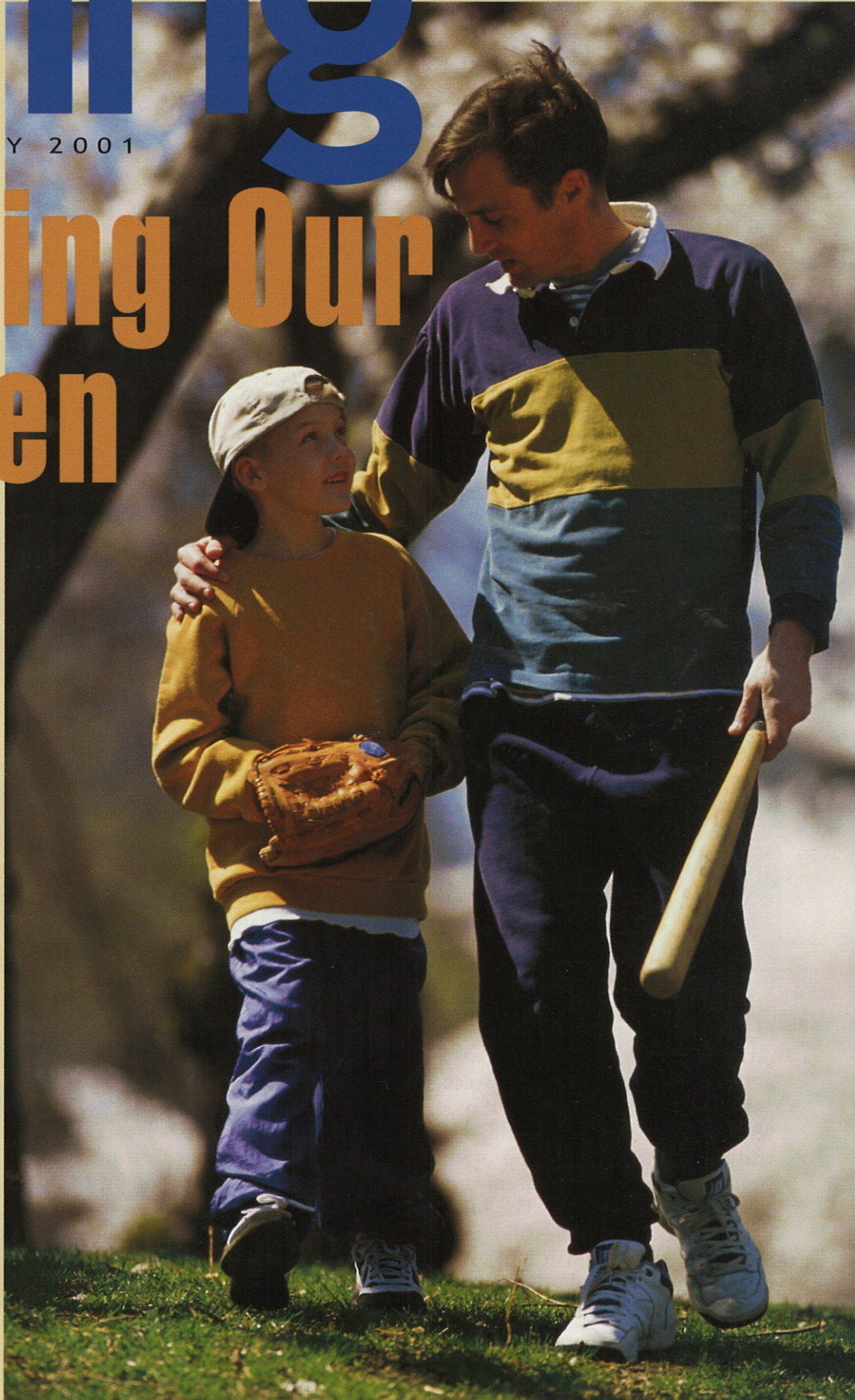


PSYCHOLOGY FOR
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JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2001

**Affirming Our
Children**



Welcome to ...
The MK Connection

**Special
Reentry
Program
Inside**

The Gospel According to Oprah

By Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

Standing in the checkout line at my local supermarket, I noticed a bold title on the cover of *O, The Oprah Winfrey* magazine. It read, **TRUST YOURSELF! THE TRUTH IS IN THERE.** So I did something I had never done before. I bought it and read it!



Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

Sure enough, the article touted the virtues of self-trust and encouraged readers to “realize your own truth” and to “act on that knowledge.” The author had

some valid points. She was trying to help people listen to things that they really knew if they would only pay attention. For example, how many men and women have had major reservations about going through with their wedding but failed to heed their inner doubts because “the invitations have already been sent” or “everything is already paid for.” So, instead of canceling what they know is a bad decision, they go ahead, only to divorce a few years later.

The author was also right that some of us spend so much effort trying to do or be what others want that we forget to listen to our own inner voice.

But she didn't give a hint of recognition that we are not only filled with truth; we are also filled with a tremendous capacity to deceive ourselves. The Bible says, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9). And it tells us there is wisdom “in a multitude of counselors.” We cannot have

unlimited confidence in ourselves because we are limited beings. Only God is unlimited and all-knowing. And only God is complete truth. We can find much truth, but it is always less than perfect because of our finitude and sinfulness.

How sad that a woman in an influential position publishes such misleading material. Millions watch her show in search of help for problems. But while I assume Oprah is completely sincere in her efforts to help, she unwittingly encourages people to build false hope in themselves and to minimize or ignore their sinful, selfish and self-deceiving tendencies. This sets them up for seriously misdirected life choices and creates more of the very problems the advice is designed to help.

The alternatives are not blind trust in ourselves or complete distrust of our thoughts and feelings. The solution is to balance the fact that we can know a great deal by using the minds and emotions that God gave us with an awareness of our tendency to distort and misperceive. Since we are created in the image of God, we have a wonderful capacity to think and to find truth and to make good choices. But it is equally important to know that our capacity to find truth is a gift from God and that it is limited. That's why He gave us the Bible and His Holy Spirit and wise Christian friends. These God-given provisions help us blunt our tendencies to misunderstand and misinterpret and to make unwise choices.

The good life doesn't come from complete trust in ourselves. It comes from knowing who we are and whose we are — and by listening to ourselves in relationship with our Creator, His written revelation, and the wise friends He gives us. While some of the truth is “in there,” a lot of it is “out there!”

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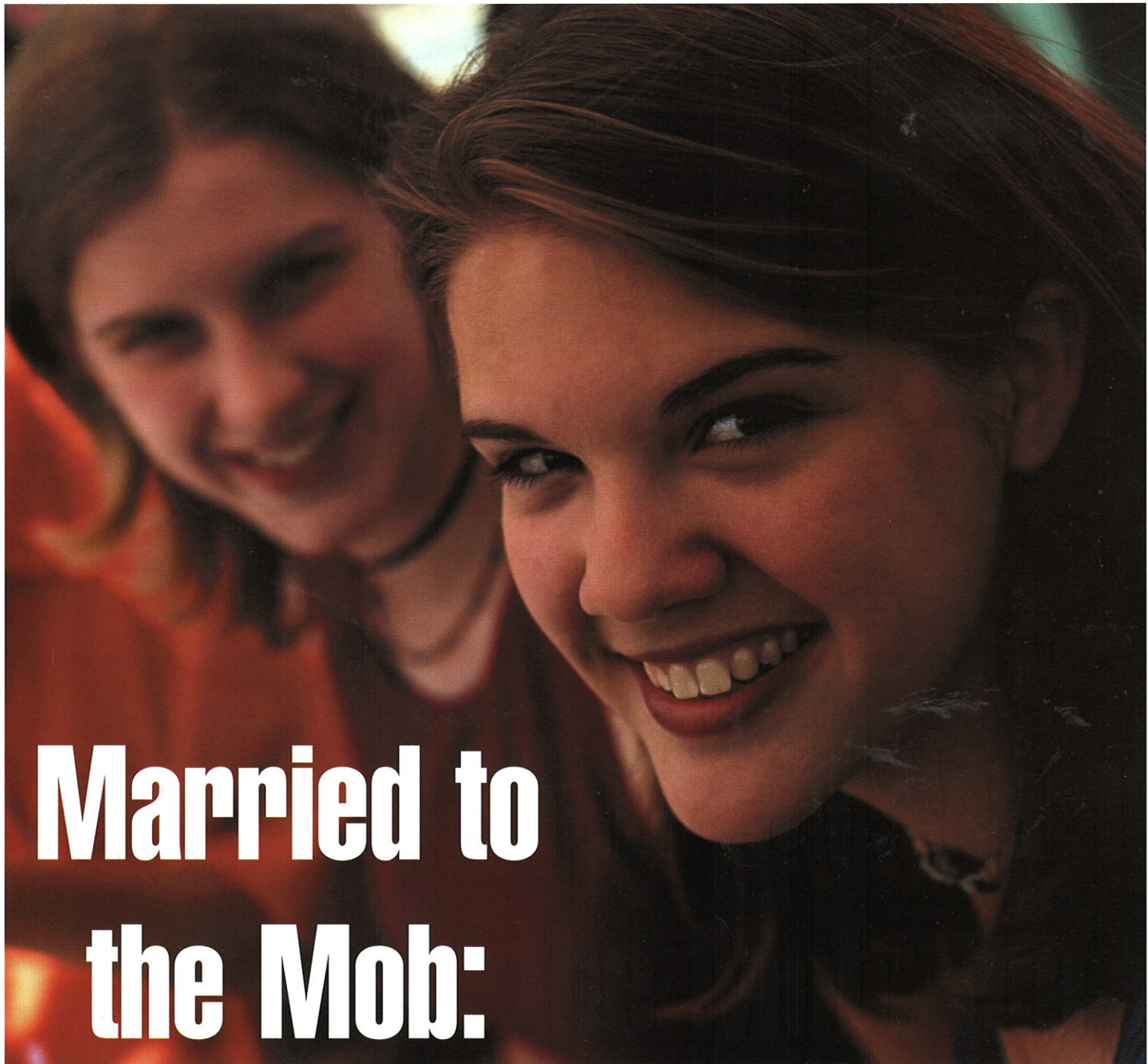
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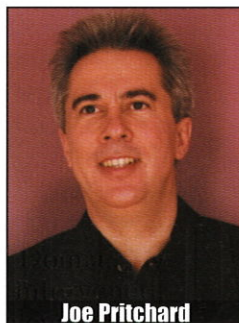
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Married to the Mob:

