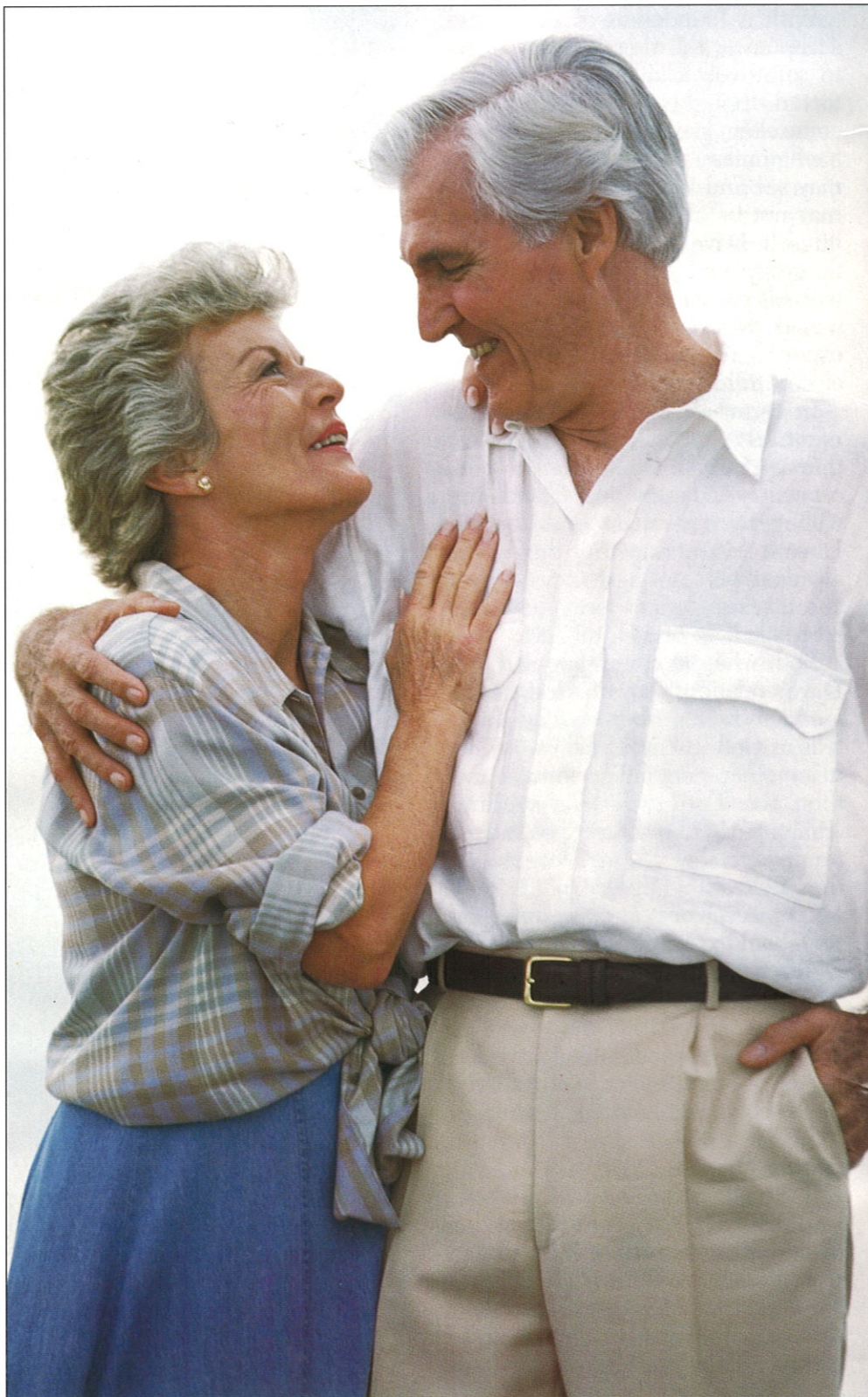
The start of the race was interesting, but the finish was what counted. This is also true in our Christian lives. We need to ask ourselves, *How are we finishing?*

The Bible encourages us to finish well. When the aging Apostle Paul wrote to young Timothy, he told him, "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (II Timothy 4:7, 8, NKJV).

It's not easy to get older. I know. I can't do everything I used to do. I look in the mirror and at pictures and I can't believe that is "really me." But, praise the Lord, I'm still able to be active, and I try to focus on the many blessings that God has poured upon my life. I praise Him for the opportunities He has given me to serve the King of kings and have a small part in His ministry.

My earnest prayer and desire is that I might FINISH WELL, and I know you want to also. It is so sad to read about many of the kings in the Bible who had great ability, privileges, and opportunity, but who finished poorly. Consider Solomon, Joash, and Hezekiah. One of the most pitiful sights in life is a person who used to be running the race, but now is lying pathetically beside the road, no longer living for the Lord!

Let's consider now some sugges-



YOU FINISHING?

tions that will help us to finish well.

Walk daily in absolute dependence upon the Lord – studying His Word and praying faithfully. God is for us. He wants to help us. Never lose your first love for Jesus, but pray it will continue to grow more and more.

Enjoy each day as a gift from God. Be aware and thank God for His blessings. Delight yourself in the Lord ... daily.

Focus and be involved in helping others. Really care and have compassion for their needs. If people grieve or hurt you, be quick to forgive and seek reconciliation. When we help others, we help ourselves. And we are quietly sharing with the unsaved what Christ is like.

Never lose the zeal to tell others about Jesus. Proverbs 11:30 says, “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise,” NKJV) Nothing is as important as sharing the gospel.

Beware of “weights and sins” that could mar your fellowship with Christ. Never be satisfied to allow sin in your life. Ask the Lord for a daily searching and cleansing. I John 1:9 tells us, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” It feels so good to be clean.

Express your love and take every opportunity to show that love to your family. They're special! Treat them so.

Do all you do for the glory of God. If you don't, you're off track! This means wise stewardship of your time, your talents, your relationships, and your resources.

Keep the hope of Christ's return fresh in your heart and mind. Perhaps today! Titus 2:13 reminds us, “looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great

God and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Proverbs 3:5, 6 is available to each of us: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (NKJV).

We don't have to muddle through life. We can be led by God Himself. Remember, “In Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

As we go through each season of life, we have special unique opportunities. A teenager, for example, can have a natural winsomeness that can be very appealing. I've known many teenagers who have been able to lead their parents to the Lord. These young people can also have a tremendous impact on other young people.

Seniors have different kinds of opportunities. Without the demands of a steady job we have more time to invest in friends or church activities. Whether we are seventeen or seventy, God can use us in special ways. Grandparents have tremendous opportunities to influence their grandchildren. This may be through talking with them, sending letters or faxes, or a myriad of other ways. There's hardly anyone kinder and potentially of greater influence than a well-adjusted godly grandma or grandpa.

