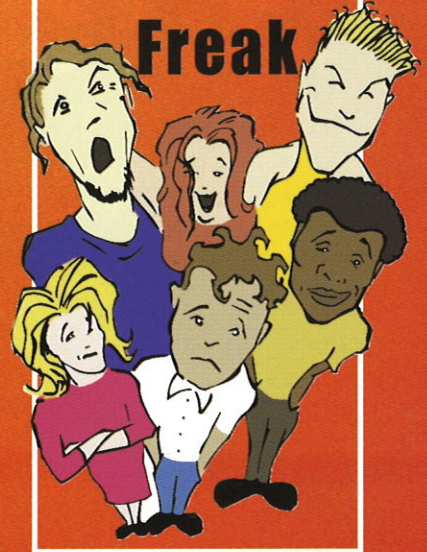


PSYCHOLOGY FOR
LIVING
JULY / AUGUST 2000

**The Key
To Living
With A
Control
Freak**



**DADS,
DON'T FUMBLE
THE BALL**

Don't Waste Your Hardship

by Bruce Narramore

In *Corinthians* Paul sheds some great light on life. He says, "I will not be mastered by anything" (1 *Corinthians* 6:12). The immediate context is food and sexuality but this principle applies to all of life. God doesn't intend for us to be mastered by anything—food, sexuality, hardship, suffering, success, or money. Instead, he wants us to master them.

Reviewing articles for this issue of *Living*, I noticed a common theme. Les Parrott's article on "Living with Control Freaks," Wade Wahl's article on the dangers of overly critical and pressuring coaching, Barbara Curtis' "Lessons in Love From an Unexpected Teacher," Susan Smeenge and Robert DeVries article on grieving, and Karen Zurheide's article, "Seasons of Life," all show us how we can grow and change in difficult situations. They show us ways of mastering and growing through tough times rather than being mastered by them. As I thought through these articles I saw several underlying principles for making tough times work in our favor.

First, we need a realistic understanding of life. God did not create evil and suffering, but He tells us that problems are a part of life. We need to expect some hardships rather than be surprised, discouraged, or embittered by them. The Bible says, "In this life you will have tribulations." No one is exempt!


Second, we need to know that God loves us deeply and wants the very best for us. He does not intend for us to be pushed under a pile and crushed by hardship. He does not want us to become depressed, hopeless or fearful in the face of trials.

Third, we need to know that God wants to bring good out of bad. In another place Paul tells us, "In all things God works for the good of those who love him" (Romans 8:28). Paul doesn't say that everything is good. And he doesn't say God works only for our good in easy or enjoyable experiences. He reminds us that God is working in ALL of our experiences, good and bad, easy and difficult, fun and sad, exhilarating and tiring, unexpected and routine. God wants to create something good for us through all of our life experiences—even those that at first glance appear very bad.

Fourth, we have to be willing to face our difficulties and trials head on. If we give in to them, we lose. If we try to avoid them, they get worse. But if we face them, God will show us wonderful, deeper truths, and He will enrich and change our lives.

I hope the articles in this issue will encourage and challenge you as they have me.

With deepest gratitude,



Bruce Narramore, Ph.D., President



Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

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DADS, DON'T FUMBLE

by Wade Wahl

“...and a little child will lead them” (Isaiah 11:6)

The memory grieves me to this day. I hope I never have to see that look on my son's face again.

It was a Tuesday evening, and I was driving home from football practice with my sixth grade son. He was unusually quiet, but I was somewhat oblivious to him because I was reflecting upon the practice and how I could get his teammates to become better tacklers.

When we arrived home, my son ran into the house while I pattered in the garage. Later as I sauntered into the house, I saw my son quietly lying on the sofa. I knew something wasn't right, because he *never* lies still. So I casually inquired, “Hey! What's up, Bud?” Immediately he peered up at me and his eyes burst with tears while his lip and chin quivered. Quickly he turned his face from me as if it would hurt less if I didn't see him cry.