A Lesson in Love

By Joe Pritchard



Joe Pritchard

“Oh, please ... let him come. I promise everything will be okay,” begged my adolescent stepdaughter, Shannon.

“I guess. I just” I couldn’t finish, a wave of anger and frustration filling my head.

“Honey, it’s okay.” Donna, my new bride, gently intervened, hoping to soften the blow, but ▶



Ninety days later I was married to “the mob.” A “mob” of females, that is.

I had asked God for a soul mate — someone to share life with — to toss Frisbees and travel the globe, to ride bikes and run with the wind, to live the carefree life and

God answered my prayers all right.

He offered me another chance at love. With a God-clause in my contract, a slight exception to the norm.

Actually, five exceptions in all. One great wife was not enough. The Good Lord decided to throw in two teenage stepdaughters and two female stepdogs.

And the icing on the cake — one tiny bathroom.

It was not enough that my overtly organized lifestyle had gone to the dogs. Literally

it was too late. The flashbacks had already flooded my mind.

“I’ll call and tell him we’ll pick him up!” Shannon, my fifteen-year-old stepdaughter, dashed down the hallway before I could respond.

“I don’t know about this.” I looked to my wife for reassurance.

“Everything will be fine.” She tried to comfort me, but the voices in my head would not cease.

Meanwhile Jamie, my thirteen-year-old stepdaughter, stuck her head out of the bathroom. “Are you serious? He’s going with us?”

“Hurry up!” Donna bolted into the bathroom. “We don’t want to be late.”

“Definitely not late today,” I

mumbled under my breath as I headed out the back door with my two female stepdogs. “Lord, help me this day. What have I gotten myself into?” I turned to the dogs for some reassurance, but they had already turned their attention to a stray cat scampering through our backyard.

Three months ago I was a free man with money in my pocket, an apartment filled with new furniture and a promising consulting job on the horizon. The world was my oyster.

gone to the dogs as my four-legged friends had taken over my new couch and love seat. Also, my two teenagers seemed determined to make a statement. A fashion statement — combat boots to boot! Which leads me back to the voices in my head — my parents.

My parents were old-school folk who had survived the Depression and worked hard to raise three God-fearing boys. I was the last and certainly not the easiest to raise. Yet, I survived their rules and found myself embracing their values as I approached forty; one value in par-

ticular – don't do anything outlandish to draw attention to yourself. Be concerned with what others think about you.

What will people think?

Little did I know my self-conscious soul was about to be turned upside down.

"I don't believe this." I pounded the steering wheel.

"He'll be here!" Shannon fired back from the backseat.

"If he's not here in the next"

"There he is! See, I told you"

"Oh, no" I sunk down in the driver's seat, hoping no one around me would notice.

"Oh my!" Donna finally saw the light. It was bright red. On the right side, that is ... of his head!

I saw another light coming from the left side of his head – three silver earrings glistening against the backdrop of his freshly dyed, fiery-red hair. At least his black shirt and pants matched the other glimmer coming from his freshly shined combat boots.

"Oh, boy," Jamie laughed. "This should be fun."

We had six city blocks and six measly minutes to get there. I weaved through traffic, the voices in my head growing louder ... *What will others think?*

I made the final turn and floored it down the home stretch.

"You guys jump out and I'll park the car." I had a plan. The voices told me.

"Oh, no," Donna quickly countered, glaring at me with eyes that could kill. "We'll walk in together."

"But we'll be late!" I pleaded my case. The voices kept speaking.

"It's okay," Shannon beamed from the backseat. "There's a break in the service if we don't make it."

We didn't make it.

And indeed, there was a break in the service. However, I was not prepared for what followed, especially since we were unable to see inside until

"Oh my," I gasped, the voices ringing in my ears. *What will they think?*

"Oh no." Donna grabbed my arm.

"Oh" Jamie's face turned white as a ghost.

"Oh boy!" Shannon and her straight-off-the-streets-of-London-looking boyfriend were all smiles.

Since the square-shaped sanctuary was packed to overflowing, we were given the dubious honor of being ushered down the center aisle. To the front row! It was like the old E. F. Hutton commercial. Everyone — and I do mean every stunned soul in that church congregation — stopped and looked and looked, and continued to stare in utter amazement as we — no, make that my family — paraded down that center aisle to the one empty pew in the front row. The only sound — his combat boots clomping and earrings jingling.

By the third verse of the hymn, the congregation's initial shock seemed to be waning. In its place — total disdain for me, the father, the head of this hideous household. I felt every eye in that sanctuary glaring at me from behind, collectively crying out, "Why did you bring him here to our nice place of worship?"

I was ready to crawl underneath the pew when the hymn ended and the time came for visitors to be greeted. I froze, unable to turn around and face the decent-looking folk in the pew behind us. Thank goodness the minister hustled over, warmly greeting us and genuinely saying to the wild looking boy beside me, "You're truly welcome here as long as I am the minister."

Even though the lovely lady sitting across from us never stopped staring, I was relieved by sermon's end. I knew I could muster the courage to make it out in one piece. Besides, the side door leading directly out to the parking lot was only 50 feet away.

It was much later that evening that I heard another voice. The kids were fast asleep, a mutt stretched

across the foot of each bed.

My lovely bride was sleeping like a baby.

I was wide awake.

Troubled that I'd seen such hurt in Shannon's eyes after church.

Troubled that I was unable to talk to her because I was still brooding from the church parade down center aisle.

I tiptoed out to the back porch. It was there amidst a million stars that I heard the voice.

Not from my head this time ... No voice from the past.

It was my voice — from my heart.

My voice

"Heavenly Father, why am I so quick to judge others by their outward appearance as opposed to their innermost beliefs and dreams?"

"Teach me to look beneath the surface to the heart of the matter. To see with my heart.

"Teach me to look at people's eyes, not clothes, for understanding.

"If there is hurt, help me to see it and comfort their pain.

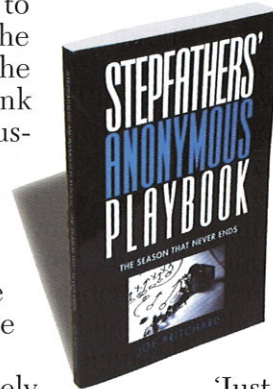
"If there is confusion, guide me to direct them to You without turning them away.

"If there is sadness, allow me the opportunity to help them find some measure of joy in their lives.

"Teach me to look for your Son's eyes in others; to look for the eyes of Jesus.

"And thanks, Father, for seeing the humor in the hair color of men and boys. It just so happens that Shannon's boyfriend likes red while I prefer

'Just For Men'."



Joe Pritchard is a licensed professional counselor and freelance writer who has spent the past 25 years working with troubled kids and families. His inspirational/humorous book, *Stepfathers' Anonymous Playbook ... The Season That Never Ends*, (\$10, free shipping) can be ordered by calling (615) 847-8741 or via e-mail dppjgabriel@mindspring.com.

Life is Tough, But God Is Faithful

by Tonya Stoneman

CS Lewis once said, "Pain is God's megaphone." For Sheila Walsh – singer, author, and former anchorwoman of The 700 Club – that megaphone sounded at what seemed the most inconvenient time in her life.