Another way seniors can be a great blessing and finish well is through their financial means. They may see a boy or girl who would profit by going to a Christian camp where he can find Christ or grow in the Lord, but he doesn't have the funds. So a grandparent can step in and meet that need. Grandparents often see potential in boys and girls



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that parents may be too busy to notice. So grandparents can arrange for them to take lessons or to have a musical instrument to help that child develop his talents.

Grandparents can also reach around the world by directing their financial resources to Christian organizations that are doing great work for Christ. Many ministries are able to keep functioning because older people have remembered them in their will. Sometimes we can give more to the Lord's work through our estate than we have at any other time of our life. But it won't happen unless we make a decision to finish well and act on our decision. Indeed, these considerations are all a part of finishing the course well.

Let us determine today to FINISH WELL! God is waiting to give out the crowns!

The author, Dr. Gordon Elliott, a former pastor and missionary, now serves as the Pastor of Visitation in his home church in Hendersonville, North Carolina. He is the brother of Ruth Narramore. 

THE TOP

10

MYTHS ABOUT

DIVORCE

The Most Common Misinformation About Divorce



by David Popenoe

Myth #1 - *Because people learn from their bad experiences, second marriages tend to be more successful than first marriages.*

Fact #1 - Although many people who divorce have successful subsequent marriages, the divorce rate of remarriages is, in fact, higher than that of first marriages.

Myth #2 - *Living together before marriage is a good way to reduce the chances of eventually divorcing.*

Fact #2 - Many studies have found that those who live together before marriage have a considerably higher chance of eventually divorcing. The reasons for this are not well understood. In part, the type of people who are willing to cohabit may also be those who are more willing to divorce. There is some evidence that the act of cohabitation itself generates attitudes in people that are more conducive to divorce, for example the attitude that relationships are temporary and can easily be ended.

Myth #3 - *Divorce may cause problems for many of the children who are affected by it, but by and large these problems are not long-*

Single

Married

Divorced

lasting and the children recover relatively quickly.

Fact #3 - Divorce increases the risk of interpersonal problems in children. There is evidence, both from small qualitative studies and from large-scale, long-term empirical studies, that many of these problems are long lasting. In fact, they may even become worse in adulthood.

Myth #4 - *Having a child together will help a couple to improve their marital satisfaction and prevent a divorce.*

Fact #4 - Many studies have shown that the most stressful time in a marriage is after the first child is born. Couples who have a child together have a slightly decreased risk of divorce compared to couples without children, but the decreased risk is far less than it used to be when parents with marital problems were more likely to stay together “for the sake of the children.”

Myth #5 - *Following divorce, the woman’s standard of living plummets by 73 percent while that of the man’s improves by 42 percent.*

Fact #5 - This dramatic inequity,

one of the most widely publicized statistics from the social sciences, was later found to be based on a faulty calculation. A reanalysis of the data determined that the woman’s loss was 27 percent while the man’s gain was 10 percent. Irrespective of the magnitude of the differences, the gender gap is real and seems not to have narrowed much in recent decades.

Myth #6 - *When parents don’t get*

“
Although many people who divorce have successful subsequent marriages, the divorce rate of remarriage is higher than that of first marriages.”

along, children are better off if their parents divorce than if they stay together.

Fact #6 - A recent large-scale, long-term study suggests otherwise. While it found that parents’ marital unhappiness and discord have a broad negative impact on virtually every dimension of their children’s well-being, so does the fact of going

through a divorce. In examining the negative impacts on children more closely, the study discovered that it was only the children in very high conflict homes who benefited from the conflict removal that divorce may bring. In lower-conflict marriages ending in divorce (the study found that perhaps as many as two-thirds of the divorces were of this type), the situation of the children was made much worse following the divorce. Based on the findings of this study, therefore, except in the minority of high-conflict marriages, it is better for the children if their parents stay together and work out their problems than if they divorce.

Myth #7 - *Because they are more cautious in entering marital relationships and also have a strong determination to avoid the possibility of divorce, children who grow up in a home broken by divorce tend to have as much success in their own marriages as those from intact homes.*

Fact #7 - Marriages of the children of divorce actually have a much higher rate of divorce than the marriages of children from intact families. A major reason ►

for this, according to a recent study, is that children learn about marital commitment or permanence by observing their parents. Among children of divorce, a sense of commitment to a lifelong marriage has been undermined.

Myth #8 - *Following divorce, the children involved are better off in stepfamilies than in single-parent families.*

Fact #8 - The evidence suggests that stepfamilies are no improvement over single-parent families, even though typically income levels are higher and there is a father figure in the home. Stepfamilies tend to have their own set of problems, including interpersonal conflicts with new parent figures and a very high risk of family breakup.

Myth #9 - *Being very unhappy at certain points in a marriage is a good sign that the marriage will eventually end in divorce.*

Fact #9 - All marriages have their ups and downs. Recent research using a large national sample found that eighty-six percent of people who were unhappy in their marriage in the late 1980s, but remained within the marriage, when interviewed five years later indicated that they were happier. Indeed, three fifths of the formerly unhappily married couples rated their marriages as either "very happy" or "quite happy."

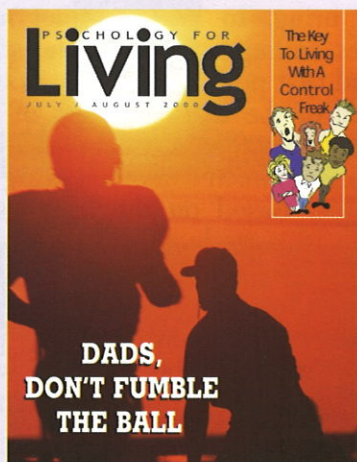
Myth #10 - *It is usually men who initiate divorce proceedings.*

Fact #10 - Two-thirds of all divorces are initiated by women.

One recent study found that many of the reasons for this have to do with the nature of our divorce laws. For example, in most states women have a good chance of receiving custody of their children. Because women more strongly want to keep their children with them, in states where there is a presumption of shared custody with the husband, the percentage of women who initiate divorce is much lower. Also, the higher rate of women initiators is probably due to the fact that men are more likely to be "badly behaved." Husbands, for example, are more likely than wives to have problems with drinking, drug abuse, and infidelity.

Popenoe, David. *The Top Ten Myths of Divorce*. The National Marriage Project at Rutgers University, 2001.

SPECIAL NOTICE



Beginning in 2003, the format of *Psychology for Living* will be changing to offset the increasing costs of paper, postage, printing, and publishing. Once a year you will receive our magazine in its current format. The other three issues of *Psychology for Living* will be in a smaller newsletter format. For more details, see this month's editorial by Dr. Narramore.



"Whenever something goes wrong,
I just push this little button and restart.
I wish my whole life was like that!"

