

PSYCHOLOGY FOR LIVING

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1997

**GRANDPARENTS
ARE SPECIAL**

**LOVE FIRST,
TEACH SECOND**

**AN EXPERIENCE
TO TREASURE**

**THE
"SINGLES"
DILEMMA**

**WHEN ADULT
CHILDREN
DIVORCE**

**SELF-ESTEEM OR
SELF-DENIAL?**



A PERSONAL WORD

by Clyde M. Narramore

AN EXPERIENCE TO TREASURE

SOMETIMES GOD ENCOURAGES US by providing a very special experience — one which warms our hearts and fills us with joy!

That is just what happened to me this past summer. It was unplanned and unexpected, but it verified to me that, starting from my youth, the commitment I'd made to faithfully serve and witness for our Lord was significant and fruitful. God allowed me to see how He had graciously multiplied the "seed" I had sown in the heart of a young seventh-grade boy so many years before.

Early in the summer, after spending several days in Atlanta where Kevin and I had both spoken at the Congress on the Urban Family, Ruth and I left for Hendersonville, North Carolina, to visit her brother Dr. Gordon Elliott and his family. We landed in Asheville, then went to their home.

No sooner had we sat down when my brother-in-law handed me a local newspaper. "Look what's happening!" he said. I looked and saw the headline on a large article which read, "FAREWELL SERMON." The subtitle said, "Brother Joe Retiring from Temple Pulpit." And there was the photo: *Reverend Joe Olachea and his wife, Ermina, standing in front of the Temple Baptist Church in Asheville.*

Gordon looked at me and said, "You know Joe, don't you? Didn't you lead him to the Lord?"

According to the newspaper article, a special meeting at the church was planned for the afternoon of the following day, Sunday, to bid farewell to Pastor Joe who, after 26 years, was retiring. This would be his last Sunday to serve as pastor of that church.

"Let's go there tomorrow afternoon," my brother-in-law said. "Joe will be very surprised to see you."

At that moment a host of wonderful memories flooded my mind. I was in my junior year at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, when I received a call from the Dean's office. He wanted to know if I would like to go



to a small elementary school out in the country and give them a hand. Their music teacher had become ill and they needed someone to handle the instrumental and vocal music.

Eager to gain some experience and to make a little extra money, I jumped at the chance.

A few days later while teaching a class in that country school, I noticed a boy named Joe. He was in the seventh grade and was about twelve years of age.

As the weeks went by, I saw that Joe was sincere, responsible, and eager to learn. During free periods I taught him to play the trumpet as well as the guitar. Joe was one of eight children. Although the family was poor in this world's goods, they were bright and worked hard.

Whenever I had the opportunity, I shared with my students about the Lord. After a few months I led Joe and several others to Christ. After that, on Sunday afternoons I would drive out to the country, pick up Joe and bring him into Tempe where we had weekly Bible studies. My drive out to get Joe, and then return him after our Bible study amounted to about 120 miles. But I was thrilled to do this because he and the others were growing spiritually as they nourished their hearts and minds with the Word of God.

For about four years, I continued dis-

cipling Joe, bringing him to these Bible studies and a host of other Christian activities. By that time I had graduated from college, had also earned my Master's degree, and was offered a teaching position with a fine Christian college in the East. Joe was ready to enter his third year of high school.

Because World War II was in progress, I realized I would probably soon be called to leave for military service. My thoughts turned to Joe, so I encouraged him to enter the high school academy associated with the Christian college where I would be teaching. Unknown to him, I paid his tuition and other expenses (even though as a new teacher I had been receiving the "tremendous" salary of \$125 a month).

When I received my "greetings from Uncle Sam," I signed up for the Navy.

Joe stayed at the academy and finished high school. He then entered college where he later graduated — although the draft interrupted his schooling for a two-year stint in the Armed Forces. After marrying a lovely Christian girl whom he had met at college, Joe went on to earn his Master's degree in Biblical studies, then became a minister of the gospel.

As the years rolled on, our paths seldom crossed. Occasionally I would meet someone who knew Joe and I would hear

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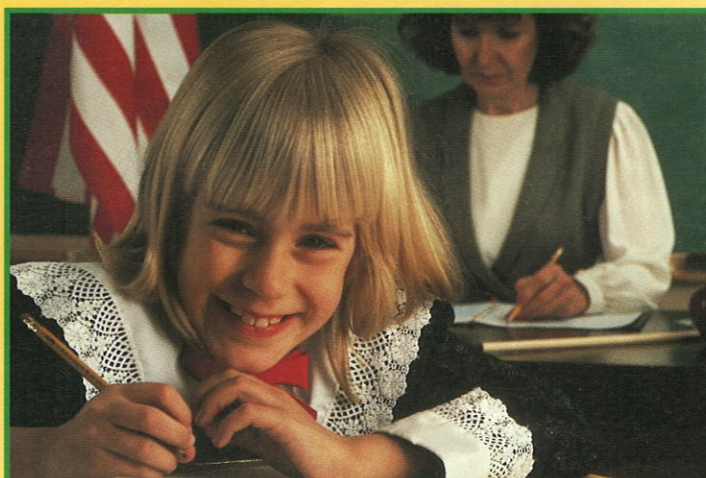
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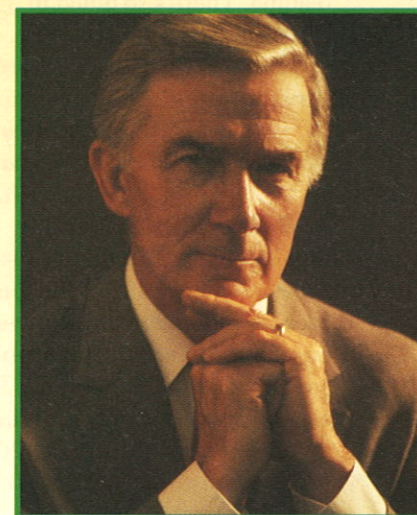


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"I need that chocolate cake!"

"I need ice cream!"

"I need a brownie!"

These were the words of Byron, our four-year-old grandson.

We were at a potluck luncheon of our NCF staff (and incidentally, all the ladies in our office are excellent cooks). Our daughter, Melodie, and her young son had joined us that day. We were going through the serving line when suddenly Byron spied the dessert table loaded with a tempting array of delicious looking goodies.

"Mommie, I need that," he'd declare while pointing at a plate of cream puffs.

Although he repeatedly told his mommie about his so-called "needs," she remained relatively unimpressed. She knew that what her child needed was wholesome, nourishing food — food that would

TO THINK ABOUT

by Ruth E. Narramore

build a healthy body and strong bones. But chocolate cake, ice cream, brownies, and cream puffs didn't really fit that category.

Byron's four-year-old pattern of thinking has not yet discerned the difference between "needs" and "wants." And this isn't only in the area of foods. Undoubtedly as he matures he will learn that what we want and what we need do not always coincide.

This is true in our lives as well. God has promised to "supply all our needs according to His riches in glory" (Philippians 4:19). He is aware of all our "needs" and He is eager to supply them. But our "wants" may be a dif-



ferent matter.

Why would God not necessarily grant us the things we want? For one thing, they may not be good for us, and God desires the very best for His children. When He

withholds something that we see as good, it may be that what He has for us is much, much better. Or it may be that what we think we want would actually do us harm. This is where trust comes in.

Is God unwilling to grant us legitimate wants? Of course not. He delights in showering us with the best. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of

turning" (James 1:17).

Did Melodie ignore Byron's request for the desserts he insisted he "needed"? No, she just made sure he ate some nourishing food first. When he had filled his little tummy with vegetables and fruit and other healthful foods, she allowed him to enjoy some sweet goodies in moderation. Interestingly, after having eaten the other nourishing foods, those fabulous desserts were not quite so appealing. They ceased to be such "needs."