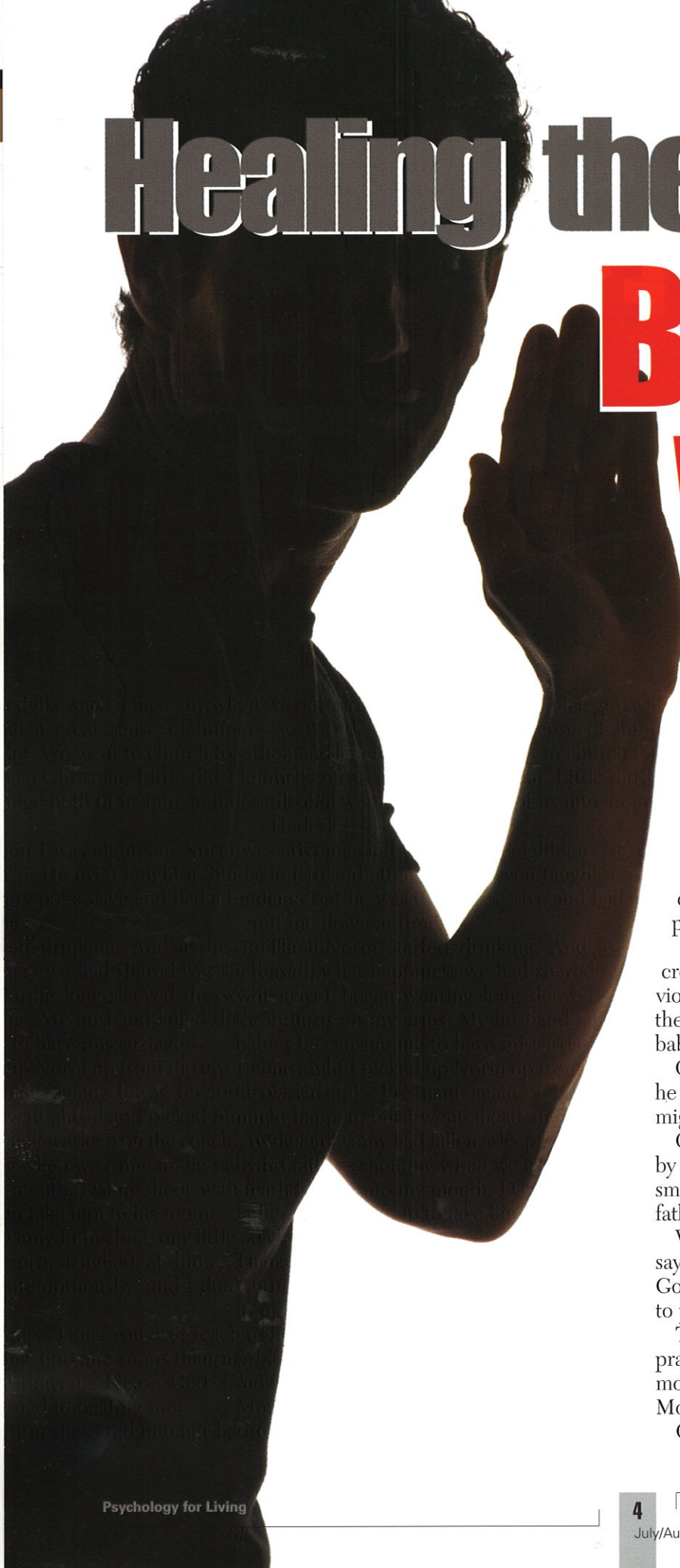
I couldn't imagine what was so troubling to him. I had never seen him like this—with such hurt and pain in his eyes. This was far beyond the anguish of stitches or a skinned knee or a broken bike. This was pain from within his very being. Horrible thoughts quickly swirled in my head! Had he been abused? Did someone hurt him? Did someone die? I just couldn't make sense of his anguished look without considering the worst possible traumas to explain it.

I sat down and tried to cradle him beside me, but he stiffened and leaned away, lending further evidence for my fears. I painfully gave him his space. After some moments he again looked into my eyes and cried, “Dad, you're a good football coach and you're always encouraging the other kids. You always tell them when they're doing good, but you never do that with me. You're always pointing out what I should do better, and you get on me more if I don't do something.”