Just Another Kid

by Joe Seay

He was just another kid who, like so many other youngsters, needed positive direction in life. His mother brought him to church with her each week as she struggled to keep him out of trouble in his early teen years. He was shy, reserved, and awkward.

I was the team manager for our church's teenage softball team, and Rick's mother, searching for answers for her son, asked me if I could find a place for him on our church team. Sometimes it seemed that some of these kids who could not adjust well in Sunday School, church choir or Bible quiz programs were often encouraged to play on the church softball team.

As I looked at him I noted that he didn't look a bit athletic. It was obvious he was suffering from low self esteem, lacking in confidence, and that he needed a friend. He needed someone to believe in him, to encourage him, to understand him, to give him a chance.

"What's your name?" I asked.

"Rick," he replied.

"Rick," I said, "we can always use another softball player. You be here at 6:30 tomorrow for practice. OK?"

He was there promptly at 6:30 standing by himself on the sidelines.

I greeted him and asked, "Where's your ball glove, Rick?"

He seemed a little embarrassed and mumbled something. I heard enough to realize he didn't have a ball glove.

"No problem. Here, use mine, Rick. I've got an extra," I said. Placing my hand on his shoulder to encourage him, I told him to play second base. He slipped the ball glove on and walked toward second base.

I had to smile a little when Rick lined up on the wrong side of second base, and I knew it was going to be a long season with Rick at second. Our team didn't win many games that year, but Rick was one of our most faithful ballplayers.

We had a rule that in order to play on our softball team, you had to be in church Sunday morning or Sunday night. Rick was always there with his mother for both services.

My sons and Rick were about the same age, and he began spending some time visiting in our home. As we got better acquainted with him, he began to relax and talk more freely.

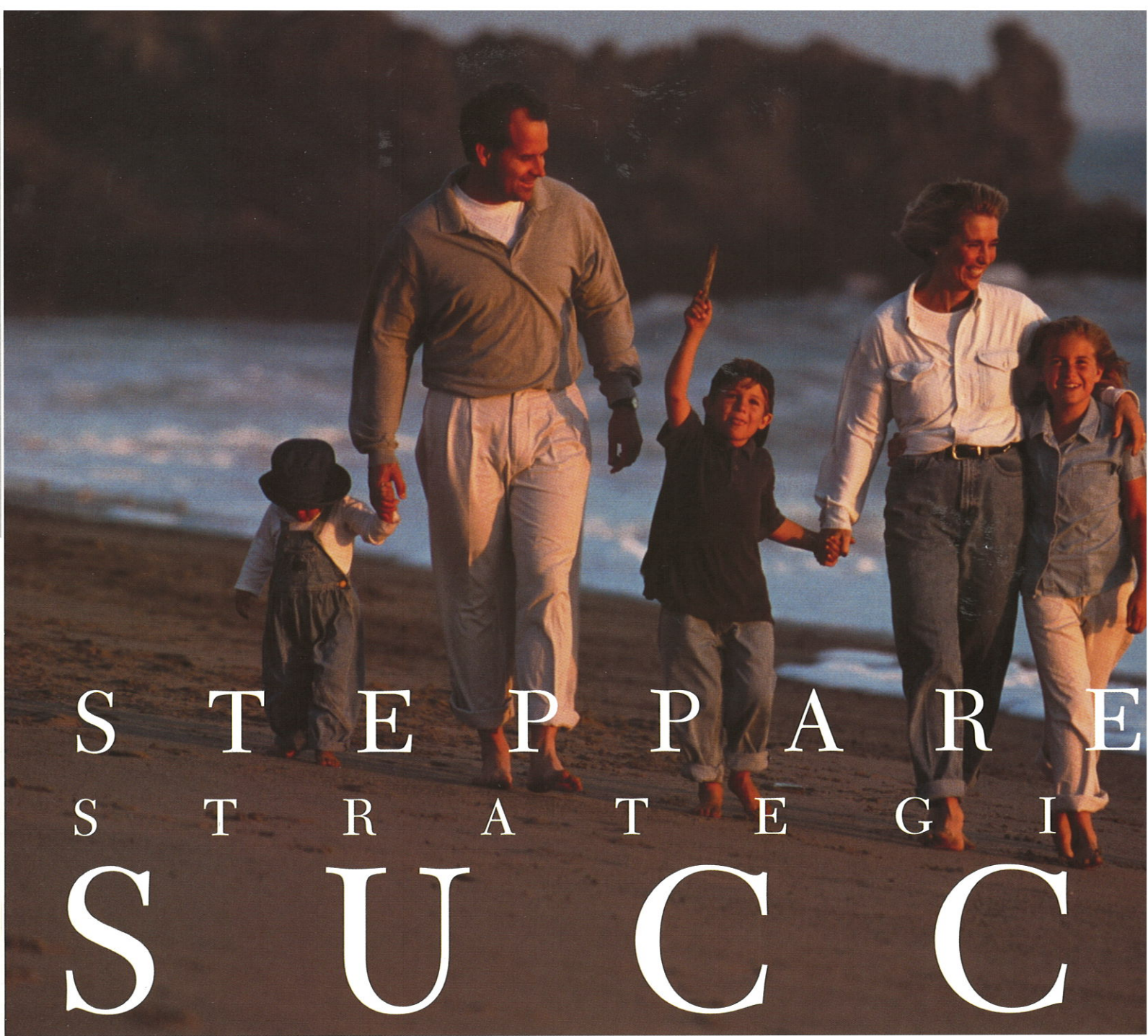


When our next softball season started, I moved Rick to right field and he matured into a pretty good outfielder. We talked about his spiritual needs, and he began to study his Bible on a regular basis.

It was a time of rejoicing that year when Rick accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior.

After his conversion Rick seemed to have a new zeal for life. He had more confidence in himself and did exceptionally well on the ball field. By his third season I moved him to center field, and he became one of our best ballplayers. Rick, now sixteen years old, had developed his softball skills but more important, he was a

Kid, continued on page 24 ►



S T E P P A R E S T R A T E G I S U C C

by Joe Pritchard

We returned from our weekend honeymoon to find the house unlocked, the windows wide open, the TV on, the dogs locked in the basement, and an army of ants attacking a half-eaten peanut-butter sandwich on the kitchen counter. And, a note...

Mom/Dad: Gone to the mall. Be back around nine.

Love, Shannon & Jamie

I turned to my bride and smiled.

"They called me Dad. Has a nice ring to it."

"They're just buttering you up — part of the honeymoon phase," my wife replied.

A week later we were on our way home from the mall, the girls angry at me for ending their excursion early. I was driving when Shannon, my fifteen-year-old stepdaughter, dropped the bomb on me.

"Why did we have to leave? I was talking to my friends and..."

"It's late. Your mother and I have

to work tomorrow," I replied.