Is this not true in our Christian lives? When we feast on God's Word and grow on His spiritual food, much of what we may have once considered to be a "need" is no longer so pressing. In fact, it may even cease to be a "want."

"Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). □

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

EASY TO LAY ASIDE OTHER THINGS

Your magazine has such good articles in it. When it arrives, it's easy for me to lay aside other things and start reading. There's so much in each issue that one can share.

Thank you for your ministry.

Mrs. Ruby Curry
Ponca, Nebraska

IT'S SO IMPORTANT

We get your *LIVING* magazine and *Letter of Blessing* each month and really do enjoy them. Keep up your good work. It's so important, especially in these days.

My husband is a fine Christian man and we have tried to serve the Lord faith-

fully throughout all of our 64 years of marriage.

Your material has blessed us tremendously. We met you personally at Denver one time when you spoke to a Sunday school conference at a big church there. We read every issue of your magazine and then pass them on to others. May God keep on blessing you and using you to help others.

Mary and Don Voss
Bowling Green, Missouri

BACK TO THE OLD ISSUES

It is always a pleasure to receive your magazine. Every article provides a measure of information and education for me. At times when I'm alone, I go back to the old publica-

tions and always find something refreshing there as well. Praise God! May He continue to richly bless your ministries.

Doriel Drakes
St. James, Barbados, W.I.

EVANGELIST FROM INDIA

Recently I was given a copy of your magazine, *PSYCHOLOGY FOR LIVING*. I learned a lot of important things from it. If I could have it regularly, I know it would be a great blessing to me in my spiritual life as well as a help to me in my ministry.

Evangelist Mohan P. Singh
Bangalore, India

DON'T LOSE THAT LAUGH!

Hearing you and your wife

on the radio is such a treat. I especially love hearing you laugh. So many Christians seem to think we should be super-serious all the time, which is unfortunate.

My eldest son is a "church planter" and has served here and in Ireland. He has a great sense of humor. He dislikes being called a "church planter" because only Christ plants churches and the title makes him think of a large container with a rubber tree plant standing in a church foyer!

Please continue giving us the benefit of your gentle, but firm wisdom...and don't ever lose that wonderful, kindly laugh!

Betsy Barber Bancroft
Birmingham, Alabama



LOVE FIRST, TEACH SECOND

After five minutes of these antics, I could stand no more. This little girl had outsmarted me, the teacher!

by Joan Clayton

“YOU’RE GOING TO HAVE MARY IN YOUR ROOM?” a fellow teacher asked. Her voice conveyed apprehension as she added, “I feel sorry for you!”

“She’s on medication, you know,” another teacher warned. “You will be, too, before the year’s over!”

Similar comments had fallen on my ears during my 18 years of teaching. But usually these first-grade children would turn out to be normal in every respect.

So I began the year with calm assurance that I could handle whatever came.

Was I in for a surprise!

A few days before school started, Mary and her mother dropped by to “get acquainted.” Golden blonde hair fixed to perfection cascad-

ed down the little girl’s back. Large, beautiful blue eyes gazed into mine.

Between the outbursts from Mary which frequently interrupted the conversation between her mother and me, I learned that Mary needed medication for both hyperactivity and asthma. She would need to take one pill after lunch.

Her mother agreed that the office would keep the medicine and I would send her for it every day after lunch. Mary’s mother graciously volunteered as room mother. I was delighted.

Then came the first day of school.

Purses, tablets, marking pens, hair barrettes, gimmicks of all kinds — Mary dropped the whole assortment as she made her bouncy entrance. Every time I turned around, it

seemed that some child was crawling under a table to retrieve Mary's loot.

Whispering seemed an impossibility to Mary. She frequently blurted out comments, disturbing the entire class.

"The answer is ahhh...one. NO TWO...NO THREEeeeeee!"

I knew the scene by heart. Scrubbing vigorously with her eraser usually tore the paper, and she would start the whole procedure with a fresh sheet of paper again...and again.

One day, completely exasperated, I voiced my complaints to the office secretary.

"Mary's medication doesn't seem to help at all."

"What medication?" the secretary questioned. "She hasn't been in for it since school started."

"I send her for her pill every day after lunch," I said, "and she comes back assuring me that she has taken it."

After that, I began sending a child with her on whom I could depend to see that she took her pill.

Even with resumption of her daily medication, I still had to deal with Mary's frequent outbursts.

One day, after constant shushing, isolating, and reprimanding, I stopped the class and said, "All right, Mary, come to the front. Take all the time you need to talk, wiggle or whatever, so you can settle down and we can get back to work."

Always before, this drastic method had worked. The student, embarrassed, would stand silently and be more than happy to sit down and resume working.

But not Mary. At first she jumped up and down, growling like a caged bear. Then she pounded on the desks with her fists, screaming like Tarzan in the jungle. The children loved the show as Mary alternated between growling, screaming, and laughing. This encouraged her to show off even more.

After five minutes of these antics, I could stand no more. This little girl had outsmarted me, the teacher!

In the weeks that followed, I ran the gamut of rewards, praise, and reinforced positive behavior (when I could find any). Nothing seemed to work.

At the end of one particularly harassing day, I dismissed the children and slumped in the chair behind my desk, totally defeated. I had tried everything.

Everything, that is, except prayer!

With my head on my desk, I prayed, "Lord, help me with this child. Show me the key. Where have I missed it?"

In utter exhaustion, I dozed off. When I awakened a few minutes later, my frustration and weariness had disappeared. Two words kept coming to my mind: *love her*.

I was well aware that those who are the hardest to love are often the ones who need it the most. But I thought I had worked through this, and that I already loved her.

Yet, those two words—*love her*—lingered in my mind. And they were there when I awakened the next morning.

"Lord," I prayed, "I already love her, so I'm going to take those two words to mean that I'm to love her physically."

I hurried to school that morning, bursting with anticipation. God had answered, and I was eager to see His plan unfold.

When the bell rang, Mary bounded in with enough energy for the whole class. I gave her paper to write her spelling words on, and she jumped ten frog jumps to her seat. Then she began to write and spell out loud, "D-o-w-n. Ddddd...ooooo.....wwwv wwwv.....nnnnnnnn!" "Mary, come to my desk, please," I said quietly.

With two hops, a skip, a side two-step and three giant steps backward, Mary obeyed my command.

Silently, I pulled her toward me and held her—close. Inside I was praying, "Lord, help this little child to calm down. Take away whatever is causing her hyperactivity."

Sometimes these sessions would last five minutes. No one saying a word. Just Mary and I holding each other. The other children watched silently and seemed to understand.

If Mary's behavior seemed to be getting out of control, we would stop and hug, just Mary and I, while the class waited patiently and lovingly. There were times we would do this four or five times a day.

One week later, Mary's reading teacher came running across the hall. "Whatever has happened to Mary? She isn't the same child!"

"It's called 'pray and hug therapy,'" I explained. "I pray for her every day, and before I let her come to the reading class, I stop the children, hug her, and say a silent prayer."

"Well, don't ever stop!" the teacher exclaimed.

In just a few short weeks, Mary's behavior change was noticed by other staff members.

I knew in my heart that God was leading.

Last fall seems long ago. It's hard to think of Mary now as ever having had problems. She acts perfectly normal in every way. When she raises her hand to answer a question, but instead says, "Teacher, I love you," I say a silent prayer of thanksgiving.

In a few minutes the bell will ring, and the children will come in—each with different needs. As I pass out their papers, I pray silently for these little lives that have so blessed mine.

"Lord, bless this child today. Help me always to love first, and teach second!"

This is a good rule for all of us to follow. □

Joan Clayton has been a public school teacher for many years. Now retired, she and her husband live in Portales, New Mexico, where she is a freelance writer and has a column in The Amarillo Globe News.