Continued on
page 9 →



THE BALL



Healing the Hurts of Battered Wives

by Gayle Garner

Norm seemed like such a nice guy when we dated. He had a great sense of humor—so we laughed a lot. We went to church together, and he professed to be a Christian. Little did I know how alcohol would plunge both of us into an indescribable Hades!

We married when I was eighteen. Norm was affectionate and attentive. He even taught a Sunday school class. But he was very possessive and had a tendency to put me down at times.

Then Norm started drinking. And as his intake increased, what happiness we had shared was shattered by violence. I began wearing long-sleeved dresses to cover the bruises on my arms. My husband killed three unborn babies by causing me to have miscarriages.

One night I picked up Norm up from the tavern because he was drunk. Pregnant again, I was terrified of what might happen, but I went ahead and picked him up.

Our son Danny had fallen asleep on the couch. Awakened by his father's shouting when we came in, he saw his father smash his fist into my mouth. Danny shook with fear as his father picked him up to take him to his room.

When Norm laid Danny in his bed, our little son began saying his prayers. Norm laughed at him. "There's no God," he declared contemptuously, "and I don't want you to pray anymore!"

Then he turned on me. "Don't you ever teach our kid to pray!" he ordered. That hurt me more than my bleeding mouth. When Danny prayed, "Please God, take care of Mommy," Norm returned to beating me.

On another night Norm staggered into our bedroom and

jerked the full-sized mattress right out from under me and threw it across the room! There I sat on the box springs with my book still in hand. As Norm came roaring at me, I instinctively jumped up, grabbed the lamp and crashed it over his head. That knocked him out and ended the violence for the night.

That does it, I thought, as I looked at his prone body. I'm tired of being battered physically and psychologically, of having him kill my babies. And I'm sick of his infidelities with other women. I'm leaving!

Taking our little boy, I left. Danny and I moved in with my parents.

One night Norm came to try to talk me into coming back, and he was drunk. When I refused, he got violent, and my father called the police. When he began threatening to kill my father, I had him committed to a mental institution. I realized he had mental problems and was dangerous to the family.

I felt depressed and hopeless about my situation. One night when my parents went to church, anger and self-pity overwhelmed me. I filled the bathtub with steaming hot water, climbed in, then screamed from the pain. Hyperventilating, I slid under the water. I wanted to drown.

My unborn baby, now eight months along, began moving frantically. Pulling myself out of that tub, I angrily declared, "No devil is going to take my life or hurt my baby!" And that was my turning point.

Up until then, I had forgotten how to smile and hadn't even been able to pray. Now suddenly I found I could pray again for my Lord's help. For I knew He had saved my life and He cared for me.

Then Norm was discharged from the mental hospital. One Sunday morning he broke into my parents' home, his eyes glaring demonically. With her soft, kind talk, Mother kept him from violence until the police came.

After several more violent episodes, I finally sued for divorce. Norm had a heart attack when he got the papers — and later died of another attack.

I am now happily married to a good Christian man. I took no chances on this one: after working through my own issues, I prayed to the Lord for wisdom and guidance, and asked Him for a good husband. And that's exactly what God gave me!

Advice for Abused Women

I now work as a nurse in a psychiatric hospital, counseling other women who have been abused by their husbands. I believe the Lord put me here so I can share the great truths I learned through my own bitter experiences. And I pray that He will use the healing biblical truths that released me from the pain and resentful feelings that kept me from being a whole woman.

If a woman's situation is in the past, I urge her to forgive her former husband for everything. It is not without good reason that Jesus taught, "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be

condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven" (Luke 6:37, NIV).

"As long as you harbor anger, bitterness, and resentment toward your husband," I tell the women, "you will be hurting yourself and your children, and be unable to get on in a wholesome way with your new life. In your mind you will stay an abused, defensive, and inferior-feeling person. If possible, find a qualified counselor to help you work through and release those harmful thoughts and feelings. This will free you to forgive your husband, and allow God to heal you completely."

If another woman has been involved, I tell the abused wife to do as I did—forgive the other woman also. Forgiving others clears the air between us and God and makes it possible for Him to help and guide us.