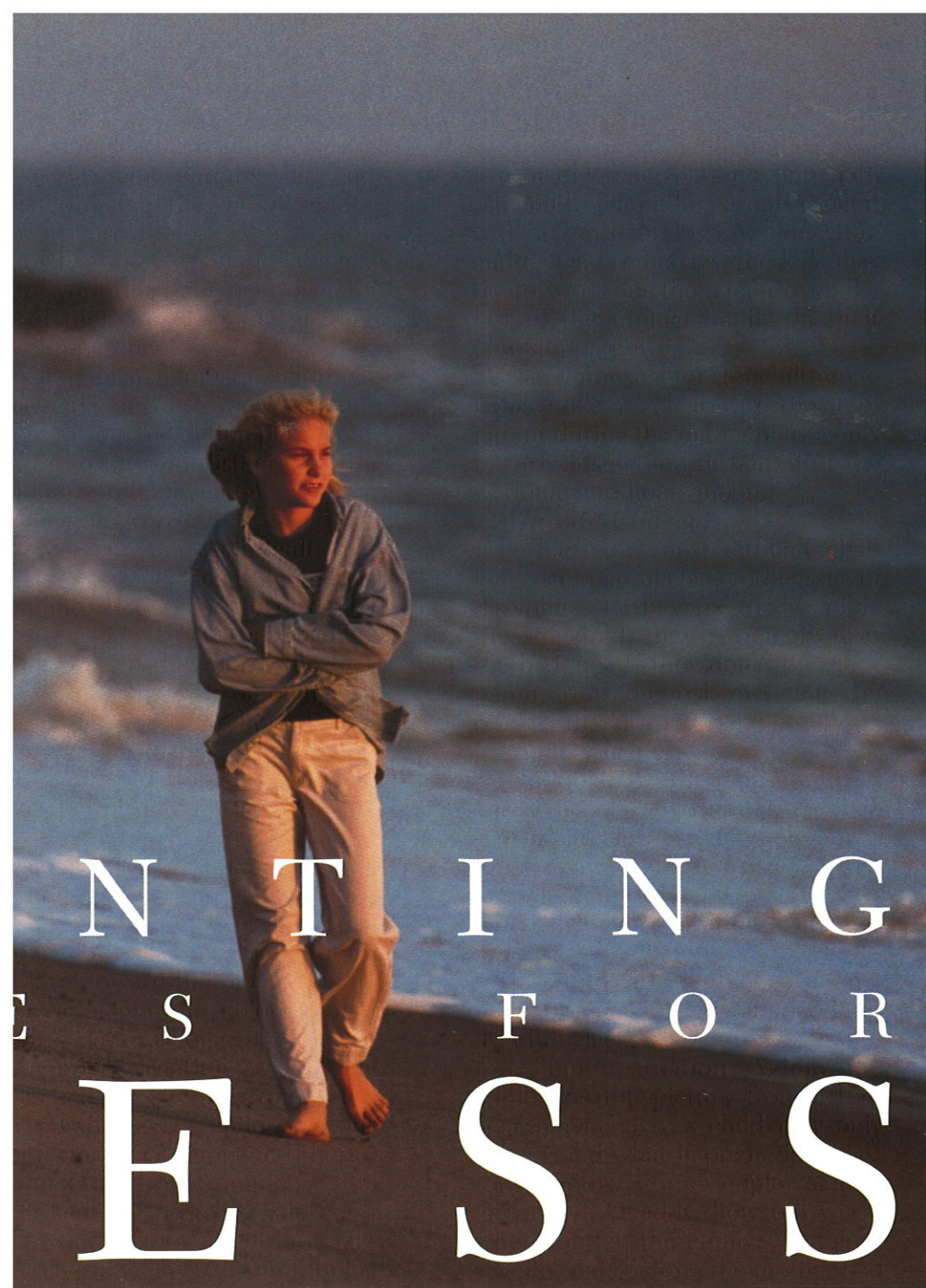
"It's not fair! I told you John could bring me home."

"And I told you..." My patience was waning.

Round and round we went — Shannon spouting off, me firing back, Mom caught in the crossfire, Jamie, my fourteen-year-old stepdaughter, playing both sides. Then it happened.

"You're not my father!" Shannon fired the ultimate shot.

I was dumbfounded, caught



E N T I N G S F O R E S S

completely off guard. I fired back a verbal barrage... I won the battle alright. Unfortunately, my cutting words started a cold war. Here I was, a 15-year veteran in the mental health trenches with the toughest kids in the state, and I couldn't even handle my two teenage stepdaughters.

Stepfamily Stats:

- A stepfamily is born every 90 seconds
- Fifty-five percent of North

Americans today have been or will be part of a stepfamily during their lives

- It takes the average stepfamily seven years to fully adjust to blended family living
- By 2010, projections suggest there will be more stepfamilies in our society than nuclear families

Why is stepparenting so difficult? What can a stepfamily do to combat the blended family battles and blues?

Stepparenting Stressors

Grief/Loss

Kids are often caught in the crossfire of divorcing parents, and both the children and the parents are left with a sense of loss. When Mom and/or Dad remarries, the kids may try to work out their pain over the loss of their intact family on their new stepparent.

It's not unusual for stepchildren to behave like angels toward the stepparent during the dating phase, only to turn hostile and distant after the wedding and honeymoon.

Who's in Charge?

Perhaps the most difficult challenge stepparents face is the issue of discipline. If they try to discipline the stepchild, they're perceived as the bad guy. If they don't, the stepparent runs the risk of being run over by the kids in the household.

Loyalty Issues

Stepkids often feel confused about their loyalty to their non-custodial parent in a blended family. Girls may feel guilty for liking Stepdad and not know how to handle such feelings, opting instead to sabotage the relationship in order to feel loyal toward the biological dad. A son or daughter in a blended family often lacks a long-time view of the family situation. While the adults see the picture from a ten-year perspective, a child may only understand what happened the last few months. For example, a little girl asked, "Daddy, how old was I when you left the family?" Actually, several years before, the mother had abandoned the family.

Money Matters

It's tough enough keeping a handle on finances in a biological household. Throw in stepkids, possible child-support issues, spending and saving values, and watch the sparks fly when the grocery bill doubles and the stepkids scream for more allowance money since their biological dad gives them more.

Stepparenting Strategies

Parenting our own children is sometimes challenging. Throw ►

in a stepchild or two and the challenge can become overwhelming for even the best of parents.

"I love my wife and she loves me," states one desperate father, "but she's at the end of her rope when it comes to dealing with my two boys. She's even mentioned leaving me."

Similar stories abound as healthy, well-meaning stepparents grasp for answers. Many feel guilty for their inability to display unconditional love toward their stepkids. Yet, with realistic expectations and specific strategies, the blended family battles and blues can be reduced to a manageable level and satisfying relationships can evolve over time. Here are some tips for helping this happen.