SELF-ESTEEM OR SELF-DENIAL?

As Christians, are we to value...or negate ourselves?

by Vincent Taber

CAN SELF-ESTEEM and self-denial exist together in the same person? Or does one cancel out the other?

Self-esteem and self-denial appear to be opposites. So how can we "esteem" what we "deny?" On the other hand, how can we deny what we esteem? Should we love *self* or hate *self*? Should we claim to be *somebody*, or admit that we are *nothing*?

Such a dilemma seems to place us between a rock and a hard place. We are forced, so it appears, to make a choice: either choose to value ourselves without regard to humility, or humble ourselves without regard to worth or value.

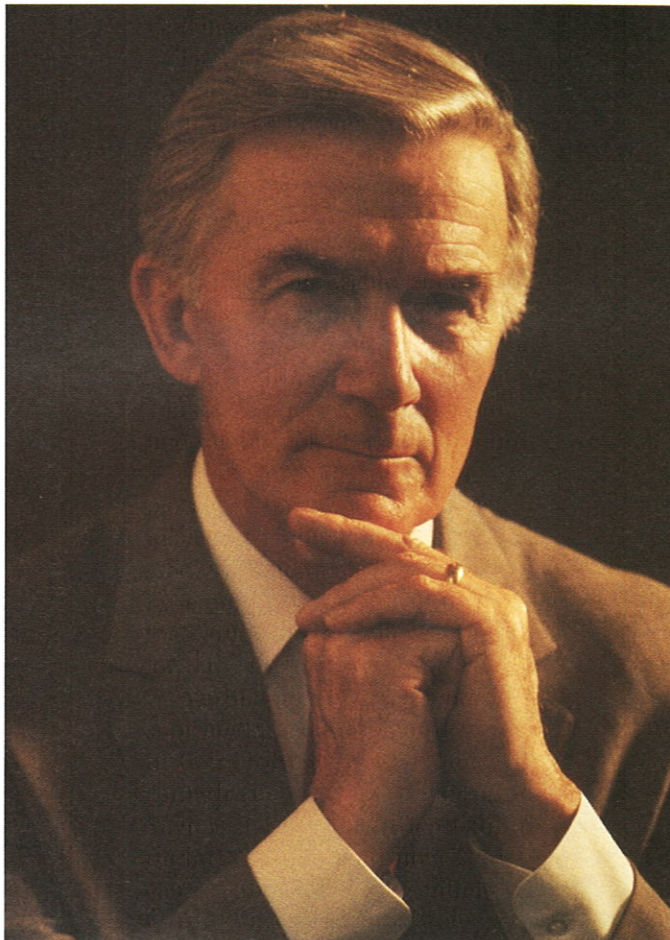
Making the Right Choice

This kind of choice can create some serious problems. If we choose the first option—to value self without regard to humility—we breed arrogance, pride, self-conceit, and a false sense of self-sufficiency. If we decide to humble ourselves without regard to our worth, we breed false piety and self-deception. Actually, ***neither of these choices is acceptable or right.*** Compounding the problem is the fact that we can conjure up considerable support for either argument.

So what are we to believe? If we listen to sermons, go to Bible studies, read Christian books and periodicals, listen to Christian radio and television personalities, or go directly to the Bible itself, both choices continue to present themselves.

Self-Esteem

It is important to clarify the difference between a person with low self-esteem and one who continues to cater to his or her old sinful nature. Good self-esteem in a psychological sense, is the realistic acceptance and appreciation of the person



God made us to be.

The truth is that many are unable to accept or appreciate themselves because of continued negative experiences in their lives. For example, a person growing up in a home where he is constantly criticized and compared unfavorably to others is apt to enter adulthood with a low opinion of himself and strong feelings of insecurity. This can lead to a variety of undesirable behaviors.

Unfortunately, an insecure person with a low self-esteem may find it difficult to accept God's unconditional love. Such a person is often unable to see that although God hates sin, He loves the sinner.

When people have been subjected to constant put-downs in their formative years, even though they accept Christ as Savior, it is often difficult for them to understand how God can see them as having infinite worth and value.

But the thrust of this article is not to deal with our emotional maladjustments. The issue here is in learning to view ourselves from God's perspective, which cannot help but bolster a healthy self-esteem.

God's Value System

We might argue that it does not make sense for God to take someone who is nobody *without* Him, only to make that person a nobody *with* Him. The Bible assures us that God places His stamp of worth and value on His redeemed children. God has created us in His own image. To be sure, sin has marred and distorted this image, and we are totally at God's mercy for salvation. We have nothing to offer that can pay the price for our sin. But Jesus came and paid it all. ***In this tremendous act of sacrificial love, our great worth to God has been forever established.*** How can any true believer look at the cross and not feel valued? To be truly Christlike, we must accept and esteem the *self* we become as a result of our relationship

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THE "SINGLES" DILEMMA

In a world that caters to the married, what is the role of singles?

by Bill Dymant

BEING SINGLE AT THIRTY-FIVE caught me off guard. My twenties were a blur of activity — a move from Boston to California, six years of graduate school and exciting trips with friends. It was a fast-moving decade — one in which time seemed to stand still. For the first time, I was let loose on the world to try my hand at being an adult.

Time, of course, did not stand still. One by one, my closest friends each sent me that special white envelope with my name printed in neat, formal font, announcing a wedding. Getting together

now meant being invited over for a casual, but highly symbolic dinner prepared by a financially strapped, starry-eyed couple.

I'm glad they didn't offer me the well-worn words of wisdom to Christian singles: "When you finally stop looking for someone, that's when you'll meet the right one." Or, "When you learn to really trust God and live entirely for Him, then He'll bring that special someone along."

Will I Be Married?

The difficult truth is that God does not intend for all of His children to be married. Many of us will be single much longer than we had anticipated. The 1990 U.S. Census reported that 25 percent of all American men between the ages of thirty-five and sixty-five are single. However, I have met only one person who, without bitterness or remorse, feels called to singleness.

Many singles entering their thirties greet their status with all the joy one feels for a flat tire on a lonely road — a temporary, irritating delay on the way to an ultimate destination. In today's pro-family church, it's not surprising that single men wonder where they fit in. It's time for us to see the critical role that single men should play in the church, just as it was when the first church was formed. Christ Himself never married. Many, if not the majority, of the 12 disciples were also single. Paul, the chief apostle, is perhaps the most outspoken in the Bible about his singleness. He deals head-on with issues facing married believers: sexuality, fidelity, divorce, and the relationship between husband and wife.

Paul clearly states the advantages that single men hold in ministry: *"One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and his interests are divided"* (I Corinthians 7:32-34).

The same can be said for single women. The majority of missionaries on foreign fields are women who have never married. This doesn't let their male counterparts off the hook. But thank God for the single women who are willing to serve the Lord in remote and difficult areas as emissaries of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Many singles squirm when Paul suggests that those who are single should not seek to be married. He writes: "Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife" (I Corinthians 7:27).

Of course, marriage is a gift from God. But it's equally clear that singleness gives Christian men and women the freedom to pursue unique ministry more easily than their married brothers and sisters.

Singles in Today's Church

In some churches, a handful of singles fellowship with other Christians in a predominantly married culture. Single men become honorary "uncles," while single women are viewed as candidates for "baby-sitting." But seldom are singles given equal status with married couples and families.

For many years, the opposite was true for me. My involvement in a single's fellowship meant that I had no friends who were younger than twenty-three, older than thirty-five, or married.

Many singles find themselves in one of these extremes, but neither is healthy.

So what is healthy? First, a balanced mix of relationships with married couples, families, and other singles. Second, a serious commitment to become involved in a ministry that's better suited for singles.