One morning she was on television with the Christian Broadcasting Network in front of 20 million people. That same evening she was voluntarily locked into a ward of a psychiatric hospital. "That's a pretty major wake-up call," Walsh said, speaking candidly of her 1992 hospitalization for clinical depression.

"One of the things that's been part of my own journey over the last three or four years is dealing with disappointment. I think it's very important to be honest about the disappointment with ourselves," she said, admitting that she isn't the paragon of virtue she has, in the past, tried hard to be. "I'm not this incredible, wonderful person that I thought I was. I am flawed. I am weak. I still do lose my temper sometimes. When you finally get a clear picture of who you really are, but at the same moment you feel the embrace of God, it's like you get rid of all this stuff that's been blocking between you and the Lord."

When Walsh was hospitalized for clinical depression,



she began to reevaluate her life. She discovered her top priority was and is to become more like Christ. Now,

as in her latest book, *Life is Tough but God is Faithful*, Walsh uses her gifts and name recognition to shed light on a confounding condition.

"I think there's a tremendous lack of understanding in the Christian community about what clinical depression actually is. Depression is an illness — a very treatable illness. But many people don't get the help they need because there's a strong sense of shame in the Christian

community,” Walsh says. “When I began exhibiting the symptoms of clinical depression, which I didn’t really understand, it was confusing, very devastating for me.”

Walsh says she couldn’t sleep or eat. She withdrew from people and was burdened by an overwhelming sadness, a sense of hopelessness — which, especially for a child of God, can be debilitating. Becoming more desperate, Walsh went to the leadership of her church and asked for prayer. She went to her boss, Pat Robertson, and a staff of counselors at CBN and asked them to pray. She fasted and prayed and did everything she knew to do. Yet she continued to sink.

“It wasn’t like there was some sin in my life,” Walsh says. “It wasn’t like I was doing something that I could think, *Well, if you quit that, things will change.* I was involved in ministry and God was using it and blessing it.”

At her worst, Walsh checked into a psychiatric hospital. Adding to her dilemma was her remembrance that her father had died in just such a facility when he was thirty-five. Walsh was near the same age, and initially she was resistant to treatment. Over the first few days, she thought, *I shouldn’t even be here.*

Then she received the news she had longed to hear — and it came from a psychiatrist who is a Christian.

“He sat me down and explained that every human body has some area of weakness. ‘For some people it’s their hearts; and if they’re under tremendous stress the heart is the thing that will give,’ he said. ‘For other people it’s their stomachs, or it can be any area. For you, it’s your mind. You’ve been under so much stress for so long and had a ridiculous schedule for so long that the chemical serotonin, which you need in your brain to operate, is so depleted that you can’t function. And,’ he added, ‘this is very treatable.’”

With medication, Walsh realized noticeable results within two weeks.

After a month of hospitalization, she emerged from the trial with a new sense of purpose. She embarked upon a three-year stint in seminary and helped energize the increasingly popular Women of Faith conferences, the ideal place to tell her story. Honestly. Candidly. Powerfully.

“I spent so many years running around in ministry trying to be the perfect Christian,” Walsh says. “Yet inside I was miserable. Other people whom I would interview were wonderful and had so much to share. But there was so much that they were struggling with in their own private lives — feeling this gap between what they wished were true and what was actually true. Not necessarily because of any sin in their lives, but there was just a disconnectedness.”

“I think every human being longs to be fully known and fully loved. But we’re so afraid of that because we think if we show each other who we really are, then we might be rejected at that moment. So we tend to hide.”

When Walsh emerged from the hospital, she made another appearance on The 700 Club to tell viewers good-bye as she headed to seminary. Instead of glossing over the reason for her absence, she knew it was time to comfort others with the comfort with which she had been comforted.

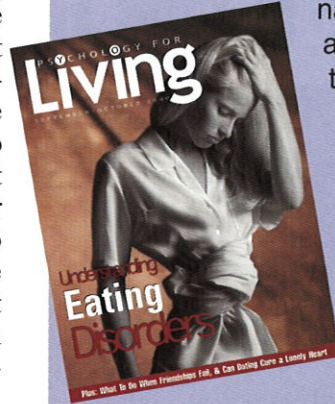
“John 8:32 says, ‘And you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free.’ I said, ‘I need to keep telling the truth,’” Walsh says. “I went on the air that morning and shared with people what had happened, and that I was just on the beginning of kind of a road home.

In the next week, Walsh remembers people expressing encouragement at her candor and reliance upon God. “I got 5,000 letters,” she said.

Tonya Stoneman is staff writer for *In Touch* magazine. Sheila Walsh’s book, *Life is Tough but God is Faithful*, is available in Christian bookstores, or contact *In Touch* ministries at 1-800-323-3747, web www.intouch.org.

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Humillity Is N

By Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

I once knew a woman who thought she was extremely humble. She walked around with a sad, depressed look and often shared her gratitude to God for accepting someone as terrible as she. One day she said to me, "Bruce, aren't you glad that we are nothing and God is so good?" When I hesitated to agree, she added, "I just wish more people realized that they really are nothing. Then God could really be exalted."

Humility Is Not Inferiority

Like my acquaintance, many people equate humility with inferiority. To these people, humility is considering themselves less valuable or capable than others. They

reason, *If we esteem ourselves more lowly than others, then we are being humble and following God's command.* Under the guise of spiritual commitment, they engage in perpetual self-debasement. They believe that if they can only rid themselves of all ability and desire, God will enter their lives and take over. Entire Christian movements have been based on this assumption.

People holding this distorted view of humility often quote Philippians 2:3 to support their belief. "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself (NASB)." At first glance, this passage does seem to suggest that Christians should feel inferior. But a careful reading of the context sheds a very

ot Inferiority

different light. Let's read the passage in its entirety:

“Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death

on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name” (Philippians 2:2-9 NASB).

Paul was challenging the church to be unified and warning about the dangers of pride. He speaks of (1) being of the same mind, (2) maintaining the same love, (3) having a unity of spirit, and (4) being intent on one purpose. He then mentions the attitudes that can ruin this unity — specifically, selfishness and conceit. It is in this context that Paul writes, “Let each of you regard one another as more important than himself.” Then he goes on to explain what he means by humility and regarding one another as more important than ourselves. He tells us Christ is our example and that we should have the attitude



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that Christ had. And he describes four ingredients of Christ's humility:

- He had a high position with God
- He took a position low in service but high in worth
- He was obedient even to death
- He was exalted after His death

Notice the absence of any suggestion of inferiority or any self-degrading statements in Paul's description of Christ. Christ certainly did not see Himself as inferior or worthless in the sight of other men. He never said, "I am so wretched and low that I might as well be the one to volunteer to go to the cross." He knew His value, His worth, and His identity.

Since Christ had a secure identity, He was free to put aside His own interests for the benefit of others. Humility hinges on this important point. Even though Christ was God, He willingly humbled Himself, became a servant, and obeyed His Father. Our humility should be the same. Notice that we, like Christ:

- Have a high position as God's children and image-bearers
- Can take a position low in service but high in worth
- Can be obedient to God until death
- Will be exalted as we reign with Christ forever.

When Paul told us to esteem ourselves below others, he was neither implying that we are worthless or challenging us to feel inferior. Instead, he was saying that as people with a secure identity, we are to focus on the needs of others and how we can minister to them.

Humility Is Not the Underestimation of Our Abilities

Underestimating our abilities is closely related to equating humility with inferiority. While apart from a vital union with Christ our lives will bear no spiritual fruit, humility does not mean the denial of our natural God-given abilities. The Apostle Paul tells us, "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment" (Romans 12:3).

Paul does not say that we lack abilities or that we should underestimate our abilities. He doesn't say, "Let each of you think as lowly of himself as he can." He says, "Don't think more highly of yourself than you ought!" Then he goes on to say that every person in the body of Christ has their own gifts and should use them freely. Paul encouraged us to have a balanced image of ourselves, to know both our abilities and our limitations.

John 3:22-30 is another passage that is sometimes taken out of context to support self-belittling attitudes. In those verses, John the Baptist says that Jesus Christ "must become greater; I must become less important" (3:30). But John was not saying that he is worthless or incompetent. He was responding to some people who were trying to stir up conflict between John and Christ.

They were saying, “Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan (Jesus) — the one about whom you testified — well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him” (3:26). They were trying to create a split or jealousy between John and Jesus. John responded quickly to this distortion and replied, “A man can receive only what is given him from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said ‘I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him’” (3:27-28). Then he adds: “The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth...” (3:31).

John was not putting himself down or feeling neurotically inferior. He wanted Christ to be recognized as God and he sought to live out his role as the forerunner who would make Christ, not himself, well-known.