If a woman is still in her abusive situation, I advise her to get herself and her children out of it. Immediately! They're both in too much danger, and I don't believe God wants a woman to stay in such a violent environment. Furthermore, the children are in great danger of becoming abusers themselves. After one occasion on which my husband abused me, my little boy came over and twisted my arm. When I asked him why he was doing that, he answered, "Daddy does it." Abused women need to learn to say no, set boundaries, and protect themselves. They also need to learn that they deserve to be treated with respect. They do not need to tolerate abuse.

I also counsel women not to be too hasty in filing for divorce because crises and major decisions do not blend well. Divorce, too, should only be a last resort after all else fails.

Many women who are in an abusive marriage are anxious to get out and start dating someone else, but they're not ready for that. They first need to find their own identities, learn to smile again, feel human again, and not think of themselves as someone who deserves to be battered. They also need to restore relationships with their families. More importantly, they need to seek God's guidance, not only regarding their future, but to see if there was a deep-seated reason why they were attracted to an abusive partner in the first place. If there was such a reason, and they don't face and resolve it, they are just as likely to be attracted to another abusive person (he, too, can be very charming at first).

Children of abused women have endured so much horror in their homes, but they need to know there was love in the marriage at one time—if there was. I finally realized that I had robbed my children by not telling them of the love their father and I once had together. This is something I now pass on to other women.

How glad I am that God saved me from myself and that He is now using this life I almost threw away to help other suffering women!

Gayle Garner is a pen name. All names in this article have been changed to protect identities. 

The Key To Living With a

CONTROL

by Les Parrott

Do you know someone who flips out if you sit on their perfectly-made bed? Do you know someone who takes credit for

your successes, or always gets his way? Do you know someone who loses it because one of his pens is missing from the pen jar on his desk, or knows exactly



Les Parrott, Ph.D.

how everything should be done and has no problem telling you? Do you know someone who invades your privacy? Do you know someone who is so organized she would heckle Martha Stewart for being sloppy?

Psychologists have called it a “will to conquer,” an “instinct to master,” a “manipulative drive,” a “striving for superiority,” and an “urge toward competence.” It doesn’t really matter what you call it, if you’ve ever been repeatedly roped into somebody else’s ways of doing and being—you simply know that you’ve been “had” by a Control Freak.

The self-test on page seven will help you assess just how controlling that Control Freak is. You can see the interpretation of your test scores at the end of this article.

Whatever your score, you have good reason to be hopeful. After many months of gathering the latest and most reliable studies on coping with Control Freaks, I’m optimistic about making significant improvement with even the most diehard control addicts. *It boils down to understanding your choices.* In India they are said to catch monkeys by setting out a small box with a tasty nut in it. There is an opening in the box that is large enough for the monkey to reach in his outstretched



THE CONTROL FREAK SELF-TEST

by Les Parrott, Ph.D.

hand, but too small for him to withdraw the hand once he's clutched the nut. When the monkey has grabbed the prize, he must either let go of it and regain his freedom or keep hold of it and stay trapped. Unenlightened little creatures that they are, most monkeys hold onto the nut, making it easy for hunters to pick them up—box, nut, monkey, and all.

Hard as it is to admit, you and I have been known to get caught in the same kind of trap. Instead of a nut, however, we are refusing to let go of money, a hobby, a friendship, a promotion, or even a job. Now, one might argue that the person who puts the goody in the box (our boss, for example) controls the ones (us) who grab it. But is that really so? If we were willing to let go of the goodies (a pay raise or a promotion), we could scamper back into the forest unharmed and uncontrolled. The choice is ours. I'm not saying the choice is always easy, but the choice is ours.

Just last week while speaking to a group in Nashville, I ran into a woman whom I had known for a couple of months when she worked at a firm where I was doing some business. "Nancy, how are you?" I asked. "I've been wondering what has happened to you." She then began to pour out her story of working in an office of Control Freaks and eventually said to me, "I decided I didn't have to put up with that kind of pressure." She quit her job without anything else in the wings. It was a step of faith but she eventually landed on her feet. She is now working in a similar job minus the personalities that made her previous one so miserable, *and she loves it.*

Nancy, unlike the monkeys in India, made a positive choice that gave her freedom. You, too, can make a choice. It may not be to quit a job or leave a relationship, but it may be a choice to be treated differently.