Third, if you are single, break out of any holding pattern that prevents you from progressing forward. I've had singles tell me they will not move further into service or ministry until they are married. They are serving an idol — the burning desire to get married.

If you're a single man, are you ready to sacrifice your desire to be married if God calls you to a different lifestyle? Or if you are a single woman, are you willing to forego your dreams of marriage and a family, and allow God to use you in a special way as a single?

With all my being I am seeking to embrace my singleness, not as a consolation prize, but as a high calling. If you're single, I hope you will do the same. The New Testament portrays single men — and women — as actively involved in ministry, not huddled together waiting for "Miss or Mr. Right" to come along.

What adventure might God have for you? Are you waiting for a rainy day? It's raining! □

Dr. Bill Dymont is the director of Dymont & Associates, a speaking and counseling firm in Pasadena, California. He also serves part-time on the NCF staff.

WHAT SINGLES CAN DO

Are you making the most of your time as a single? Whatever you do, don't put your life on "hold." Here are a few adventures you might consider:

Take Risks: Consider doing something that may require greater physical, financial, and emotional risks.

Keep Growing: Think about taking courses to improve yourself, or even enroll in a college or university and work toward a degree (or an additional one). Also, be sure to attend Christian conferences and seminars — especially those geared to giving you a wider outlook, or that will help you develop personally and spiritually.

Become a Christian Entrepreneur: Start a business or ministry.

Become Politically Active: People who are single can more easily devote time to foreign civil service and domestic politics.

Befriend a Fatherless Child: If you're looking forward to some day being married and having children of your own, why not befriend a needy child today?

Become a Mentor: Why not encourage others who are struggling in their efforts to achieve? Inner-city children especially need renewed hope that they can make it when they graduate. Show them how.

Volunteer Abroad: Contribute one or two weeks a year to spreading the gospel of Christ globally. Or dedicate a year or two to service as a short-term missionary. You may be surprised at the great demand for your expertise in developing countries. And the blessings you accrue will pay unsurpassed dividends to your own soul. □



WHEN ADULT CHILDREN DIVORCE

It's like a death in the family; one goes through the same process of bereavement.

by Carole Logsdon

"NO!" I wanted to shout. "No! Our family doesn't believe in divorce!"

But instead of shouting, I stood there numb and stunned. Suddenly I began to feel ill all over. *This can't be happening to our Christian family*, I told myself in disbelief.

But it was.

When divorce hits a family, it is like trying to get an egg back into its shell. Everyone in the family is left to accept it and personally cope the best way he can. And it's devastating!

It's like a death in the family; one goes through the same process of bereavement. There are feelings of personal loss and failure as a parent. Often anger is displayed in ways we later regret. This only adds more hurt.

We have feelings of disappointment and we even challenge God as to "Where were You, Lord, when all of this was taking place? Why have You allowed this to happen in our family?"

Divorce upsets us physically, spiritually, and emotionally. We feel extremely isolated and have a sense that somewhere in the raising of our children, we personally have failed. It just isn't supposed to happen to people who love and walk with the Lord! It's a hurt that never seems to heal. And when it is your adult children who face divorce, your whole family seems to blow up with the impact of a bomb.

For more than 25 years, my husband and I were actively

involved in Christian ministry, both locally and internationally. We never dreamed we would ever face this kind of trial. We have four sons raised with Christian values. We weren't perfect parents, but we did the best we knew how. Our sons are grown now, yet all four of them have faced heavy trials. For one reason or another, every one has had his marriage fail.

Today's society assumes the philosophy that if you hurt bad enough, get out of the relationship; you owe yourself another chance at happiness. But this is not the answer.

As our son's parents, we felt traumatized. To us, divorce was unthinkable. We have former daughters-in-law whom we still love and who continue to call us "Mom" and "Dad." We have chosen to keep these relationships—not as former daughters-in-law, but as daughters-in-love. There are numerous areas we have had to struggle through, and are still struggling through.

1. What are the feelings that are going on inside of us?

Someone has said, "We often tend to go through life being known as someone's wife or husband, or as someone's mother or father." Our identity for a lifetime is associated with others. Our family members are an extension of ourselves as individuals. When they hurt, we hurt. When their behavior is disappointing, we feel anger and disappointment—even embarrassment. Such feelings don't die easily. They have to be worked

through, and that requires time.

We have to learn to love through disappointment and loss. This is a love that offers support, even when we are hurting. It is a love that is given without blame, criticism, or even asking anything in return. As parents, we cannot know what has gone on in our adult children's homes or lives; therefore we should not take sides or feel responsible for their choices. It takes time, recovery, determination, and a willingness to let the Lord exchange our negative emotional makeup to a positive experience of growth. It means, however, that we must be willing to let Him change *us*, not our circumstances. It's called growth under extreme stress. Often our children have the attitude that the divorce is *their* business, *their* problem, *their* choice (which it is), but they fail to realize the loss and the painful emotional stress that is inflicted upon us, their parents. They fail to realize that divorce changes the relationship with those whom we, their parents, have called family. This is not done intentionally, but because our children have been consumed with their own hurt, bewilderment, and disappointment.

2. Where do we go for comfort and help?

For the 44 years that I have known Christ as my Savior, my Bible has been my main source of comfort and strength. My husband and I, other family members, and many friends have also been a well-spring of comfort through many crises in our lives. In dealing with the divorces of our adult children, this has also been true. We have been fortunate to have many friends that are in the counseling profession. When we have asked for their help, they have freely made themselves available to us.

There are times when we need others to guide and help us. With the news of each divorce, it seemed less embarrassing and more comfortable to just withhold it from our friends. We read everything we could find about the subject, while my husband and I became silent sufferers. Daily we hung onto and claimed Scripture verses of comfort. We talked between ourselves, shared our feelings with each other, cried together as well as separately.

One of our comforts was to look back in our lives at other times of crisis and relive how the Lord had provided wisdom, strength, and guidance, and how He had supplied our comfort. This helped us to feel confident that the Lord would not fail us now, and that He would supply our every need to get us through this ordeal as well.

After some of our healing and acceptance had taken place, we were able to accept another source of comfort in talking with others who had gone through the same experience. Especially, if those people were honest enough to share their inner struggles, how they coped, and yes, even how they had failed. It made us realize that we were not alone, that we could learn from others about their victories and mistakes, and see how they finally came through it as trophies of God's grace.

We were often so blinded by anger, disappointment, selfish-

ness, or pride, it prevented us from finding our way to healing or to be in a position where we could be comforted. It was easier to blame secondary things for our hurt and confusion. We would also dwell on issues that were totally irrelevant to the problem.

There were times when we needed professional help to take off our blinders. This was a surgery of the soul, but it was necessary. It was needed for our growth, our fellowship with the Lord, and the keeping of our sanity. It was necessary to enable us to be honest, loving supporters for our hurting sons and daughters-in-law. It has taken time, work, and the willingness to be vulnerable. And it required complete honesty.

*There is a love
that offers sup-
port—even when
we are hurting.*

3. How could God use these experiences to glorify His name?

First of all, God does not waste suffering on His children. He

wants us to have a close and personal relationship with Him during our times of trial. He also knows the "why" of our suffering and hurt. He knows that our hurtful times bring us to a point of decision: (a) Will this experience make us *bitter* or *better*? (b) Will we allow God to exchange our human turmoil for His peace and purpose? The choice is ours.

If we are truly His children, then there is a reason for everything that happens to us. We may not see it now, but we will—in His time. The way God uses such experiences is His business. Mine is, with His help, to keep a right relationship with Him and trust Him. He will do the rest. There is a verse in Joel 2:25 (NAS) that I have claimed: "Then I will make up to you for the years that the locust has eaten, the creeping locust, the stripping locust, and the gnawing locust...."

There is a notation in my Bible beside this verse. It is a quote from my pastor, Dr. Charles Swindoll, from one of his sermons: "It's never too late to give God what you have and what you are."