Humility Is Not Self-hatred

I frequently encounter people suffering from depression. Generally these people are friendly, cooperative, and kind; and their friends cannot understand the depression that haunts them.

Underneath their friendly and cooperative image, however, lie strong feelings of bitterness and resentment. Rather than directing these feelings toward others, however, these people direct their anger inward. Constantly “down” on themselves, they never give themselves credit for accomplishments. Instead, they repeatedly berate and criticize themselves.

If these people are Christians, they are usually exceedingly sensitive to sin. They experience guilt and confess their sins at the slightest twinge of conscience. They make repeated trips to the altar to make sure of their spiritual well-being. Or when they read the Bible, verses on sin and judgment leap out at them and they use these verses to further punish themselves with guilty emotions. They are often among the most committed church members, genuinely seeking God’s will for their lives. But their Christian experience is distorted by their self-hatred. This self-inflicted punishment is also not humility — it is a form of emotional masochism. Why should anyone hate someone God created, loves, and redeemed with His Son’s death?

Humility Is Not Passivity

During a seminar, I asked the 200 participants to think of the most humble person they knew. I then asked them to list the five words that best described that person. This gave us 1,000 statements about

“humble” people. The results were interesting. Two traits stood out above all others. The first was a warm, loving attitude. The second was a quiet or unassuming manner. Humble people, according to the survey, were loving and passive. Love is certainly a key ingredient in humility. But since when is passivity necessary for humility? These people, like many of us, had some serious misunderstandings about humility.

Among the phrases used to describe a humble person, there were several glaring omissions. Not once, for example, did anyone ascribe the characteristics of aggressiveness, boldness, intelligence, enthusiasm, or ambition to a humble person. Apparently if we are intelligent and aggressive, we can’t be humble!

Close your eyes for a moment and picture an extremely humble person. Do you see a weak, quiet, or passive person? Many of us do. But these characteristics are not outgrowths of genuine humility, for humility is really based on strength.

Once again, Christ is our example. When it was appropriate, He showed His strength and boldness. Righteously angry, Jesus entered the temple, drove out all who were buying and selling, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the benches of those selling doves (Matthew. 21:12). Then He said, “It is written, ‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but

you are making it a ‘den of robbers’ ” (Matthew. 21:13).

Christ also showed His strength by being willing to suffer great pain and insult on the cross at the hands of others. People challenged Him, “Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!” (Matt. 27:40). He allowed them to mock Him and spit in His face — a most severe form of public humiliation. But He didn’t do it out of weakness or inferiority as if He was too fearful or cowardly to fight back. He could have had the entire group destroyed with one cry, but He hung on the cross because of His love for us.

No, humility is not passivity. The truly humble person is confident of his strength and his rights. With his strength, he chooses to take a position of service or suffering when that is called for. Because of his inner strength, he can also rise up and aggressively combat evil. Humility is not inferiority, underestimation of our abilities, self-hatred, or passivity. In the next issue we will look at true Biblical humility. And we will find that it is an exceedingly enjoyable, emotionally-healthy attitude.



“Humility is nothing but the truth. Humility is a synonym for honesty, not hypocrisy. It is not an artificial pretense about myself, but an accurate assessment of myself.”

– John Stott

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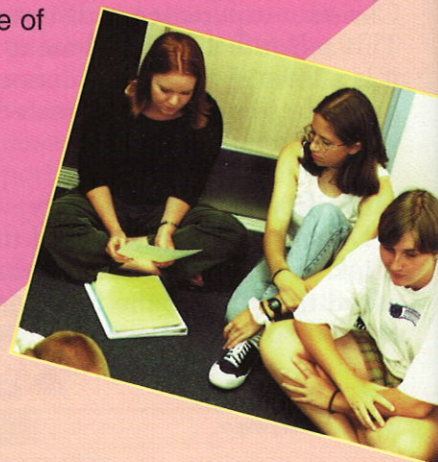
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- ✓ American culture—the good, the bad.
- ✓ Transitions from overseas to the U.S. and Canada.
- ✓ Developing a Biblical worldview.
- ✓ Friendships and dating.
- ✓ American culture and finances.
- ✓ College life and choosing a church.

Assessment

Take a look at your interests, strengths and areas for growth:

- ✓ Vocational tests will help clarify your choice of a college major and potential career path.
- ✓ Personality tests will help you look at your distinctive style and see how that impacts your adjustment and relationships with others.



Recreation

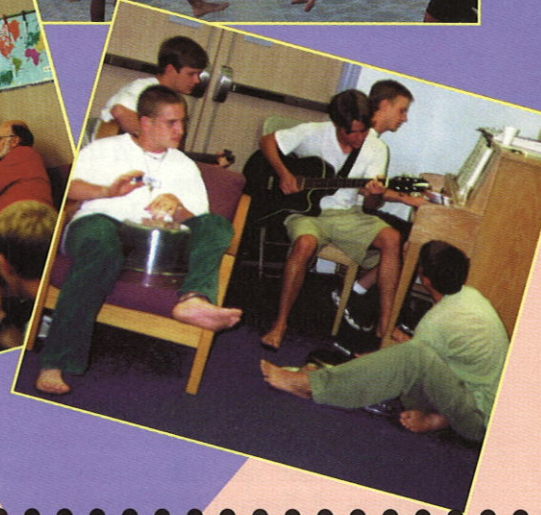
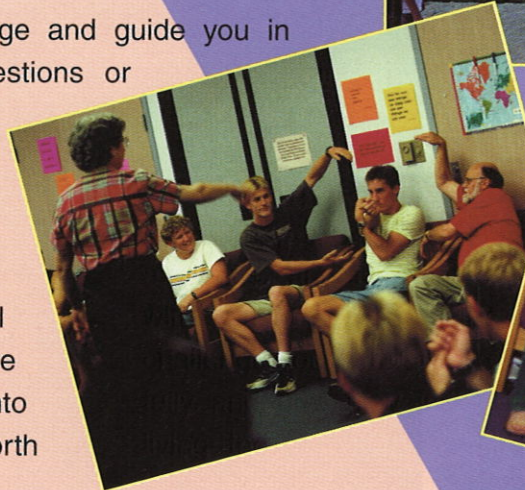
While mornings and some afternoons are spent in the classroom, there is also time to enjoy sports, recreational group activities, table games, swimming and relaxing around the pool or just hanging out with other MKs. You will also enjoy several off-campus outings.

Counseling

Christian counselors with a heart for missions and a love for young adults will encourage and guide you in addressing any personal questions or areas you wish to explore.

Challenge

Daily chapel, evening dorm meetings, and informal chats with staff and fellow MKs will challenge you to trust God more fully and give new insights into living the Christian life in North America.



What MKs Have Said!

- ✓ "It is the most awesome experience you'll ever have! You learn how to relate to others, understand yourself, and look forward to the future." —MK from Ecuador.
- ✓ "This is something you will never regret. You will come away with a sense of encouragement and hope regarding living in the U.S." —MK from Mongolia.

Cost, Scholarships and Registration

The only fee is a \$100 non-refundable registration fee. The remainder of the seminar expenses for each participant is covered in the form of an \$800 scholarship provided by the Narramore Christian Foundation.

Apply now!

Email: mkreentry@barnabas.org

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Welcome to ...
The MK Connection

The Back Do

By Dick Innes

Did you know that Walt Disney went bankrupt seven times and had a nervous breakdown before he became successful? At age forty, Henry Ford was broke. Enrico Caruso, who became one of the world's greatest tenors, was advised by his voice teacher to quit singing because he failed so many times to carry his high notes. Albert Einstein and Werner Von Braun both flunked courses in math. Most people know that Thomas Edison failed more than 6,000 times before he could get an electric light bulb to work, but did you realize that one of his teachers once called him a dunce? Sir Winston Churchill, the great orator, was once asked what was the greatest lesson he ever learned. He said it was when he flunked eighth grade in school. He actually took three years getting through eighth grade because he had trouble learning English grammar! History is filled with similar stories.

Think, too, of the many Bible greats who experienced failure. Moses killed a man and fled to the wilderness. Abraham lied about Sarah, his wife. King David not only committed adultery with Bathsheba, but had her husband, Uriah, killed and took her as an additional wife. When he admitted his failure, God forgave him and gave him another chance. In fact, Bathsheba became the mother of King Solomon through whom came the line of Christ!

And remember the Apostle Paul.



Door to Success

He was so opposed to Christianity that he was running around having Christians killed when God got a hold of him, turned his life around and used him in an incredible way.

It may sound strange, but failure can actually be the back door to success. For example, a high jumper will never know how high he can jump until he reaches a failure point! And only then can he work on improving his techniques. Or to use another sports analogy, if you want to hit home runs, you've got to be willing to strike out. In fact, the year Babe Ruth broke the world record for home runs, he also broke the record for the most strikeouts! Most people who have succeeded in life have also struck out many times.