Time and Patience

The younger the stepchild, the easier it usually is to bond. Yet, many stepparents don't realize that even with pre-school-age children, that bond may take as long as one or more years. This requires patience.

Relationship Building

As difficult as it sounds, the stepparent needs to allow the stepchild to set the pace when it comes to establishing trust and a bond. Stepparents can provide opportunities and situations where a positive exchange and trust can emerge; however, they need to be careful not to force the relationship. If the stepchild remains aloof, respecting their boundaries and remaining positive in the face of rejection will pay off in the future.

Teamwork

In the early stages, the biological parent needs to shoulder much of the disciplinary responsibilities while the stepparent is establishing a positive relationship with the child. However, the couple needs to present themselves as a united front in order to manage the inevitable onslaught of manipulative strategy that children use to pit one adult against the other in order to get what they want.

Modeling Behavior

Generally speaking, the younger the child, the more apt they are to imitate the parent's behavior.

What stepparents sometimes fail to recognize is the impact their non-verbal cues have on stepkids, especially teens. No matter what may be coming out of our mouths, if our actions portray hostility, anger, or frustration, that is what the kids will take away from the encounter.

Developing a Game Plan

Stepfamily success starts with a game plan, much like a business plan. The partners (parents) need to approach the challenge with a businesslike attitude just as though they were setting up a family-owned, partnership business venture. As Christians, you will want to reflect your spiritual values and commitments in your plan.

Begin by sitting down with your spouse, away from interruptions, if possible, and design a family mission statement. Reschedule another brief session several days later and finalize the family mission statement. Jazz it up on the computer and post copies on the bathroom mirror and the fridge for all to see.

See the example of a family mission statement. Note the implied partnership qualities this message

portrays to the kids.

Keys to Developing a Successful Family Business Plan

Keep it simple. Your children need to understand it.

Keep it positive. State the goals positively... i.e. what you're trying to accomplish, not what you're trying to avoid.

Keep it realistic. Program your family for success. Don't set up unrealistic goals.

Sign a Time-out Contract:

Here's an incredibly useful plan, a time-out contract: I, _____, (each family member signs and agrees to uphold) am committed to our family living together in peace and harmony. I know we will have arguments and disagreements. However, I agree to not let my anger get the best of me and cause me to verbally or physically assault any member of my family. If I start to "lose it," I will: (a) tell the family member I'm about to lose it and that I need to "chill out," then walk away; or, (b) if I'm unable to recognize that my anger is about to get the best of me, I agree to walk away and cool down if another family member requests me to do so. In either situation, I agree to get back with the person I was angry with and talk things

Family Mission Statement

We agree to love, honor and support each other and our children every day by:

- discussing our feelings openly and in an atmosphere and attitude of caring and concern.
- taking a time-out before our feelings get the best of us.
- keeping our hedges strong so that no one or no job comes between our relationship and commitment to each other and the family.
- sticking to our agreements and supporting each other in the discipline of our children and overall management of the household.
- introducing some joyous event/anecdote into the daily lives of each other and our children.
- developing our spiritual lives individually, as a couple and as a family.
- enjoying physical activity (walking, biking, etc.) as a couple and as a family on a routine basis.

out once I've cooled down.

The time-out contract is powerful, if followed. It is important when discussing the contract with your family that the kids know they too have the authority to ask you, the parent, to "chill out." As with the mission statement, post the contract, signed by all, in a permanent place in your home.

Use a Contingency Contract

This is a written, signed contract with expectations on both sides, stating if your teenager and/or third-grader agrees to do "X," then both parents agree to do "Y." Very simple, yet highly effective, especially if the stepparent is the one delivering the positive payoffs in the beginning.

Key elements to contracting with your kids include: (a) making sure you can deliver the goods (payoff); (b) being specific in the wording of the contract and what the expectations are; and, (c) getting feedback from the children on the payoffs before drafting the contract. The idea is to eventually have your kids writing the contracts. However, this won't happen unless you program the initial contracts for success. Your kids may eventually sabotage the process to see if you will follow through with the consequences and not simply give in. Stick to your guns when this occurs, otherwise the contracts will mean nothing, and more importantly, your word will mean nothing.

Build Family Rituals

Birthdays, holiday celebrations, and other family rituals provide structure and order for the kids as well as the adults. There is a measure of security and comfort in knowing that events will routinely occur at specific times.

Conduct Family Meetings

Nothing fancy... be brief. Have a 15-20-minute weekly meeting, preferably at the same time each week. Establish an agenda with your partner before the meeting and plan on a positive, goal-oriented meeting



as opposed to a gripe session. Over time, the kids will know the agenda and come prepared to discuss ideas and concerns. An agenda example:

- Open with brief prayer (Encourage each person who wants to pray.)
- Brief review of family meeting rules
- Who's on first? (Who's going with whom and where for the week?)
- Ideas for the upcoming family outing
- Family concerns to discuss – solve problems quickly, if possible. If not, defer until after the meeting with the parties involved.
- Keep a positive tone throughout your meeting and be sure to say something positive to each child at the beginning or close of your family meeting.

Intangibles to Winning:

Make it fun... share some measure of joy with your kids and spouse

every day. It may be a simple ritual like tucking your child in every night and asking him what he is looking forward to tomorrow, or what made him happy today. Perhaps reading a story. Whatever the case, make sure your loved ones have something they are looking forward to every day.

Remember, stepparenting is like a business, a family business. It just so happens it's the most important business of your life, not to mention your kids' lives. God can use you in an incredible way in your children and stepchildren's lives!

Joe Pritchard, M.S., LPC, is a licensed professional counselor, stepfather and freelance writer with 25+ years experience in the mental health trenches with a variety of troubled families and stepfamilies. His humorous and heartwarming account of stepfamily living with five rowdy females is chronicled in his inspirational book, *Stepfathers' Anonymous Playbook... The Season That Never Ends*. To order a copy (\$10 and free shipping) call (615) 847-8741, or e-mail dppjgabriel@mindspring.com.

NCF Worldwide Staff Associates

Over 60,000 North American missionaries are serving Christ around the world. An even larger number from other countries are engaged in full-time missionary work. Some of these serve in relatively safe settings. Large numbers live and work under extremely difficult circumstances and incredible spiritual, emotional, and physical stress. Harsh physical environments, repressive military regimes, communist dictatorships, and religious persecution buffet them day in and day out. Most missionaries have no place to turn when these pressures become too great. Since there are practically no Christian psychological services available, these servants of God are left to struggle alone. Sometimes they find a way through. Sometimes they suffer severe emotional or family wounds. And sometimes they crumble under the pressure.