Yes, you can choose to be treated differently. I know a husband who has been married more than a ➡

If you sense that you are living with or are related in some way to a Control Freak, the following test will help you better understand the degree of this person's control. So take a moment to answer these 25 questions as honestly as you can by circling either Y for yes or N for no. Take as much time as needed.

- Y N When I hear the words "Control Freak," I can immediately identify a person in my life.
- Y N When I hear the words "Control Freak," I have more than one person who comes to mind. (If you think of more than one person, do the test for each one.)
- Y N Most other people, not just I, would describe this person as picky, critical or controlling.
- Y N I find myself doing things I would never do if I did not feel pressured by this controlling person.
- Y N This person would rather give orders than take them.
- Y N This person's day is ruined if you sit on his or her perfectly-made bed or do something similar to mess up his or her neatly ordered world.
- Y N I sometimes feel used by this person.
- Y N This person hangs onto a project forever because he or she wants it to be perfect.
- Y N This person loves order (don't even think about touching things on his or her desk) and established routines (watch out if his or her plans have to be rearranged).
- Y N This person's controlling tendencies cause others to feel anxious, and even alienated altogether.
- Y N On more than one occasion I have felt that this person was snooping around where he or she didn't belong.
- Y N This person feels most comfortable when he or she is in charge.
- Y N Like a bulldog, this person holds onto the way he or she wants things done.
- Y N This person can be indecisive because he or she continues to mull an idea around and puts everything else on hold.
- Y N If something isn't exactly to this person's liking, he or she reflexively points it out—even at the risk of embarrassing others.
- Y N Most people—at least at first—are surprised by this person's demanding style.
- Y N This person has his or her way of doing things and almost never budes.
- Y N Hardly anyone would describe this person as flexible and easygoing.
- Y N If this person does give into another's idea, he or she doesn't fully jump on board with it.
- Y N If there is the slightest thing out of place, this person will find it.
- Y N Once this person decides on something, it is settled; all other options cease to exist.
- Y N It seems that winning an argument is more important to this person than finding the best solution.
- Y N If this person doesn't get what he or she wants, you can count on a good display of anger, pouting or the silent treatment.
- Y N While driving a car, this person would rather get lost than ask for directions.
- Y N Most others conclude that for the sake of peace, they should comply with what this person wants.

Scoring

Total the number of Yes answers and multiply by four:

Total Yes answers = ____ x 4 = score ____

Turn to page eight for the interpretation of your score.

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decade to an energetic woman who is vigilant about controlling their social calendar.

Not only does she schedule dinner parties in their home most months, she volunteers for countless civic events and activities. She coordinates the school auction. She's in charge of their church's bake sale, and on and on. This all was fine with her easy going husband until her frenetic pace kept him from having time for himself. In a counseling session he confided: "She tells me where and when I'm supposed to be someplace most evenings and on most weekends. And if I don't follow through, she lays on the guilt. It's driving me nuts." He went on to tell me that he'd given up golf and other things he'd enjoyed for years because of her controlling ways. This weary man now sat in my office, depressed and contemplating his own life. If he was going to hold onto his marriage, he thought, he would never enjoy his freedom. He saw this as his only option—to live in misery or to let go of his marriage altogether.

Well, it didn't take long for us to come up with other choices this man could make—options that gave him

“Well, it didn't take long for us to come up with other choices this man could make—options that gave him back his freedom and allowed him to enjoy the marriage he truly cherished.”

back his freedom and allowed him to enjoy the marriage he truly cherished. He started simply but clearly saying *no* to many of his wife's demands. He told her, "I think it's great that you can do everything you do, but I need more time to relax." Then he started playing golf again. Initially his wife became angry and intensified her pressure. But once she saw that he meant business, she gradually started to ease up. Today, in fact, he is one of the most happily married men I know. And it is the result of making some difficult choices even though it meant temporarily taking the consequences of an angry spouse! But his courage to stand up and do what he knew was best eventually paid off.

The point is that *no one can actually control you—only God is in true control*. A person may coerce, seduce, cajole, threaten, and tempt. They can throw tantrums, cry, walk out, or fire you, but they cannot control in the sense of actually making you do something against your will. God doesn't even do that. Leon Morris put it well when he said, "God has no need for marionettes."