We can fail for any of several reasons. Most often it is because we are human and lack perfect knowledge and skills. Sometimes we try something different but don't allow sufficient time to master the new skill. Other times we fail because we haven't planned well.

Some people fail because they have a distorted view of themselves and believe that they are doomed to fail. Perhaps they were never given any approval and affirmation as children, or they lived with constant criticism no matter how well they did. So now they see themselves as people who are destined to fail. They may even unconsciously set themselves up to fail. Then they live up to their deep inner expectations of never succeeding. Their low self-esteem has become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

A few people fail because they are lazy. Others fail because they get discouraged and give up too soon. They lack tenacity and persistence. When a young reporter asked Thomas Edison, "Why do you keep on trying to make an electric light bulb when you have failed 6,000 times?" Edison replied, "Young man, I have not failed 6,000 times. I have successfully discovered 6,000 ways that won't work!" Edison must have had good self-esteem.

Edison didn't assume that failed experiments meant that he was a failure. Just the opposite. He knew each failure brought him closer to success.

Persistence

To succeed in anything worthwhile takes persistence. For the Christian, once we are confident that what we are doing is in harmony with the will of God, we need a determined attitude like the Apostle Paul about preaching the gospel. He said, "It is God Himself, in His mercy, who has given us this wonderful work [of telling His Good News to others], and so we never give up" (2 Corinthians 4:1 TLB). When we think of all the trials and setbacks Paul experienced, we can appreciate his statement all the more.

Faith

Success also takes faith. We need to know and believe that God wants us to succeed. Even where we have failed, God wants us to learn from our mistakes and turn our lives around and succeed. This happened to David. It also happened to Jonah

who was given a second chance after he failed to obey God's clear directive. As the Bible put it, "The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time ... (Jonah 3:1). Fortunately, we have a God of second chances.

I recall reading about a young business executive who asked his boss, a successful president, "To what do you attribute your success?"

"Two words," replied the president. "Good decisions."

"And how did you learn to make good decisions?" asked the younger man.

"One word," the president said. "Experience."

"And how did you gain experience?" the executive then asked.

"Two words," responded the president. "Bad decisions!"

Remember that failure is an event – not a person – and that the only real failure is not to get up one more time than we fall or get knocked down. So, if you feel like you are a failure and want to give up, don't! Now is the time to give God a chance. It starts with being honest with yourself, with a trusted friend or counselor, and with God. Admit how and where you've failed, see what you can learn from your failure experience, and ask God to direct you to the help you need to succeed next time.

God wants us to learn from our mistakes and failures. They can be some of our greatest teachers. Indeed, for many they are the back door to success!

Healing From Post-Abortion Syndrome

By James E. Phelan

Over a million abortions are performed each year in the United States. Without much publicity, however, abortion-on-demand leaves countless women traumatized by the experience. They are left to silently struggle with its spiritual, physical and psychological after-effects.

Clergy, medical, and mental health professionals are seeing women in immense pain and conflict following an abortion — a phenomenon referred to as Post-Abortion Syndrome (PAS). In fact, this phenomenon is now considered by many scientists to mimic Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This includes symptoms such as nightmares, physical and mental pain, guilt, depression, anxiety and other pathologies.

When a woman inquires about an abortion, she is often afraid, alone, indecisive, young and immature.

Women often report they were told that abortion is a safe, minor procedure. But evidence from their own testimonies, coupled with scientific data, shows that it is not always a safe procedure. Rather, abortion is a major surgical procedure which often involves complications.

Furthermore, research indicates that approximately 70 percent of women who have had an abortion have had some religious affiliation. Therefore, many women make the abortion choice against their religious conviction only to experience pain and regret afterward.

Some obsess about the death of their unborn baby. Others find it hard to stay in a relationship after having endured an abortion, and they end up in separa-

tion or divorce. Others try to cope with their pain by having another child. Studies have shown that a large percentage of women who abort do become pregnant again, in some cases, soon afterward. Conversely, in other cases, it becomes difficult to bear children, and some women become infertile as a result.

A woman who has had an abortion and then bears other children can become anxiously bonded and overprotective. Conversely, others may have an inability to bond. Some may go as far as to reject or abuse the child because he/she cannot substitute for the aborted child. Still others become neutral or numb to the new child. Sadly, many of these women discover that after giving birth to a live child, they still feel unhappy.

Reconciliation and Healing

Every type of pregnancy loss needs healing. Clergy and other ecclesiastical workers can be properly trained to assist women with pregnancy loss and even to start local ministries to meet their needs.

There is help available. For example, Victims of Choice (VOC)*, a Christian non-denominational, non-profit organization, offers *The Facilitator Guidebook for Post-Abortion Recovery* (a 10-step one-on-one guide). This was developed by Christian therapists. VOC makes training available to those who wish to help and offers a "Pastors Packet," which provides resources specifically for clergy who want to help. In the context of healing, there are ways to understand post-aborted women without judgment and guide

Healing from Post-Abortion Syndrome, continued on page 18

AFFIRMING OUR CHILDREN

by Karen Johnson Zurheide

“Nice try, buddy!” called my husband to our eight-year-old son, who eagerly lifted his head out of the water for feedback.

“Great job! Keep working on straight legs!” I chimed in. Moments earlier, with the subject submerged, we parents had checked each other’s responses to this latest diving effort. It was hard not to react to legs going every which way, so much that they looked more like the eight of a spider than the two of a child. The glare I shot at my husband said without words, *You’d better not let Andrew see that disappointed face!*

My husband is honest. He’s not about to tell someone they did well if he doesn’t believe it. Not even his young son. With images of the perfect dive in mind, how could he praise the feeble attempt he just saw?

I too think of the goal of a graceful spring into the water, legs straight and together, toes pointed perfectly. And some eight-year-olds can do just that. But I also think how terrific it is that Andrew is willing and eager to try, especially given that some kids his age are still too fearful to give diving a go.

After the dive, Andrew asked with enthusiasm, “Dad, what number was my dive?” The presumed judging scale was one-to-ten, but the standard for Andrew had not really been set.

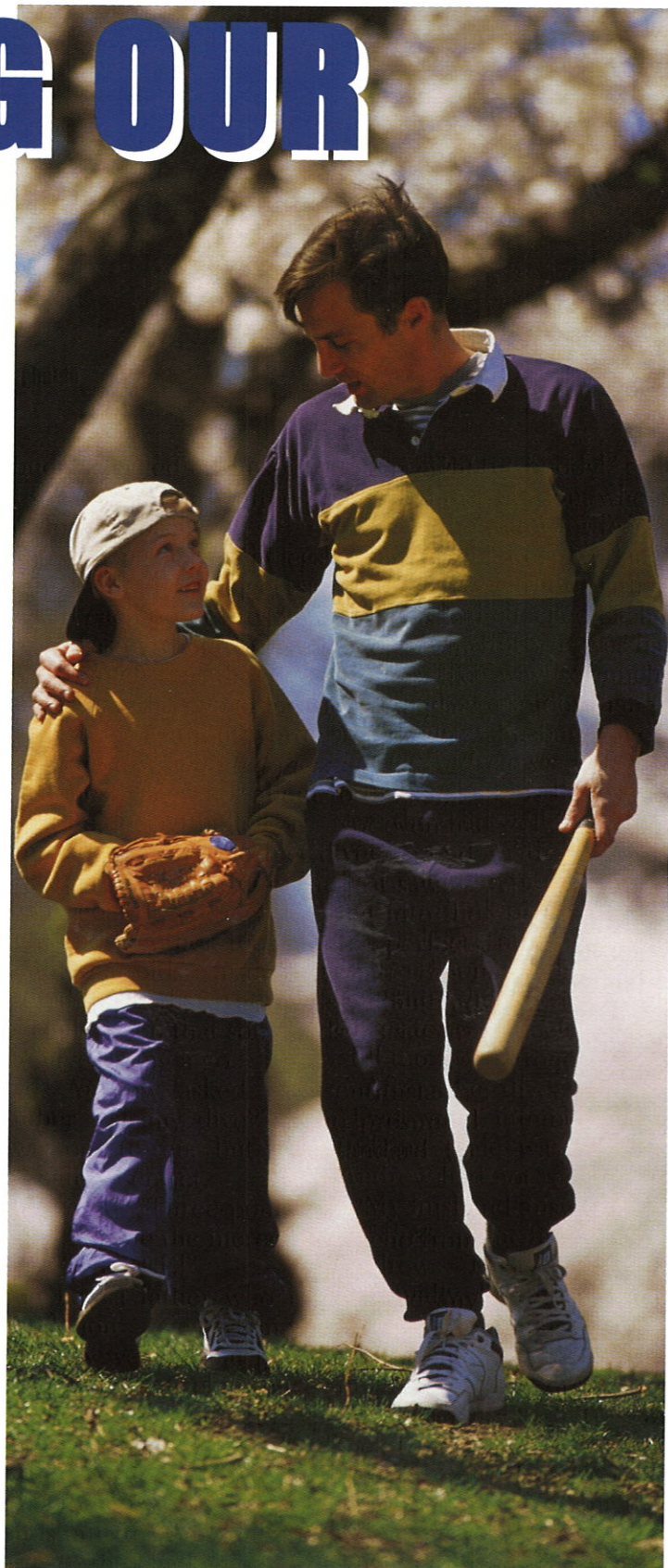
My husband answered, “Three-point-five.”