Every time a missionary couple is forced to leave the field because of personal or family problems, it is a great tragedy for that family and for the cause of Christ. The missionaries often feel like failures — confused, guilty, or resentful — because they were not able to fulfill God's calling. The cause of Christ also suffers since it costs an estimated \$250,000-\$400,000 to equip and send a qualified replacement!

These personal tragedies and financial wastes make it imperative that Christians do everything possible to support our missionaries and their families.

During the past three years, NCF has developed partnerships with ten outstanding Christian psychologists and psychiatrists to help meet these needs. These NCF Staff Associates are dedicated men and women who

provide crisis intervention, ongoing personal and family counseling, workshops and retreats, consultations to mission leaders and reentry training for the sons and daughters of missionaries. NCF works with these outstanding men and women to help develop and offer much-needed missionary counseling services in strategic areas around the world. The map to the right identifies these staff associates and their key locations. Here is more information on each of them:

1 **Dr. Roger Brown** is a Christian psychiatrist who serves as the Director of Professional Services at the Tumaini Counseling Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. Tumaini is the major missionary counseling center worldwide and serves missionaries from throughout Kenya and Eastern Africa.

2 **Dr. Karen Carr** is the Director of Mobile Missionary Member Care in West Africa. She and her teammates travel throughout the 12 Western African nations providing crisis intervention, consultations, short-term counseling and workshops on topics like interpersonal relationships and stress management.

3 **Dr. Charles Chege**, a native Kenyan who received his doctorate from the Rosemead School of Psychology, carries out short-term ministries in Kenya. Dr. Chege and his wife, Winny, periodically conduct seminars for local churches and workshops for pastors and other Christian leaders. Dr. Chege has also had opportunity to be interviewed on Kenya's national radio and to consult with some of the

Dr. Keith Edwards

5

country's top educational leaders.

4 **Dr. Nancy Duvall** is a professor at the Rosemead School of Psychology. Each summer she takes a team of Rosemead doctoral students to Daystar University, the only major Christian University in Kenya. Dr. Duvall and her students teach courses in counseling and psychology and consult regarding the development of a master's program in Christian counseling at Daystar University.

5 **Dr. Keith Edwards** is a faculty member at the Rosemead School of Psychology. He conducts intensive



9 Dr. Dave Wickstrom

7 Drs. Kelly and Michele O'Donnell

8 Dr. Ben Wat

6 Dr. Tim Friesen

Dr. Karen Carr **2**

Dr. Roger Brown **1**

3 Dr. Charles Chege

Dr. Nancy Duvall **4**

summer ministries for missionaries in France, Ecuador and other key locations. Dr. Edwards specializes in marriage enrichment, couples' communication and stress management.

6 **Dr. Tim Friesen** serves with the Covenant Church in Chiang Mai, Thailand. He and his wife, Tammy, are dorm parents for five teenage missionary children, and Tim offers counseling and consultation to missionary personnel. Dr. Friesen is also laying the groundwork to begin a full-service Christian counseling center for the missions community in Chiang Mai, the major regional headquarters for thousands of missionaries through-

out Southeast and Central Asia.

7 **Drs. Kelly and Michele O'Donnell** minister throughout the world from their headquarters in France. Kelly has authored and edited three major books on providing member care, counseling, and psychological services to missionaries and their families.

8 **Dr. Ben Wat** is a Chinese marriage and family counselor serving in Hong Kong. Dr. Wat and his wife, Rachel, conduct family-life seminars and workshops and teach in Hong Kong and Mainland China, as well as provide counseling services for

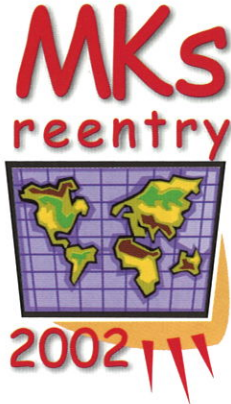
Chinese missionaries and pastors.

9 **Dr. Dave Wickstrom** is a Christian psychologist who grew up as an MK in Africa. He travels extensively around the world providing short-term counseling, consultation, and workshops to missionaries. He also provides transition assistance for missionaries and their families who are returning to the United States for home assignments.

As you support the Narramore Christian Foundation with your prayers and finances, you are enabling us to partner with these and other wonderful men and women to serve God's servants around the world!

by Bruce Narramore

More than seventy sons and daughters of missionaries gathered on the campus of Biola University for NCF's annual summer reentry programs. These MKs came from 20 different countries where their parents are serving with 22 different mission agencies!



After getting acquainted and meeting the staff of NCF and Barnabas International, the MKs immediately moved into the intensive two-week program. The first day they took a battery of personality and vocational tests. This was followed by practical sessions like "Understanding Yourself and Others," "From One MK to Another," "Life Transitions," "Your Identity and Self Esteem," "Dealing with Feelings," "Attachment, Separation and Loss," and "College Orientation." Between lectures and discussions the MKs attended individual and small group counseling sessions and had recreational times including a pool party and barbecue at the home of Bruce and Kathy Narramore where they met Dr. Clyde and Ruth Narramore. Each evening ended with a time of small group devotionals before getting a good night's sleep in preparation for the next busy day.

At the end of the two weeks the students headed off to 26 different universities throughout America to begin their lives in their new country—the United States of America!



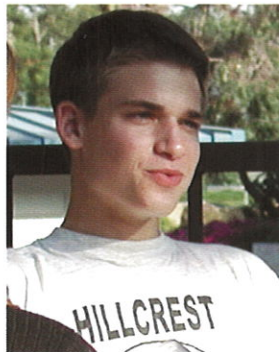
Staff counselor, Maribeth Niager (left), sharing conversation with Topher Blank (Papua New Guinea) and Gabe Kalmbacker (Philippines).



Dr. Bruce Narramore sharing on the topic of "Understanding Yourself and Others."



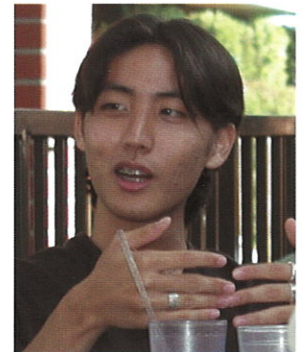
Stephanie Law, doctoral student at Rosemead School of Psychology, discusses life transitions with MKs.



Stephen Hammach, Nigeria



MK staff member, Angela Strong (Bolivia), dialoguing with another MK.



Sun Young Lee (Indonesia)



July, 2002, MK Reentry participants





Who Is An MK?

Anonymous

Who is an MK?

I am a combination of two cultures. I am neither, and I am both. I am the brat who throws a temper tantrum and refuses to dress native for the American church. I am the six-year-old who cries herself to sleep the first two weeks away from home. I am the one who complained about eating oatmeal every day of my life, yet I am the one who orders oatmeal at the restaurant just for old times' sake.