It all comes down to the courage to make your own choices. You may *feel* that you are being controlled, but look carefully. Do you have absolutely no option but to be pressured into behaving contrary to your own desires? Or are you like the monkey, feverishly holding on-

to your "prize" because you won't give up what you believe is your only option for getting something you want?

Let me assure you, there are many options for coping with controlling people. In fact, in many cases, you may be able to escape the annoyance of control without having to give up whatever it is you are holding onto. Not even a blissful monkey enjoys this pleasure.

Scoring and Interpretation

How well did you do on the test? A total score of 100 is possible and the scale that follows will help you interpret your results.

0-24 *Count your blessings.* Relative to most other people, you have very few, if any, controlling people in your life. On second thought, this also raises a caution flag. Perhaps *you* are controlling the people around *you*. I suggest you muster up your courage and ask two or three people who know you well and whose opinion you trust if they ever see you as controlling.

25-49 *You know what it's like to be with a Control Freak, but you're certainly not in the worst of situations.* You probably have a few isolated incidents of finding yourself with someone who is argumentative, nit-picky, invasive, or obnoxious. Fortunately, this person is not consistently controlling or at least you don't have to deal with him or her on a regular basis. Still, you can benefit from some fresh approaches to making your interactions with controlling people better.

50-74 *You have your work cut out for you.* Whether the Control Freak in your life is found at work, at home or somewhere else, you are going to need every tool you find to regain some of the control you have lost to this person. You will also want to take a good look at why you are allowing another person to gain so much control over you and your life.

75-100 *Unfortunately, you are up against a full-throttle, no-holds-bar Control Freak addict.* You are dealing with someone (maybe more than one) whose craving for control is never satisfied. As a result, you are going to need to give yourself fully to finding new ways of coping with this person and changing the way you interact with him or her. Give yourself ample time to study and reflect upon the personalized strategy you will design as a result of your reading. You may even want to augment your reading with some sessions from a support group or a counselor who can coach you through this important process.

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right. Dad, I need encouragement, too!”

As he finished speaking these words he snuggled back into my arms as if the opponent had been tackled once and for all and he could again connect with his Dad.

I wept as I heard his words because I heard my son's pain. My worst fears weren't realized, but perhaps this was an injury more painful than those I had imagined—the pain of having a father who made you feel like you're not good enough.

Little had I realized that his anguished pain was the result of something I, his own father, had done. It wasn't some bad guy in the world. It was in his own “safe place”—his own home. I was the source of his pain. He was right and I knew it. In all of my efforts to be a good coach, I wanted to make sure I did not treat my son with more favor than the other players. In doing so, I unknowingly went to the other extreme and treated him with more demands and harshness than the others. He had a higher standard to measure up to—an impossible one, I began to discover.

I held my son close and quietly whispered to him, “You're right, Son. I haven't encouraged you as much as the other players, and I am sorry. I am grateful you told me. Now I know how you feel, so I can change my way of coaching you. I will do my best to encourage you more. And if I ever blow it like that again, I hope you will tell me.” We tightened our arms around one another and nestled quietly, not wanting even words to intrude into the love and sadness we were sharing.

I have prayed over and reflected upon that encounter many times since. My son's tears weren't the result of a rough practice. They were from mistakes I had made. This was the middle of my fourth year coaching his team, and I have wept over

how long he may have felt this way and how I never saw it, either in him or in me. I have resolved to be different. I finished the season in which I blew it only one other time. In the middle of a practice my son nodded to me and reminded me with just a whisper, “Encouragement, Dad.” I nodded back, we smiled, and I redirected my focus onto just that—encouragement!

I learned several lessons from my son's honest communication. One was being reminded of how important it is that I, as a father, encourage my children—whether on the athletic field or in the privacy of our own home. Colossians 3:21 says, “Do not embitter your children or they will become discouraged.” Ephesians 6:4 says, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children, instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” It seems to me that to have unfair expectations or to fail to encourage our children is to provide a ripe opening to embitter, discourage, and exasperate them. To make demands that do not match their capabilities is to treat them as though we don't really know them. As a result, our children feel injured and discouraged by our insensitivities to whom they are and what they feel.