In considering the situation of our divorced adult children, how can we know that the Lord has been working in our lives?

We will know when:

1. We no longer blame Him or others, or hold them responsible for our hurt.
2. We can accept the fact that our circumstances will *not* change, but with the Lord's help, *we can*.
3. We desire to help others rather than burden them with our sadness and grief.
4. We can open our hearts with acceptance and love to all of our extended family—even though legally they no longer belong.

God's Word assures us: "*Happy are those who are strong in the Lord, who want above all else to follow Your steps. When they walk through the Valley of Weeping it will become a place of springs where pools of refreshment collect after rains!*" (Psalm 84:5, 6 NAS). □

Carole Logsdon and her husband, Duane, are Christian leaders in Southern California.

GRANDPARENTS ARE SPECIAL

September seventh is designated as "Grandparent's Day."
Here is the story of one woman who knew the importance of a grandmother from personal experience.

by Dorothy M. Gregory



I NEVER KNEW MY GRANDFATHER. God had taken him to Heaven long before I was born. But the one grandparent I knew and loved — my grandmother — was a very special person! I can vouch for this, for it was she who raised me.

One week after my fraternal twin sister and I were born, our mother died from complications resulting from the birthing process. Ours was a home delivery on our family farm by a country doc-

tor in Southern California. Upon seeing our mother's weakened condition, he immediately sent for an ambulance to take her to the local hospital.

Sensing that she would not be returning home, our mother turned to her mother-in-law (our grandmother) and asked that she raise my twin and me to be Christians so that she (our mother) could one day meet us in Heaven. Our grandmother assured her that she would. My mother's premonition turned out to be correct, and God took her to Heaven to be with Him.

It was then that Grandmother found herself with the responsibility of raising her five grandchildren. Since our grandfather had died several years before, this meant that Grandmother must assume the job alone of caring for my twin and me (one week old), along with our three older brothers who were two, four, and five years of age. It would be a monumental task, but then, Grandmother was a monumental person!

Soon after my birth, she and our doctor noticed that my legs were drawn up and pressed against my chest. This was the result of lying in a cramped position

during my uterine life. The doctor told her I would probably never walk and would always be handicapped. He suggested that in a few months she should place me in a crippled children's facility so as not to hold back the development of my normal twin.

This my grandmother refused to accept, and prayed for wisdom as to what she should do. Every morning after our baths, using olive oil, she massaged my tiny legs downward until they came to a normal position. When we were old enough to learn to walk, we did so together. Not until years later did Grandmother tell us about this.

Later in my adult life I discussed this condition with a woman doctor who delivered babies, and she told me that it is known as a "Frank Breech" which sometimes occurs when there is a multiple birth. When it does, the mother is instructed to gently massage the baby's legs downward until, in just a few weeks, the legs descend to a normal position. So even without the instruction of a doctor, Grandmother was right on target!

When Grandmother was older, she often had difficulty going to sleep due to a numbness in her feet and legs. At that time I was a teenager and would frequently sit at the foot of her bed massaging her feet and legs until she dropped off to sleep. I did not mind doing this at all, for I was grateful for what she had done for me when I was an infant. At the time of my birth, she did it as a "labor of love" for me; sixteen years later, it was my "labor of love" for her—a real pay-back.

I'm sure this experience gave me a sensitivity for people who have physical pain and greatly influenced me to become a chiropractor. Through the years it has been the joy of my life to bring relief to suffering people.

Our grandmother, being an old-time school teacher, taught us many things in preparation for going to public school. This included learning the alphabet and how to write and spell. She also took us to Sunday school and taught us to memorize Scripture. She taught us the scales in music, as well as to sing many of the old hymns.

Those were hard times for everyone since it was during the Great Depression and many people lost everything. Money was not federally insured, and banks closed. Families were forced to go on

welfare, ours included, as our father lost his small vegetable farm. Many people committed suicide when faced with these severe losses. In Pasadena, California, there is a high bridge from which discouraged people often jumped to their deaths. It became known as "Suicide Bridge." But even in those difficult days, our grandmother never lost faith in her Lord and taught us to trust Him, too.

My twin sister and I were sixteen when Grandmother died of a heart attack. This was traumatic for us. However, we soon discovered that the many things she had taught us were still in our hearts and minds. This was what helped us through and gave us the needed foundation to build a strong future.

Today there are thousands of grandparents who, for one reason or another, are raising their grandchildren. Divorce has become so commonplace— even among Christians— and many, many times it is the grandparents who must assume the responsibility of rearing their



Above: The twins: Doris and Dorothy Hartwell. Opposite page: Grandmother Anna Hartwell.

grandchildren who are the victims of those broken marriages.

But in talking with many of these grandparents, I have learned that most of them do not consider it to be a great burden. Rather, they say their grandchil-

dren do wonders for them. They keep them "young in spirit" and help them not to dwell on their own problems. They have added "spice" to their lives and brought joy.

It is not easy for grandparents who have already raised one family and deserve to enjoy some rest in their older years to assume the responsibility of raising a second family. This involves a world of sacrifice. But the great love that exists between them is the catalyst that makes the relationship not only bearable, but a joy.

In my case, Grandmother never complained about having to raise her five grandchildren. In fact, she literally devoted the rest of her life to caring for and loving us as long as she lived.

Yes, Grandmother was indeed a very special person!

Thank God for a caring grandmother! □

Dr. Dorothy Gregory is a chiropractor and a freelance writer. She and her husband, Dick, live in Redlands, California.

A SENIOR SERVANT PRAYS

by Gordon P. Elliott

LORD, AS I GROW OLDER HELP ME TO BE:

More like You.

Help me to look forward to seeing You and Your home, and mine.

Take away the fascination and attraction of this world.

Please keep me mentally alert and physically strong until it is Your time to call me home.

Help me never to be a burden...or merely to exist;

Please let me go home before dark.

In my older years give me wisdom and understanding;

Make my life a blessing and encouragement to others.

Help me to continue to serve You and be used as Your channel and instrument.

Please help me to show forth Your love, first to my wife and family, and then to all in every situation.

May I be kind and patient and walk in a godly way;

May I bear fruit and be a bold witness of Your grace.

Give me Your joy and peace and contentment.

May I leave beauty and blessing everywhere I go.

Help me not to harbor sin—uncleanness, unforgiveness, jealousy, hatred, or bitterness.

May my life continually praise You and encourage others.

Help me to leave a godly heritage for my children, their spouses, and my grandchildren, and have the great joy of seeing them walk in Your will and be greatly used in Your service.

Lord, help me not to be afraid when I pass through the valley of the shadow of death. I will fear no evil for You are with me as You have been all through my life.

I will be entering my home and will see my Lord whom I love and adore.

I will be reunited with dear ones and get to know many more of the great family of God from every kindred, tribe, and nation.

I will be better than young again—no pain, no illness, no death—a quality of life surpassing anything I have ever known on earth—finally perfect, complete, whole, free from sin and all the limitations of mortality.

Help others not to mourn for me in that day:

*I will be **finally home!***

Lord, it would be my greatest joy if You should come today, and my precious wife and I would go up to meet

You in the air together, along with our entire family.

Even so come, Lord Jesus!

Dr. Gordon P. Elliott, Ruth Narramore's brother, served as a pastor for many years until accepting a call from SIM (Society for International Ministries) as pastor-at-large to their various mission fields. During this time, he and his wife, Othella, ministered in numerous third-world countries. At present, Dr. and Mrs. Elliott reside in Hendersonville, North Carolina, where he serves as Minister of Pastoral Visitation at the First Baptist Church.

Self-Esteem of Self-Denial

(Continued from page 7)

with God's Son.