I am the one who desperately worries about fitting in, but I am the one who wears my native wrap around the college dorm and doesn't care what anyone thinks. I am the one who has lived under strict school rules, and I am the one who returns to America and questions what my real values are. I am the one the churches make a saint out

of and the one some people pity and laugh at. I am the one who traveled halfway around the world before I was four, and I am the one who has no home. I am the one who promises to write, but never do because it's too difficult to deal with the reality of separation. I am the one who has seen the devil dancers, and I am the one who has seen the rock concerts.

I am the one who knows and understands world missions, life and death, heaven and hell. I am the one who has seen God work miracles. I am the one who knows prayer works, but I am also the one who sometimes finds it difficult to pray.

I am the one who has learned to live with a politically unstable government, and I am the one who waits impatiently by the phone for news that everything is safe. I am the one who has spent only three

months a year at home, yet I know, beyond question, that my parents are the best in the whole world. I am the one who speaks two languages, but can't spell either. I am the one who has devotions from a French Bible.

I am the one who wears a thousand masks, one for each day and time. I am the one who learned to be all I'm expected to be but am still not sure of who I really am. I am the one who chooses my college by where my friends are because nobody understands an MK like another MK. I am the one who laughs and cries, sings and prays, gets angry and doubts, fears and questions, expects and receives, hopes and dreams. And I am the one who cares. Not all MKs are like me, but my guess is that many are.

I am an MK, and I am proud of it!

Does The Bible Promote Self Esteem?

Q Dear Mr. Narramore: Dr. Dobson and you often talk about self-esteem. I am told that the ones who originally came up with this concept were Rogers and Maslow — two men who were not Christians.

We hear little written about the sins of pride and boasting today. In the Bible we read that in the latter days men will be lovers of themselves, but where does the Bible promote this concept of self-esteem? Is there something that the church leaders and reformers overlooked or dismissed by not discovering self-esteem in the Bible? I think a much better term for the Christian is “Christ esteem.” Our worth, our value is in Christ. The world can persecute me, say bad things about me, as they did to Paul and others, but if I know Christ and His unconditional love for me, then I can face the challenges and the problems of life.

I hope to hear from you on this subject.

—DJ



Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

Dear DJ, Thanks for your question about self-esteem. I partly agree and partly disagree with your observations. I totally agree that the word “self-esteem” can be problematic if it connotes an esteem merited by our goodness or promotes pride and boasting. That, of course, is unscriptural. The Bible makes it clear that we are all sinners and cannot merit God’s love and that no one

of us is better than another.

When I use terms like self-concept or self-esteem in talking with Christians, however, I mean something very different. I mean that every one of us should think and feel about ourselves as God thinks and feels about us. Specifically, the Bible tells us that we are created in God’s image, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, very valuable and significant to God, redeemed by Christ, and will spend eternity with Him. These biblical truths are the reasons we should see ourselves as valuable and significant. You ask if church leaders have overlooked this, and I would say they often have. But King David, a man after God’s own heart, did not. In answer to his own question, “What is man that you are mindful of him?” he answered, “You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor” (Psalm 8:4-5). Jesus Himself also tells us that

we are more valuable than the birds of the air and the lilies of the field (Luke 12:22-31).

The Bible, of course, also tells us that we are finite, limited people who are deeply fallen and sinful. We enter this world not only with great God-given potential, but with an irresistible bent toward selfishness and sin. That must also be a part of our self-concept – recognizing that we are sinners. This is the truth that keeps us humble.

The next truth about ourselves is that we are being recreated into Christ’s likeness after salvation through the process of sanctification. We are gradually being restored into the image of Christ in this life, and we will be completely transformed in the next! This truth gives us fantastic hope and expectation for a wonderful future!

As to finding our identity in Christ, that is certainly a major source of our understanding of ourselves and an incredible spiritual truth. Theologically, however, I think it is incorrect to place our entire identity on Christ’s atoning work. The Bible indicates that every person, even the non-Christian, is a bearer of the image of God, no matter how distorted by sin. This is the foundation for Christian ethics. We are to treat every human being as a creation of God. To be biblically accurate, we must begin where scriptural revelation about human nature begins – with our creation in God’s image. Our redemption through Christ is an absolutely central part of a comprehensive biblical understanding of human nature. But the original foundation of our understanding of ourselves is the fact that God created us in His image. As such, we are incredibly important to Him.

That, in a nutshell, is how I understand the biblical teaching on the attitude that we should have toward ourselves and others. Understanding and accepting these biblical truths helps us avoid both prideful superiority and neurotic inferiority. Since we know that every person is created by God and that we owe our very existence and all of our gifts to Him, we won’t attempt to pridefully lift ourselves above others. We will also value and respect every other person as a fellow human created by God.

Since we know that we are sinful and finite, we will also be humble. But we won’t misunderstand humility, as some do, to mean that we are worthless or inferior. Instead, we will be grateful to God, the Creator, Redeemer, and Giver of all life, and we will lovingly respect all people (including ourselves), as being

Self-esteem, continued on page 24 ►

Tribute Gifts

Would you like us to join you in honoring your loved one? You can send a Tribute Gift or Living Memorial Gift to the ministries of the Narramore Christian Foundation.

Gifts in the Honor Of:

Les & Kay Clemens

Presented by:

Steve & Christine Clemens

Gifts in the Memory Of:

Emil S. Mesko

Emily Mesko & Family

Rosalind Rinker

Eric & Vicki Young

Hugh & Eunice Greenman


Mrs. Karen Livesay

Eric Engblom

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Eric Engblom

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Clip out and return  with your loving gift.

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Send acknowledgment to:

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Arcadia, CA 91066-1900

HEALTH WATCH

Compiled by Eva Hallam Solberg

The Mind and the Immune System

One of the mysteries of medicine is the relationship between the mind and physical health – how feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and behavior are related to physical illness; how psychological and social stress affect the likelihood of developing a disease or the ability to resist it; and how counseling for emotional problems can aid recovery from illness. One of the clues to this mystery lies in the immune system.

Social stress can be even more damaging than physical stress. In general, good social support is associated with better immune function in the elderly, even after correction for health habits, depression, anxiety, and life stress. In a year-long study of people caring for spouses with Alzheimer's disease, changes in immune function were greatest in those who had the fewest friends and least outside help.

In a study of how traumatic stress affects the immune system, people in the most heavily damaged neighborhoods of Hurricane Andrew showed reduced activity in four out of five immune functions. Similar results were found in studies of hospital employees after an earthquake in Los Angeles, and in abused women.