God's Word gives a wonderful illustration of encouragement in Romans 7 and 8: Paul laments his own struggle to behave rightly: he does what he does not want to do and doesn't do what he wants to do, and he feels wretched. But then he is encouraged by God's response to him. “There is therefore, no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” Paul's failures are met with grace, forgiveness, and a tenacious love by God. He tells Paul

there is nothing he can do to separate himself from God's love.

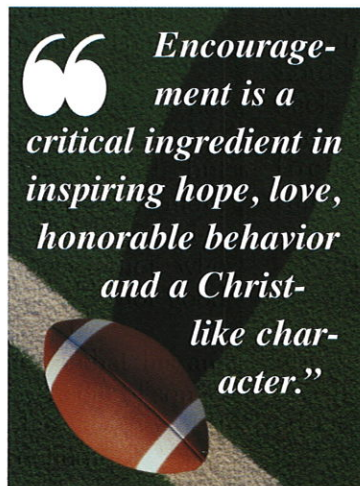
Wow! What an encouragement! When I blunder as a Dad, God says to me, “Wade, I love you because I love you and there is nothing you can do to change that!” That kind of

encouragement inspires me to want to live differently, to parent with more care and attentiveness, and to equally encourage my own son when he is struggling to learn a new skill.

God tells us to “encourage one another daily...so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness” (Hebrews

3:13). Encouragement helps us avoid becoming callused to sin. It actually makes us more sensitive to our own wrongdoings and more tender toward others. The writer of Hebrews adds, “let us encourage one another...” (10:25) as a way to “...spur one another on toward love and good deeds” (10:24). Clearly, encouragement is a critical ingredient in inspiring hope, love, honorable behavior and a Christ-like character. As a Christian coach, surely God desires for me to inspire this character in all my players, including my own son. He has modeled for me a key tool for developing character (encouragement), and He has sent a messenger (my own son) to remind me of His desires for me as a coach and as a father. May I be found faithful in embracing His loving encouragement for me and extending it to those around me.

Wade Wahl, Psy.D., licensed psychologist, Marriage and Family therapist, has been providing counseling services for the past 18 years. He is also a Professor of Psychology at Northwestern College in Minnesota. He and his wife, Char, have been married 22 years and have two children.





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L e L i n s o n s Love

by **Barbara Curtis**

I call Jonathan “my little extra” because he has an extra chromosome—you know, that extra one on the 21st pair that causes such panic in parents-to-be. Down syndrome, it’s called—named after the doctor who first “discovered” it. Trisomy-21 in modern genetics—like I said: third chromosome, 21st pair.

Expecting my eighth child in 1992, I’d prepared my own announcements with a verse from Elizabeth Barrett Browning: “God’s gifts put man’s best dreams to shame.” That’s how I had felt about each of my children. And that’s how I felt when they put this new little baby in my arms and I could see he looked—well, just a little different.

My husband said we’d name him Jonathan. Only after we sent the announcements did we learn his name meant “Gift of God.”

There were many things I learned “only after.” Life got pretty hectic because Jonathan came close to dying. With the same care accorded a crown prince, the medical community mobilized to meet his needs. Only after Jonathan recovered did I learn that until recently, many Down syndrome children were denied lifesaving procedures—sometimes even by their parents. Only after did I learn that nine out of ten babies prenatally diagnosed with Down syndrome lose their lives in abortion.

I was grateful that Jonathan was born at a time when the medical profession—at least once he was out of the womb—respected his worth as a person as much as they would any of my other children.

Experts told us we would need to work a little extra to help Jonathan realize his potential. What they didn’t know was how God would use Jonathan to help us realize our own.

I remember us all encircling him, cheering as he ever-so-slightly lifted his wobbly head. We taught him how to sit, how to crawl, how to feed himself—the things other children learn without much help at all. My

children grew more caring and compassionate every day. His presence built a stronger unity in our family.

That’s why we all understood when one day my son Matthew said, “Wouldn’t the world be a better place if everyone had

a brother with Down syndrome?”

Yes, parenting him has been more of a challenge, but it has also been a blessing. With the challenges have come an expansion of my heart. It seems that everyone who spends a little time with Jonny is a little better for the experience.