To love and esteem the *self* that God has created in us — *a new creation* in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17) — is essential to living a confident, productive, fulfilling, and joyous life. Throughout Scripture, the life that becomes ours when Christ indwells us is described in ways that allow us to see our great worth. Specifically, we have been purchased at an enormous cost.

But in living the Christian life, there's more to be considered. Listen to the words of Jesus as He challenged the multitudes—as well as His disciples—to leave all and follow Him: *"If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?"* (Mark 8:34-36).

Just how does this all fit together?

The Answer According to Paul

The Apostle Paul is explicit in expressing this reality: *"For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority"* (Colossians 2:9, 10).

This is a central theme in Paul's writings. The person we become in Christ is to be valued and confirmed by our day-

by-day behavior. *"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do"* (Ephesians 2:10).

Paul later adds, *"Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry"* (Colossians 3:5). And again, *"If you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live"* (Romans 8:13). This "death to self" exhortation is very prominent in the New Testament. It is critical that it not be overlooked, avoided, or explained away. A life verse for many Christians is found in Paul's familiar words to the Galatians: *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me"* (Galatians 2:20).

But a paradox still appears to exist. How can the *self* be both dead and alive at the same time? And are we to love ourselves or hate ourselves? Should we put *self* to death, or are we to let *self* live? **Scripture affirms both.** The question we need to ask is, "In what ways are both true?" Both must be present if we are to live a vital, vibrant Christian life.

Paul makes it clear that one's *self* can be expressed in two postures — in Adam, or in Christ. This distinction is expressed over and over. Paul sums it up in these words: *"For as in Adam all die, so in Christ will all be made alive"* (I Corinthians 15:22). In other words,

when Scripture speaks of death to *self*, it is the *self* that refers to our old sinful nature.

The Happy Conclusion

So we see that one's *self* in Christ is to find expression by fully embracing the life He died to give. Jesus tells us: *"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full"* (John 10:10). Whenever Scripture admonishes death to one's *self* (the sin-nature inherited from Adam), it is always accompanied by the resurrection of the person's *new self* in Christ. (See Romans 6:5-11.) God wants us to be free from our old sin-flawed unregenerate *self*. In its place he offers an enhanced, radiant, fulfilled *self* that becomes ours as we yield to the power of the living, exalted Christ within us.

Can we truly deny and esteem ourselves at the same time? Is it possible for one's *self* to be both dead and alive? Or are we to choose one over the other? God gives the answer in His Word: *"Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ"* (Romans 6:11). The sinful *self* inherited from Adam is to be hated and put to death in our daily experience of living. But the *self* in Christ is to be loved, valued, and lived to its fullest, always keeping in mind that we are who we are by the grace of God alone. □

Scripture references are all from the New International Version.

Dr. Vincent Taber is Director of the Southern Connecticut Christian Counseling Center, Inc. of Fairfield, Connecticut.

Personal Word

(Continued from p. 2)

how he was faithfully serving the Lord. Naturally, my heart rejoiced.

Now, many years later, Joe was retiring from the ministry. **He had devoted 45 years to preaching the gospel**, leading people to Christ, and establishing them in the Word. For the last 26 years he had served as pastor of the Temple Baptist Church in Asheville, North Carolina.

So on that Sunday afternoon this past summer, Ruth and I, along with Gordon and his wife, Othella, went to Joe's farewell recognition service! Joe had no idea that I was even in the area, and of

course, until the day before I didn't know that Joe would be in Asheville, retiring from his faithful years of ministry.

As we entered the church, Joe looked around and saw me. I think he almost fainted! He jumped up and said in a loud voice, "Here's Dr. Narramore — the man who led me to Christ when I was twelve years old. I've told you about this, I guess a thousand times during the last 26 years!"

He called me up to the front of the church and we hugged, tears streaming down our faces. After the service as Joe stood there with his lovely wife, he introduced me to his sons and daughter and their spouses. His children are all dedicated Christians, and one son is in the ministry. He also introduced me to

his grandchildren, all of whom are born again.

Joe shared with me how before going into military service, he returned home to Arizona to see his family. While there he led each of his eight brothers and sisters to the Lord, as well as his mother and father. Four generations: Joe's parents, Joe and his siblings, Joe's sons and daughters, and his grandchildren. What a spiritual harvest, to say nothing of the multitude he has led to Christ and taught in the Word over the years.

As I look back, this just has to be one of my most cherished moments! I shall treasure this memory the rest of my life!

Clayton W. Narramore

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

by Kevin Narramore

Can the World Wide Web Enrich Your Life?

KEY ISSUES OF THE DAY. Profiles of people who are serving the Christian community around the world and in our own country. Standing up for Biblical values such as the sanctity of the family—these are the typical story lines of my column. So why write about the World Wide Web?

The answer, quite simply, is one of timing. Technology has just reached the point where even the most confirmed technophobe can find it easy and affordable to enjoy the benefits of "surfing the web."

In particular, the marriage of the Internet and your home television has arrived. It's "ordained" by its new owner (pending anti-trust law review), MicroSoft, and is called WebTV.

Sometime in 1998 it will be improved again with the application of Windows CE, a box that, like WebTV, will sit on top of your TV set. Windows CE will integrate your living room television set with cable TV, satellite, and the World Wide Web. Will all this be information overload? Well, one thing is sure: On the web, your world will be different.

You'll use E-mail to keep in touch with your work and church friends and family—as well as missionaries from around the world. Imagine communicating instantaneously with friends and loved ones who are serving overseas, rather than having to wait weeks or months before hearing from them!

Your bookshelf will include most major magazines and newspapers, not to mention the entire *Library of Congress*. If you're the trusting type, you can bank and shop electronically. Your best airline and hotel fares can be discovered at the click of a button.

With Internet access provided by WebTV, you can do all of this for just a few dollars each month—and it's easier than you think.

Using ordinary phone lines, this communication network appliance hooks up to your regular television to deliver easy and inexpensive access to the World Wide Web. (For seniors there are often discounts.) With just a local call you can bring millions of web pages made of



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words, pictures, and sound directly to your television screen at home. This browser lets you freely and safely explore these web pages and collection of pages called "web sites."

A few months ago the Narramore Christian Foundation received a call for crisis counseling for missionaries serving in Indonesia. Among other things, I quickly turned to the Web to get recent information about a certain village where these missionaries were living. Within minutes I learned about conditions there—economic, religious, cultural, and a host of other facts. Then I furnished this information to Dr. Agnor, the Christian psychologist in Pearl City, Hawaii, whom we were sending to help resolve the crisis in Indonesia.

SO, WHAT IS THERE FOR YOU TO DO? Explore web pages devoted to your favorite ministry such as "The Bible Answer Man," or a web page devoted to giving financial advice such as "Net Worth" or "Smart Money." Find out the latest international study programs or local activities hosted by "Senior Net." Discover summer programs offered by your favorite Christian camp or Bible conference.

Looking for information on where to go on your next vacation or what new car is rated as safest? It's easy to find information about people, places, or specific subjects on the Web. Click on the search button and discover a few of the many information resources available to you now that you're on-line. Using E-mail is as easy as writing a letter. In fact, it's

often easier. You will be assigned an E-mail address when you sign up.

For example, Shirley Higgins, a lady on our staff, enjoys visiting "Psychology On-line," "AARP On-line," Christianity On-line," and the "Christian Widow/Widower PrivateChat" room through *America On-line*. She uses these as opportunities to share her faith in Christ. To "chat" with Shirley you may E-mail her at "sjoyhig@aol.com".

Are you, like I, the curious type? The wonder of the Creator's universe has always amazed me. Sometimes I like to visit NASA's home page and gaze at stars from a remote telescope. Another favorite web site of mine is *The Economist*, a London-based international on-line magazine which keeps me up to date on global politics and economic trends. I also use E-mail to keep in touch with mission organizations and trauma response team members in Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia. By using E-mail I am able to get the job done in short order, and at a minimum of expense.