“Three-point-five?” came the incredulous echo from Andrew. “That’s TERRIBLE!”

Actually, having had a father who rarely gave any praise or commendation – even when well deserved – my husband does very well in that he believes in and practices regular praise of our children.

But the subtle contrast between our typical responses leads me to consider what kind of feedback from a parent is most helpful to a child. Certainly that depends somewhat on the personality of each child. One child responds only to abundant and overt praise, while another rises to the challenge of praise withheld until attaining a high goal. Widely various types of relationships between a parent and child need also to be considered.

Overall, however, I think it best to err on the side of



praise. Few suffer from being overly complimented. We may worry about spoiling a child, but over-

Affirming Our Children, continued on page 18

them in ways to help settle the pain and anguish about their experience and convictions. The process is not to take away the memories, but effectively deal with them and experience God's healing.

Here are some practical steps for helping women through recovery:

- Help her to express and process her loss. Allow her to cry and to verbalize her feelings. Women who have gone through abortion need a nonjudgmental listener, someone who does not shun them for what they have done, but accepts and cares for them.

- Take her through a mourning and grieving process. Mourning is a normal human response to loss and should not be repressed. Guiding a woman through this can be very beneficial. Supportive care through the grieving process helps bring closure and healing.

- Offer helpful printed materials available from an array of organizations.

Communicate the unconditional love of God: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I call to you all day long. Bring joy to your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. You are forgiving and good, O Lord, bounding in love to all who call to you" (Psalm 86:3-5, NIV).

While Scripture is silent regarding aborted babies going to heaven or the nature of their being if they do, it is wise to point out to the mother that a loving and all-wise Father God will, in His perfect wisdom, do what is best.

Encourage them to give their testimonies by telling their stories after they are well on the road to healing. You might also encourage them to consider establishing a Post-Abortion Recovery program. Helping others is an effective way to redeem their own struggles.

If they were pressured into having an abortion, help them to forgive those who insisted on the abortion — whether it was a family member, an abortion counselor, friend, partner, or physician.

Most importantly and above all, help them to experience God's forgiveness and acceptance so they can go on with their lives.

God's Word says, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1, NIV).

* Victims of Choice, P.O. Box 815, Naperville, IL 60566-0815, (630) 378-1680, email 103514.451@compuserve.com.

James E. Phelan, is a licensed social worker in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania



affirmation is a rare "disease."

I don't mean to imply that we lie to our children or manipulate them, or that we set them up for disappointment when someone less kindhearted and more objectively blunt tells them that the efforts we wholeheartedly praise really stink.

Within the confines of honesty, however, I believe that as a parent, one of my most crucial roles is that of cheerleader. Yes, a parent is model, teacher, disciplinarian, provider and so much more. But who better than I to root for my child? In the cold, harsh world, there is plenty of correction and advice, plenty of competition and failure. While my love for my children is unconditional, not dependent on their performances, I want them to know how well I think they are doing.

These simple guidelines help me as I cheer my children on:

Praise with enthusiasm—from the standpoint of joy in the effort and a specific point or more of actual improvement. ("Wow! I never saw you dive out so far before.")

Avoid BUTs—they subtract from praise.

Offer constructive criticism. ("Try to remember to keep your legs together.")

Participate when possible. ("Here's how I like to dive" — followed by a moderately good parental example.)

Encourage repetition. ("Do another dive for me.")

Praise again. ("You are starting to really get it!")

As to the Olympic-style judging scale, maybe the dive really was a three-point-five. However, if you start with a score of five or more, you'll still leave plenty of room for improvement, and you won't crush a young ego.

Come to think of it, the principle of abundant praise (not at all costs, but as good judgment allows) can be applied to grownups, too. Few people of any age are at risk of being over-praised. So spread some approval around today, within your household and wherever else you can. Which reminds me, I think it's time to track down my husband and tell him what a great dad he is, and to gently, lovingly remind him how much it means to his kids to hear his praise.

Editor's Note: In the Scriptures we are instructed to "Encourage one another daily ..." (Hebrews 3:13, NIV). Giving honest praise and approval is one very effective way to affirm and encourage our children, our spouses, our friends, and one another. Write or call 1-800-477-5893 for a free copy of the NCF booklet, *Ten Ways You Can Shape a Child's Life*, and we will mail it to you immediately.

Karen Johnson Zurheide is former director of a parent support network and co-author of *In Their Own Way: Accepting Your Children For Who They Are* (Augsburg, 2000).

Helping Teenagers Through Tragedy

By Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

Question: I am a youth minister who has just lost one of our youth to illness. What can I do for all who are grieving?

Dr. Bruce: Thank you so much for your note requesting ways to help members of your youth group deal with the loss of one of their members. I have a few suggestions including one book which I think you will find helpful.



Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

My first observation is this: You already appear to be handling this quite well judging by your question. The reason I say this is because you show an awareness that it's going to take awhile for your young people to process their grief, and you realize it

won't be resolved simply through a few times of prayer and praise, or spiritual recommitment.

Second, what young people most need in times like this is a chance to talk and to be patiently heard and understood. You are in a wonderful place to do that, since as a pastor, they will interpret your listening as God's provision for them.

Third, as you listen, try to give your young people the freedom to express not only their feelings of loss but also memories of good experiences with their friend, as well as any questioning and confusion they are experiencing. At times like this it is normal to ask, "How could God let this happen?" and be angry, confused or afraid. It is important that your young people are able to express all their thoughts, feelings, questions and confusion, whether they are positive or negative.

Fourth, realize that many of the questions your young people raise will have no good answer – at least at this point. While it can sometimes be helpful to offer a biblical perspective, for example, that death — even "premature" death — is part of living in a fallen, sinful world, we should not use this potentially helpful explanation to try to encourage young people to prematurely stop the grieving process. They need to understand that grieving takes time.

Fifth, offer spiritual reassurance. The Bible speaks of "the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (II Corinthians 1:4). And it says that we mourn, but not like

those without hope (I Thessalonians 4:13). Your young people can rest assured that they will eventually be reunited with their friend in eternity.

Sixth, it's important to strike a balance in dealing with some of the renewed spiritual commitments that some of your young people may make at a time like this. While God can wonderfully use spiritual recommitments that come out of tragedies, as Christian leaders we should never try to manipulate young people into some kind of rededication in the middle of such tragedy.

Seventh, it is usually helpful for people who have suffered a tragic loss to get back into their regular routine of activities as soon as possible. This helps to keep them centered and encourages them to move on with their lives as they are processing their grief.

Eighth, I would encourage you to do something to memorialize the deceased person. Have his friends put together a scrapbook remembering good times and difficult times, or special friendships and events. That can help bring partial closure, continue the grief process, and stimulate some integration of the whole experience into your young people's lives in retrospect.

Ninth, an excellent book that I would recommend is *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy* by Dr. William Worden, published by Springer Publications. While the author is a Christian, the book is not written specifically for a Christian audience. However, it has some excellent insights available on the process of grief and grief counseling.

Tenth, keep in mind that the grieving process generally goes on for many months or even a year or more, especially when we lose someone close to us. While we don't need to talk about the loss every week, I would encourage you to be sensitive to any of your young people who were close to the one who passed away. This is especially important for those who fail to talk about it or are not processing it at all. If, several months after the loss, they show signs of still not processing their grief (either by showing none or by being paralyzed with depression or anxiety), you may need to seek them out and encourage them to share their feelings or to receive some professional Christian counseling.

Finally, monitor your own feelings of grief and loss. Although we all grieve differently, if you stay in touch with your own growth through grief, that will help you remain sensitive to the needs of your young people.

I will be praying with you, and I trust these few thoughts will be helpful.



Finding the Girl of My Dreams

As a pioneer in the field of Christian psychology, Dr. Clyde Narramore is in the process of writing his autobiography. This article is a brief excerpt from his book to be published in about a year.

— Editor

By Clyde M. Narramore



Dr. Clyde M. Narramore

While on duty as a naval officer on Long Island, New York, during World War II, I went into New York City one Saturday afternoon. There in Times Square I saw a sign:

“Victory Center

— Servicemen Welcome.” I was greeted by a lovely lady from one of the local churches who asked, “Are you going to hear Jack Wyrzten tonight? He directs youth meetings in Times Square and I think you’d like to hear him.”