—*The Harvard Mental Health Letter*

Bruxism: Avoiding the Nightly Grind

It's estimated that perhaps one in ten adults grind their teeth while they sleep. You may be unaware of it — until your dentist notices signs of ground-down teeth and informs you that you have bruxism (the technical term for tooth grinding). Symptoms you may notice include morning headaches, jaw pain, a clicking sound in your jaw, sensitive teeth, and damaged teeth or crowns. Nearly anybody can have occasional episodes of nighttime grinding, but only a small percentage of people grind so much that they damage their teeth and jaws. Some experts believe chronic, heavy grinding can lead to TMD (temporomandibular disorder, an umbrella term for painful conditions affecting the jaw and facial muscles). Over time, bruxism can worsen periodontal disease, harming gums and teeth.

Emotional stress is a likely villain. People who grind their teeth often report that they are undergoing marital or financial difficulties, worrying about exams, fearful of losing their jobs, or otherwise under pressure. Tell your dentist if you are taking antidepressants because they can sometimes promote, rather than prevent, grinding. Your dentist may create an individually fitted mouth guard or splint to wear at night, or you can try a simple athletic mouth guard to spread the clenching pressure evenly across your mouth.

If you are under severe stress, something as simple as a

Health, continued on page 24 ►

Grief Is A Love Word

by Ruth E. Narramore

As Denise stepped into my office, I greeted her and suggested she sit in a chair by my desk. Denise was one of the missionary kids (MKs) attending our seminar for the sons and daughters of missionaries. I had been assigned as her counselor in career guidance.



Ruth Narramore

Before me was a sheaf of papers with her vocational tests and various other data pertaining to the girl. One thing that caught my eye was a statement saying that Denise was grieving because her father had passed away about six months before.

"I'm so sorry about your dad," I told her. "I'm sure it is a difficult time for you."

"Yes," she answered. "It's hard."

Pursuing the subject a little further, I asked, "Were you and your father close?"

"No," was her immediate and definite reply.

This took me back. Here was a girl who was grieving for someone with whom she did not feel close. It seemed like a paradox. I wondered if she had really understood my question.

In time, I began to understand. My friend, author and speaker Fay Angus, explains that we not only grieve for people and things we have loved and lost,* we also grieve for what we desired but never experienced, and for something we knew would never take place.

This was the situation with Denise. She was grieving for a father with whom she had longed to be close but

“

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

—Ephesians 4:30

wasn't. And now that he was no longer alive, her grief was intensified because she realized that she and her father never would be close. This kind of grief can't turn to happy memories for comfort. Indeed, unless resolved, it can be a bitter, inconsolable grief.

In Ephesians 4:30 the Apostle Paul instructs, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." He goes on to enumerate some of the ways we cause the Holy Spirit to grieve. When we harbor bitterness, malice, anger, when we speak evil of others, are unkind, unloving, and unforgiving, the Holy Spirit is grieved. Paul also mentions a number of grief-producing actions in the four verses preceding this command — things like lying, stealing, corrupt communication, and giving place to the devil.

Participating in sins such as these grieves the Holy Spirit — yes, the whole Trinity. God wants a close relationship with us, His children. When we miss out on that, He grieves.

You and your Heavenly Father can experience a wonderful, close relationship. Don't miss it!

How To Do Everything Right and Live to Regret It by Fay Angus. Published by Harper and Row.

Your Influence Living Forever

by Clyde M. Narramore

Years ago when Ruth and I founded the Narramore Christian Foundation, we heard something I'll never forget.

We knew a Christian organization that was doing splendid work. It was growing, but their income was extremely low. One day the president received a surprise letter. It was from an attorney saying that a certain lady had passed away and had remembered their organization in her will. That gift enabled the ministry to move ahead in a remarkable way.

The president remarked, "God knew how desperately we needed financial help, and He used this lady to wonderfully assist us."

Friend, remembering this ministry in your will is one way your influence can live on forever. Even after you are enjoying the blessings of Heaven, your faithful stewardship can go on working here on earth, reaching thousands of people. Ruth and I have made this decision, and we will be eternally grateful if you will also remember our desperately needed ministry in your will. Here is all you need to do: Tell your attorney the specific asset or amount or percentage of your estate that you would like to go to support these ministries and provide him this information: The Narramore Christian Foundation is a non-profit 501(3)(c) organization located at 250 West Colorado Blvd., Arcadia, CA 91107.

Thank you from the depths of our hearts.

—Clyde and Ruth Narramore

LETTERS

I gain a lot for my ministry from your magazine. I long for it. I wait for the next issue. I desire to read it. Every time I get the magazine I find practical, precious articles for my ministry.
—Pastor, Thailand

Just a note to say that over the years how enjoyable your magazine has been. I might add, I like your magazine's presentations.
—J.Z., Ohio

I look forward to each issue of *Psychology for Living* and I usually know of a friend who could benefit from something you have printed, so I pass it along.
—A.L.B., Arizona

We appreciate NCF so much and pray each day that God will bless you in a special way. Everything we receive we keep for the future.
—M.K., Maryland

Kid, continued from page 11


good Christian example for others to follow. It was exciting to see the changes in Rick's life.

In our fourth softball season, his quick moves in the outfield and clutch home runs helped our church team win third place in the end of season playoffs.

After that year my employer transferred me to another state and I lost track of Rick. It was 20 years later before I heard from Rick again. He contacted me and thanked me for being a good influence and role model for him to follow during a critical time of his life.

He is now a confident, happy and well-adjusted adult, active in his church and outspoken about his Christian faith. He is happily married and has been blessed with four children.

He is also the Chief of Police in the city where he lives!

I'm retired now and enjoying my "golden years," but after visiting with Rick, I was reminded that we all have a place to serve God in His great kingdom — even if it's just coaching a softball team of ragtag kids looking for direction in life. 

Health, continued from page 22

warm bath before sleeping may help alleviate it. And talk to a friend or a qualified counselor about your problems.

—UC Berkeley Wellness Letter

Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's Disease is notoriously difficult to diagnose in its early stages, when it can be easily confused with other types of dementia. But in two recent studies, researchers report on new techniques that may allow doctors to diagnose Alzheimer's sooner, opening the door to new and earlier treatments.

Until now, a definitive diagnosis of Alzheimer's could not be made without performing an autopsy after a patient's death.


These new techniques (imaging and blood comparisons) may eventually provide doctors with earlier clues to the cause of memory loss and help to distinguish Alzheimer's from other forms of dementia.

—HealthNews

Self-esteem, continued from page 21

neither superior nor inferior. As the Apostle Paul put it, "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you." Then he goes on to encourage each of us to use our gifts for God.

Having read both Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, I can assure you that their view of human nature is radically different from this biblical perspective! Neither of them believed that we are born sinful. They both thought that we were born either inherently good, or at the very least, morally neutral. Neither of them believed that we were the apex of God's creation. Instead, they saw us as highly evolved animals. Neither of them believed that we needed to be spiritually reborn. They both believed that we could grow strictly through our own self efforts. And neither of them believed that every person was so valuable to God that he would live for eternity.

I trust these few thoughts are helpful. 

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