You can use the web to educate yourself, your children, or your grandchildren in powerful new ways. Make new friends over the Internet and witness to those who haven't heard the Good News of Jesus Christ. Without a doubt, WebTV is an exciting and powerful tool.

On the dark side, the Web is also home to smut peddlers, con artists, and sociopaths. If you have children, it will be wise to monitor their viewing and to place electronic restrictions on what you do or do not want them to see. Like dynamite, the web is a powerful tool that is, of itself, neither right nor wrong. It's what you do with it that counts!

A world of interesting and helpful information and companionship is now open to those with a little black box appliance which sells at discount stores for under \$275. But there's a lot more. Christian organizations, missionaries, Bible students, and others can use it to further the Kingdom. Have you thought about buying a WebTV and exploring the web for yourself?

Look out, it's dynamite! □

HEALTH WATCH

by Eva Hallam Solberg

FAMILY MEDICAL TREE

It has become increasingly important to know your family's health history. As the field of genetics evolves, scientists are discovering more about the role your genes have in your health. You inherited half your genes from each of your parents.

Defects within a gene are at the root of many diseases and disorders, and can be passed from generation to generation. Defects or damage in one or more genes can cause or contribute to many other conditions, including breast cancer, diabetes, Lou Gehrig's disease, colon cancer, asthma, melanoma, obesity, ovarian cancer, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease.

Constructing a family medical tree is wise. Put yourself

in the middle and then branch out. In general, the more frequent and the earlier a condition occurs in your relatives, the more likely you may be at risk. Most conditions you discover on your family tree aren't a cause for immediate alarm. If necessary, you and your physician can plan a strategy to help you avoid or postpone the condition. Your doctor can help you decide your next step and whether you need to see a specialist, such as a medical geneticist.

(The Mayo Clinic Health Letter)

DONATING BLOOD TO YOURSELF

Before surgery, donating blood to yourself may be the best way to avoid the small risk of getting a disease through a transfusion. Called autologous blood donation, it

involves donating one unit of blood every three or four days. Each donation takes between one and two hours, and blood can be stored up to 42 days before surgery. The amount of blood needed varies by type of surgery. Example: Primary hip surgery may require only two units of blood, while revision hip surgery usually requires four or more.

Although some people donate for themselves before elective surgery, the public blood supply is just as important as ever, and safer than ever. Nine out of ten Americans will need blood from the blood bank at some time in their lives. The average transfusion is three pints. Donors can be anyone between the ages of seventeen and seventy-five. Those older than seventy-five can

donate if they bring along written permission from their physician dated within two weeks of the donation.

(New England Baptist Hospital)

MIDWIFERY ON THE RISE

In 1994 about 218,000 babies were delivered by midwives, compared with 29,000 in 1975—the great majority by certified nurse-midwives in hospitals.

Women giving birth out of hospitals, usually in birthing centers or at home, accounted for less than ten percent of the total. Only women at lower risk for complications choose midwives: for this and other reasons, babies delivered by midwives in or out of hospitals are more likely to be full-term and healthy.

(University of California at Berkeley Wellness Letter)



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COMING NEXT ISSUE

Giving Thanks—Is It Still In Vogue?

Logos—The Vocabulary Of God

Is Christmas A Problem?

A "Vacancy" Sign For Jesus

Do You Use People?

by Clyde M. Narramore

HOW CAN I GET MY SON TO STUDY?

QUESTION:

How can I get my son to settle down and work on his homework? He's now a high school sophomore but is completely unmotivated when it comes to his studies. I know he's capable, but he's doing far worse than he should. Every night, getting him to crack a book is like pulling teeth. As his mother, how do I light a fire under him?

ANSWER:

I can appreciate your concern about your son's study habits, or rather, lack of them. Undoubtedly, many other parents reading about your predicament are saying, "Join the club!"

If your son is a sophomore in high school, he is probably about fifteen years old. And it's not uncommon for boys of that age to be interested in almost anything other than school work. Studies often rank low on the totem pole of priorities and interests.

Here are several categories with related questions that would need to be answered in order to determine your son's problem and effectively work with him. Remember, diagnosis should always precede treatment!

Physical Health

Does he have any special physical problems or handicaps? How is his general health? What are his height and weight? Has his eyesight and hearing been tested lately? How is his energy level? Does he like sports? What about his nutritional habits? What does he generally eat throughout the day? Does he

indulge in sweets? How about soft drinks? Does he get sufficient sleep? Are there indications that he may be using alcohol or drugs?

Intellectual Status

What IQ scores has he made on his mental maturity tests at school? Is he average, or above, or unusually bright? What do standardized achievement tests show? How well does he read? Are there areas in which he excels? Are there any non-school related hobbies that he likes? Is he creative? If so, in what ways? What do his teachers tell you about his progress? Has he had trouble with schoolwork in former years?

Home Environment

Does he live with both parents? (You don't mention his father. You ask how you, the mother, can light a fire under him.)

How do family members get along? Is there quarreling and bickering in the home? Has there been a divorce in the family? Does your son have much contact with his dad? How does he get along with brothers and/or sisters? Do you or your husband compare him unfavorably with siblings, or with any other children? Do you continually nag at him? How much quality time do you spend with him? Do you regularly encourage him? Have you kept the lines of communication open by listening rather than lecturing? Do you openly express your love for him, both in words and deeds and in physical affection? Have you found out what his vocational interests are? If so, have

you encouraged him along the lines of his talents?

Atmosphere For Study

Does he have a specific place to study where there is good light and few distractions? Does he spend too much time listening to CDs or watching videos and television? Does he try to study while doing those things? Are you thoughtful about keeping the noise level down in the rest of the house? Do you take an interest in his assignments? When he is stymied or seems to be having difficulty in a certain subject, do you look at his book and try to help him get a handle on his work? When needed, do you arrange for a tutor? How about rules? For example, do you require him to do his homework before watching TV or going out to do other things? Do you hesitate to exercise appropriate parental authority by enforcing these rules?

Emotional and Social Adjustment

For the most part, is he fairly happy and positive in his outlook? Is he given to moods? Would you say that he is well organized, or is he rather sloppy in his habits? Does he have many friends? What kind of young people does he hang out with? Does he show any particular interest in girls as yet? Does he talk much? Is he outgoing and gregarious, or does he tend to be shy and rather unsure of himself? Does he spend much time by himself? Is he fairly serious, or does he like to tell jokes and pull pranks on others? How does

he relate to adults? How does he get along with his teachers at school? Does he attend a public school or a private Christian school? Are there things he dislikes about school, or situations that may cause him to be frustrated or fearful?

Spiritual Emphasis

Is your son developing spiritually? This is crucial, because down deep in the heart of every youngster is a God-given longing for spiritual life which can only be satisfied through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. All people, including children, have four great spiritual needs: (1) To know Christ as personal Savior, (2) to grow spiritually in the likeness of Christ, (3) to yield all gifts and talents to Him, and (4) to have Christian friends. Is he in a good church where he can grow in the Lord and have lots of good fellowship with other Christian teens?

All of these areas impinge on a teenager's development. I suggest you review all of the above questions, talk them over with your husband in detail, and possibly see a counselor. As you do, your course of action will become apparent. Patience, understanding, and encouragement during these years will pay great dividends. Try to imagine what many of today's great men may have been like when they were fifteen! □

A copy of my booklet, *Ten Ways To Shape A Child's Life*, is available for the asking. Phone (626) 821-8400, or write NCF at P. O. Box 661900, Arcadia, CA 91066-1900.

by Lee and Gloria Bendell

OVERCOMING OUR MOST PRESSING PROBLEM

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE HUMAN RACE, the most pressing problem — other than rebellion against God — has been that of *relationships with other people*. Excluding problems of physical illnesses or difficult financial situations, the most common difficulty confronting people revolves around unpleasant and upsetting relationships — at home, at work, with relatives, friends, or even those with whom our encounters are brief. Some people just seem to “rub us the wrong way.” We resent them because we see them as insensitive, critical, demanding, self-centered, paranoid, argumentative, aggressive, insecure, not trustworthy, over-controlling, or just plain uncooperative.