So I joined a Christian buddy and we sat by the aisle so we could see all the girls — ahem, I mean get the full benefit of the service. Two pretty girls swished by while we were singing a hymn, so I asked my buddy, “Do you know who the tall blonde is?”

“Yeah,” he said. “That’s Ruth Elliott. She’s a good musician.”

As soon as the meeting was over, I made it a point to meet her and talk. And all the way back to the naval base that evening I was thinking enthusiastically — *This might be the girl God has for me!*

I learned that Ruth had been raised in China where her parents had been missionaries. As I got to know the family, I was impressed with their dedication to the Lord. Ruth was a fine Bible student and a remarkable musician

(pianist, organist, trumpet soloist, composer, and arranger). Her writing skills were evident from her graduate term papers.

Some months later, the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, and the war was over. I was transferred to the headquarters of the Third Naval District in downtown Manhattan and Ruth had by then enrolled in Columbia University.

On Thanksgiving Day, November 25, 1945, we invited friends to her home for the evening and showed home movies of the two of us. Suddenly at the end of the film there was a “news flash” announcing our engagement. I slipped the ring on Ruth’s finger ... and then we turned on the lights.

The wedding date was set for April 13 and we planned to be married at the well-known Calvary Baptist Church in New York City.

In the Navy, I often made reservations by phone for high-ranking officers arriving in New York City to stay at various hotels, including the prestigious Waldorf-Astoria. When I told the reservationist that I was getting married and wondered if we could spend our first weekend at the hotel, he graciously put a hold on a honeymoon suite!

Wedding Bells and Honeymoon

We had a perfect wedding with lots of beautiful music. Ruth was absolutely radiant and beautiful! We stayed the first weekend of our honeymoon at the Waldorf-Astoria, then flew to Bermuda to enjoy the rest of our honeymoon in that quaint and lovely setting. Because it was at the end of the war and all the hotels had been taken over by the military, we were unable to get reservations. But not to be deterred, I contacted Jack Wyrzten, whose Word of Life radio broadcast was aired in Bermuda.

I wrote to the families whose names

were suggested by Jack, asking each one about possible motels. Much to our surprise, all four responded saying they’d like us to stay with them. We chose to be the guests of a Christian lady who had recently lost her husband and wrote that she would be pleased to have us in her home overlooking Hamilton Bay.

So we flew to Bermuda and rode in a U.S. military jeep to the picturesque, charming town of Hamilton. From there we took a horse-drawn buggy taxi up the hillside to our “honeymoon home” since at that time no cars were allowed on the island. Our hostess met us, looked at Ruth, then back at me and said, “Young man, you are a lucky boy.” And I knew I was!

On Easter Sunday morning we went to church with our landlady who introduced us to the pastor and told him we were musicians. So at his invitation, Ruth played the organ and I sang two solos for the evening service. The pastor also asked us to lead the young people’s group on Monday night. We had an excellent meeting where 11 young people surrendered their hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ, including the pastor’s daughter! That really put honey into our honeymoon!

Our stay in beautiful Bermuda was perfect and the people were exceptionally friendly and hospitable. When we flew back to New York, Spring had sprung and lacy green leaves, pink and white dogwood, apple blossoms, and colorful azaleas greeted us. Our hearts were filled with joy and blessing.

What a wonderful honeymoon with a perfect bride — a bride who wanted to serve the Lord! And in the many years since that time, it has been a great privilege for Ruth and me to be *not only* companions in life but also *companions* in ministry serving the Lord together. We’ve planned *together*, worked together, and been *partners* in every way!

The Valentine

By Ruth Narramore

Valentine's Day reminds me of an incident that took place years ago when our children were young. Our daughter Melodie was in grade school, but our son Kevin – being younger – had not yet started school.



Ruth Narramore

A touch of the flu had kept Melodie home for several days. Although she was a lot better, on this particular day it was cold and rainy, and I felt it would

be wise to keep her at home one more day.

It was also Valentine's Day. And Melodie seemed consumed with the idea of making valentines for everyone in the family. Scissors, paste, paper doilies, lace, flowers, glitter, and all kinds of fancy stuff littered the table. Kevin, who looked up to his big sister, got in the spirit and joined in to make his own valentines. Every little bit, Melodie would stop what she was doing to help her little brother. They were two busy children wanting to make the most beautiful valentines ever for Mommy and Daddy and Grandma and Grandpa (my parents).

But I began to feel that entirely too much time was being spent on the valentine project and that Melodie had some other things she ought to do.

"Sweetie," I said, "you haven't practiced much this week because you've been sick. Why don't you work on your piano lesson?"

"OK, Mommy. But can I finish my valentines first?"

I gave my permission never realizing that the valentines would consume the rest of the day.

An hour later: "Melodie dear, how about practicing the piano?"

"Pretty soon, Mom."

Forty-five minutes later: "Honey, you've missed several days of school. Don't you think it would be good if you did some arithmetic so you can be sure to keep up with the class?"

"Soon, Mommy," she said.

But "soon" wasn't really very soon, so I kept pestering her. "Practice your piano!" "Go over your spelling list!" "Work on your math!" Melodie was not prone to disobedience. She was always conscientious and a good student, so it really wasn't necessary for me to keep "bugging" her. But that day she was so engrossed in making "the most beautiful valentines in the world" for the family she loved, that time didn't seem to register. Her motives were good.

Suddenly it dawned on me that I should be grateful for her love-gifts and stop being such a wet blanket. After all, the various things I had asked her to do could be done the next day! BUT THIS WAS VALENTINE'S DAY!

So I said, "Melodie, it's alright! You can do those other things tomorrow. Go ahead and make your valentines."

Her face lit up. "Oh, thank you! Thank you, Mommy."

So the valentine project continued. Melodie is very artistic and each valentine was proving to be a work of art.

By late afternoon the rain had ceased and it was clear and beautiful. Clyde was away on a speaking engagement and my dad, who

worked for Moody Bible Institute, was also out of town. So I phoned my mother who lived nearby.

"Mom," I said. "Both of our men are away and we've been cooped up in the house all day. What do you say we all go out for a bite to eat?" Mom was all for it, so we headed for a nearby restaurant ... but not without a big box full of fancy, handmade valentines.

At the restaurant while waiting for our food, the box was opened and Melodie and Kevin presented their tokens of affection. As we exchanged our valentines, their grandmother and I "oohed" and "aahed" and gave and received the hugs and kisses that accompany such a special time. There was a lot of love going around.


Unknown to me, a man and lady at a nearby table were watching this whole scenario. After awhile they came over to our table and the gentleman said, "Excuse me, but my wife and I have been watching your little valentine party. There was so much love in it that it warmed our hearts. I hope you don't mind, but we wanted to express our appreciation, so we paid for your dinners."

Wow! I was flabbergasted. Whoever said that love wasn't catching!

God knows it is, and that's why in His Word He tells us to "love one another."

God intends for us, His children, to express our love. In fact, Jesus said that this was how others would know we are Christians. It's a trademark of our Christianity.

So let us freely express our love for God, for one another, and for the world that Christ loves so much and died to save.

God loves you ... and so do I. 



Dr. and Mrs. Narramore with the International Missionary Care Retreat participants.

Caring for Caregivers

An International Missionary Member Care retreat was conducted on November 19-20, 2000, in Angola, Indiana, U.S.A. The retreat was co-sponsored by the Narramore Christian Foundation and the Member Care Task Force of World Evangelical Fellowship's Missions Commission. It was attended by 26 member care leaders from 18 countries and six continents. Dr. Bruce and Kathy Narramore were both active participants.

The purpose of the retreat was to bring together Christian psychologists and counselors and other leaders who are responsible for the selection, equipping and on-field support for missionaries around the world. The participants spent time in both formal and informal discussions about ways of improving the spiritual and emotional support of missionaries on the field. **SURVEY RESEARCH INDICATES THAT THE TYPICAL MISSIONARY LIVES WITH AT LEAST FIVE TIMES THE AMOUNT OF STRESS EXPERIENCED BY THE AVERAGE U. S. ADULT.** These leaders met to seek improved ways for helping missionaries and mission agencies cope with these incredible stress levels.

A recurring theme of the retreat was that supporting missionaries emotionally and spiritually as well as financially is an expression of the Great Commandment that as Christians we are to love one another as Christ loves us. Too often mission agencies have focused on the Great Commission to go into all the world to preach the Gospel. This is often done without considering the needs of the missionaries for loving support, which is an extension of the Great Commandment! The world needs Christians who are carrying out both the Great Commission and the Great Commandment!