Our common reaction is to “steer clear” of people who aggravate us — to avoid them. While this may promote relief from casual acquaintances, such “escapism” doesn’t work with those who live with us. Although it may be possible to avoid contact with parents or adult children who no longer share our residence, we need to recognize that in cutting out these family members, we may be creating a vacuum in our own lives in terms of emotional fulfillment.

How can we deal with our relationship problems so they can be overcome? Since it is hard to change others, we need to begin by asking ourselves, *Am I contributing to this problem? If so, how?* This is particularly necessary if most of our relationships are negative. It may be that it is our attitude or behavior that is “turning others off.” The Apostle Paul advises, “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves” (II Corinthians 13:5).

This can be difficult. Are we brave enough to ask a close friend or a family member how we “come across” to them? It may be that we should seek out a counselor and take tests that might reveal personality characteristics needing improvement. Are we open enough to accept this feedback...and then do something about it? Many of us have the tendency to say, “Well, this is the way I



am...and if people don’t like it, too bad!” Or, “I’m too old to change.” Yet the Bible encourages us to change. A favorite verse of ours is Romans 12:2: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of the world, but be *transformed* by the *renewing* of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — His good, pleasing and perfect will.” Jesus said in Matthew 18:3: “I tell you the truth, unless you *change* and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven.”

The book of James yields many practical ways in which we can change (e.g. persevering, asking God for wisdom, listening, becoming slow to anger, obeying God’s word, controlling our tongue, doing good deeds, becoming humble, praying earnestly, confessing our sins, and much more.) Try meditating on the book of James and putting its lessons into practice in your own life.

After looking at ourselves and trying to correct any of our own inadequacies, we may find that we are not the primary cause of a relationship problem.

Perhaps (as we suspected all along) it is the other person who is triggering a poor relationship. Avoidance just isn’t possible or even desirable for family and close friends. I have often heard Dr. Clyde Narramore say, “*The person who has the insight has the responsibility for initiating remedial action.*” A young married man I know was encouraged by this statement and initiated correspon-

dence with his father who seemed to be avoiding him. He was overjoyed to get a positive response and will meet with his dad in the near future. He is doing his part in attempting to reconcile a broken relationship.

How do we decide whether or not we should try to mend a strained relationship — especially when in our thinking, the other person has been the cause? We must ask: *Do we have a responsibility for or obligation to that person?* How important is that relationship to us?

Our immediate family should be our number one priority. Keep in mind that our parents will not always be with us, and after the Lord takes them home, it is too late to do any healing of our earthly relationships. We must also remember that what’s happening (or *not* happening) between us and our children is shaping them for the rest of their lives.

One of the changes required in our own lives may be to develop an attitude of forgiveness over perceived wrongs. This applies to family members, as well as others. We must attempt to accept the other person just as he or she is. Acceptance is a measure of love — *unconditional love*. This is how God loves us. As Christians, we are to model God’s love in the way we relate to others.

When Jesus was asked, “Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:36-39).

God wants us to continually deepen our love relationship with Him. He also wants us to improve our relationships with those about us. This means that as we identify problems, we must endeavor to resolve them.

As Christians, we have been given a *ministry of reconciliation*. (Read II Corinthians 5:11-21, especially verse 18.)

May we be faithful in doing our part to heal our relationships with others! □

All Scripture is quoted from the N.I.V.



OUR WORLD TODAY

by Eva Hallam Solberg

PRAY FOR PERSECUT- ED CHURCHES

Moderate to severe persecution of Christians (including Protestants, Catholics and Orthodox) exists in more than 80 countries, reports the annual *Open Doors World Watch List*.

Of the world's estimated 5.8 billion people, approximately two-thirds live in countries where Christian persecution and discrimination is either widespread, or the threat of religious oppression is great enough to visibly restrict Christian evangelistic activity.

The U.S. is pressuring Saudi Arabia to permit U.S. personnel to worship freely in this strictly Islamic nation. A report issued by the U. S. State Department sharply criticized Saudi Arabia, noting that their government commits and tolerates serious abuses in human rights. (Muslim countries lead all other nations in religious persecution.)

A greater response in prayer for these suffering Christians is definitely needed.

(EP News Service)

MULTIRACIAL LIST- ING TO CENSUS

Adding a multiracial category to the 2000 census is unlikely to affect the way most black or white Americans identify themselves, but it could reduce the number of respondents who choose other racial categories, the Census Bureau reported.

Existing racial categories include black, white, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Asian/Pacific Islander. (Census officials

*The test of every religious,
political, or educational
system is the man or woman
that it forms.*

regard Hispanic as an ethnic classification, but not a separate racial group.)

The study is the third in a series of surveys designed to assist Office of Management and Budget officials in deciding on possible questions for the 2000 census.

(Los Angeles Times)

COLLEGE CREDIT CARDS AND DEBT

Although banks bombard college students with credit cards, using those cards may start a spending and debt habit that can last a lifetime. Spending limits usually start at \$500 but rise rapidly as cards are used. As a result, many students graduate with a huge debt from their education and credit card use.

Pre-college students need to be taught about the responsible use of credit cards.

Paying bills on time can mean the difference between obtaining future credit and loans—or not.

(Bottom Line Personal)

FORMER CULT MAKES DRAMATIC CHANGES

The Worldwide Church of God, a former cult that has undergone startling doctrinal changes in recent years, was welcomed into the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in May. The church originally rejected the Trinity

and taught that tithing and Sabbath observance were necessary for salvation. After the death of Founder/President Herbert W. Armstrong in 1986, church leaders of the Worldwide Church of God began to study the validity of his teachings, and determined that many of his controversial beliefs had no foundation in Scripture. The theological changes adopted by the present leaders of this former cult have now brought it in line with orthodox evangelical beliefs. Such an about-face has not been without internal repercussions, however, and has resulted in the loss of nearly half its membership.

Today the Worldwide Church of God joins 48 other denominations in the NAE.

(EP News Service)

RESPONSIBILITY TO PRISONERS

The rate of incarceration in the United States is the highest among industrialized nations, with about 1.6 million Americans now in prison. The church must equip believers to share the gospel with prisoners for many reasons, not the least of which is "to reduce the current tragic recidivism rate of roughly 75 percent of prisoners re-entering society. The local church must extend itself by helping

to secure housing, employment, transportation, and clothing, and by providing spiritual and moral support to ex-prisoners who genuinely seek to be more Christ-like," said Robert P. Dugan, Jr., vice-president of National Association of Evangelicals.

(Washington Insight)

CHILD LABOR

More than 250 million children between five and fourteen years old are used as laborers, according to the United Nations International Labor Organization. Half of them work full-time, the agency says.

In southern Asia and West Africa, children sometimes are sold into bondage. Youngsters commonly work as street vendors, factory employees, and farm laborers. In some areas, more children die from pesticide poisoning than from childhood diseases.

World Vision operates projects to provide youth with marketable skills that keep them at home. The agency also rescues young prostitutes by offering vocational training. In one project, World Vision arranged for the payment of family debts to free young bonded laborers.

(World Vision News)

BIG DADDY WELFARE

America's welfare system discourages marriage and encourages illegitimacy. According to the National Academy of Science research, "For low-income young women, a ten percent increase in welfare benefits causes a twelve percent jump in illegitimacy."

(Family Voice)