Check Your Mailbox

If you have been receiving both *Psychology for Living* magazine and *Special Insight*, you will notice a change this spring. We will be combining *Psychology for Living* and *Special Insight* into one quarterly publication beginning with our April issue. Dr. Clyde Narramore's *Special Insight* article will now appear as a regular feature in *Psychology for Living* magazine. *LIVING* will continue to include the same insightful articles and ministry updates that you have been receiving.

These changes are part of the Narramore Christian Foundation's

effort to minister effectively to you while being careful stewards of the financial resources the Lord provides. These changes will lower the printing and mailing costs of NCF's publications by nearly 50 percent! In turn, these savings will allow us to take another major step forward in expanding our Internet outreach. For more details on this expanding ministry read the following report: "NCF Expands Internet Ministry."

NCF Expands Internet Ministry

A recent *Newsweek* report tells that 64 percent of all Americans over eleven years of age are now on the Internet, and the average user spends more than nine hours weekly online! Think of it – nine hours weekly. That is far more than they spend reading the printed page!

To reach the multiple millions of web readers, the Narramore Christian Foundation is developing a major Christian counseling website featuring articles on more than 200 of the most common spiritual and emotional problems facing men, women, and families. People will be able to access these biblically-based, insightful articles from anywhere in the world at a click of a computer.

Because of the lower cost of presenting materials on the web, articles will be able to be at least twice the length and in much more depth than articles currently published in NCF's magazine, *Psychology for Living*. You are encouraged to send topics or questions you would like to see addressed on NCF's website or in *LIVING* magazine. Questions should be sent to Mr. Dick Innes, Director of Publications at the Narramore Christian Foundation. You can access NCF's website at www.ncfliving.org.

In case you are not online, or prefer articles in print, don't worry: NCF is continuing to publish its booklets and *Psychology for Living* magazine for those who want the printed page!

Compiled by Eva Hallam Solberg

Views on Mental Illness

Americans are more accepting of mental illness now than 50 years ago. Since many have dealt with mental illness in their own lives and families, it seems to have softened the general perception of it. One-quarter of all Americans have a family member with a mental illness, according to a recent NMHA poll. And more than 15 percent of Americans use some sort of mental health service agency each year, says a 1999 surgeon general's report on mental health.

The two surveys asked the same question of 352 Americans in 1950 and 658 in 1996: "When you hear someone say that someone is 'mentally ill,' what does that mean to you?"

The percentage of those who used words describing psychosis dropped from 40.7 in 1950 to 34.9 in 1996. Other, nonpsychotic descriptions, including irrational, abnormal, and impaired judgment, rose from 7 percent to 20 percent.

But responses to the same question also revealed that [some] Americans have become more afraid of the mentally ill. Some people won't seek or continue treatment as a result of the misperceptions. They're fearful that if it were known, they might face discrimination in housing or on a job. It affects all aspects of their recovery and their ability to lead a full and productive life.

Most who are mentally ill are not violent.

—*Journal of Neurotrauma*

White-Coat Hypertension

If your blood pressure is high in the doctor's office but normal elsewhere, you have what's known as "white-coat hypertension." The presumed cause of this phenomenon — stress — seems fairly clear. What's less certain is whether white-coat

hypertension increases the risk of heart disease.

In light of the findings in a recent study, white-coat hypertension may be more worrisome than once believed. "If your blood pressure rises when you see your doctor, it probably rises during other anxiety-provoking events as well," notes Dr. Howard C. Herrmann, director of interventional cardiology at the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center

Life-style changes may keep you from developing hypertension, especially if you are in the high-normal range outside the office. Start exercising regularly if you are sedentary, lose weight if you are overweight, don't smoke, and keep your daily sodium intake below 2,400 milligrams. Also lower your fat intake and increase your consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products.

Dr. Herrmann recommends that people with white-coat hypertension talk with their doctors about being treated for high blood pressure, even if it is intermittent.

—*HealthNews and UC Berkeley Wellness Letter*

Do I Need A Stress Test?

You should probably undergo a stress test if you're experiencing one or more symptoms of heart disease and have a few risk factors, such as being over age sixty, having diabetes, hypertension, or high cholesterol, being overweight, or if you smoke. If you have several of the risk factors but no symptoms, whether you need a stress test depends on the kind of activity you want to do. If you want to begin a program of leisurely walking, the test might not be necessary. But if you are considering training for a strenuous mountain hike and you have several cardiac risk factors, a stress test might be in order. Check with your doctor before starting any new exercise program.

—*Food & Fitness Advisor*

Solutions for Chronic Pain

Chronic pain is fast becoming the top medical complaint in the United States. Studies suggest that up to half of older Americans are plagued with persistent muscle, joint, or nerve pain. But contrary to popular opinion, nagging discomfort is not inevitable.

Whenever pain persists, getting relief and finding the pain's underlying cause are important. If ignored, chronic pain can be highly debilitating and lead to complications such as depression, disturbed sleep, and impaired balance, and may progress and become more serious.

If you experience chronic pain, be sure to tell your doctor. Because pain is subjective, you are its only witness. Pay special attention to when and how often the pain occurs, what brings it on and how long it lasts, as well as its location, intensity, and quality (sharp or dull, burning or tingling). Also report the treatments you've tried, including nonprescription drugs and alternative therapies, and how well they've worked.

Nontraditional therapies such as relaxation techniques, transcutaneous electrical stimulation (TENS), biofeedback, acupuncture, and/or cognitive and behavior therapy and group counseling may be helpful. Chiropractic manipulation may help relieve back and neck pain, especially if performed soon after symptoms arise, but should not be used on people with osteoporosis, disc herniation, rheumatoid arthritis, fractures, or cervical arthritis because of the possibility of injury.

If pain persists and you are not given a specific diagnosis or you are dissatisfied with your treatment, consider a pain management program offered by a multidisciplinary pain center.

—*Health After 50*



Absolutely Gorgeous

The most recent [November/December] *Psychology for Living* is absolutely gorgeous. I don't

think I've ever seen a finer piece of print in the Christian world ... and much of the secular world.

—TB, Maryland

Tragedy in Uganda

I am twenty years old. Some time ago sudden death occurred here in Uganda and 35 of my relatives, including my father, brothers, and sister died (by the hands of a cult). I feel I could commit suicide because this happen to my people. I am a born-again Christian but my faith is not strong, and I fear even to attend services in the church.

When I was buying a bag for my books in a second-hand market, I came across your magazine and had hope. I am seeking your prayers to God and advice and counseling so that my heart may be living in a good mood.

—SM, Uganda

Long-time Subscriber

I have taken *LIVING* magazine for years and know Dr. Clyde Narramore personally. I have shared the magazine with my granddaughter, but now I think she would like to have one sent to her directly.

—JK, Ohio

Common-Sense Approach

I compliment you on the fine and helpful article, "Coping With the Loss of a Loved One." It is the first I have read with a common sense approach to a difficult situation.

When my husband passed away, I kept hearing, "You're a strong person so you'll get along just fine" and the phrase we hear so often, "Time heals." Those are fine comments, but a period of grief is necessary and healthy for one's emotional wellbeing. Those two contributors wrote an encouraging and helpful article. I re-read it often.

Each month I try to do something special to honor my husband's life. He was most interested in your outreach with the printed word and helped make the original print shop possible. This month I am sending a check to help carry on your mission to hurting people. You and your organization are in my prayers.

—DAR, Texas

Truck Drivers So Alone

Thank you for the ministry you have for the truck drivers. Many times as I traveled down highways and prayed for the drivers, I believed they were so alone – but when I read your February issue, I praised God for you and for *Transport for Christ*.

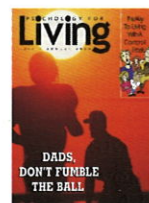
—RLV, Texas

Seminary Student

In the 80s I was a seminary student. To support myself I worked

the late shift at the campus "guard shack." Your radio broadcast came on at 4:00 a.m. and signaled that a new day was about to begin. It was so helpful and insightful. I also purchased almost all of your booklets. The ones on *Encouragement* and *Overcoming Negative Criticism* have been invaluable. God has allowed me to develop a writing ministry during the past 15 years and your friendly and practical writing style has been a model I have often copied.

—JB, Texas



Informative and Strengthening

I enjoy the articles in your wonderful magazine ... they are so informative and strengthening. I read and reread "The

Storm That Kept Them Safe," by Mrs. Ruth Narramore. Sometimes I do feel life is like that. Dr. Clyde Narramore's radio broadcast was a turning point for me. It was then that I took hold of my problem and went to the Lord.

I look forward to your *Letters of Blessing* and the magazine.

—DT, New Jersey

Radio Listeners Also Write

I am a regular listener to Radio 74 in Switzerland. I have learned a lot and will continue to do so as long as Dr. Narramore continues to be on the air and if God grants me His gift of life.

—CK, Switzerland



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