Remember when cynics presented a blind man to Jesus and asked who had sinned, the man or his parents, thereby causing the blindness. Jesus answered that neither had sinned, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life” (John 9:1-3 NIV).

I suppose most have understood this to mean that the work of God would be displayed when Jesus healed the man’s blindness. I see it differently. After all, Jesus did not say the work of God would be displayed in his healing. He said it was displayed “in his life.”

That blind man was once a baby and a growing boy. For years his needs had had an impact on his family, his friends, his teachers, his community. Surely the work of God was being revealed each day in the growing compassion and wisdom in those who might otherwise have had no reason to give up their own self-centeredness.

God doesn’t waste a life He has given. I know as surely as I know each dimple on Jonathan’s cheeks that God has used that 21st chromosome to give me more than I would ever have asked for. He offered me a little extra. I’m thankful for that.

© 1999 Barbara Curtis. Barbara is a columnist for the Amy Foundation Syndicate, Lansing, Michigan. Her freelance articles have appeared in more than 40 publications. She is the mother of 11 children (9 still at home), including three with Down syndrome (two through adoption) and grandmother of five. See Barbara’s web site at www.barbaracurtis.com.

Coping With The Loss of A Loved One

by Susan J. Zonnebelt-Smeenge and Robert C. DeVries



Loss is inevitable. We lose ball games, money through bad investments, pets by accident or disease, and our own strength as we age. Many of these losses also come with pain, deep emotional pain. This is especially true for a married person whose wife or husband dies. We may try to avoid this emotional pain, but we soon discover that it has a way of pressing in on us. Avoiding the pain of loss is impossible. It is also unhealthy.

As people who have experienced the death of a spouse, we know that the loss of someone we love is one of the most emotionally and spiritually traumatic events one can face. We form deep attachments, then death tears these relationships apart. Loss of a loved one throws us into a period of grief which involves everything we are: our bodies, emotions, behaviors, thought patterns, and spiritual life. As much as we may want to avoid

the unpleasantness of grief, these normal responses simply cannot be avoided. We can temporarily minimize the intensity of the pain by distracting ourselves, throwing ourselves back into the “normal” routines of life, or finding someone else to quickly fill the vacancy in our lives caused by our loss. But that relief only lasts for awhile. Facing the pain of loss head-on is the only way of *Getting to the Other Side of Grief*.

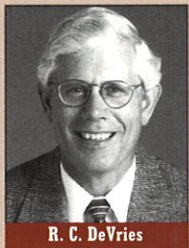
This is the title we chose for our recently published book. It conveys the notion that healing from the emotional pain of loss is an achievable goal—but that we have to face it to get to the other side.

So why do some people get stuck? Why does it seem that some people never get over their grief? Because grief is a painful process! But sometimes our society and even churches promote myths about it that make the process harder. Here

are facts about grief that can help guide you through the process.

1. Grief Work Is Necessary.

Christians need to grieve just as much as non-believers need to grieve. Although having faith in Christ provides a solid foundation for both life and death, Christians do not escape the normal reactions of confusion, anger, frustration and loneliness. As the Bible says in I Thessalonians 4:13, “Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.” Our faith gives us certainty for eternity and strength during times of trauma. But faith cannot and should not be used to avoid the reality of grief. Grief work is necessary to reach a healthy adjustment after the death of a spouse. Grief work implies an *active, intentional process* that defies the popular notion that grieving “just takes time.” Someone whose spouse has died inherits a new “job” – a task of attacking his or her grief in order to discern the new direction and goal Christ has for that person’s life.



R. C. DeVries



S. J. Zonnebelt-Smeenge

2. Resolution of Grief and Pain Can Occur.

Our definition of resolution, which is based on our professional and personal experiences, is that a widowed person has “resolved” the grief when he/she no longer feels the pain and intense emotional responses associated with the spouse’s death. Resolution does *not* mean forgetting the person or forgetting the emotions one had in that relationship. Resolution does mean that the pain and intense emotional responses have been moved into one’s memory and no longer affect the person’s life today.

3. Length of Time for Grieving Varies Within an Outer Boundary.

That grief should or can be completed within a certain length of time is another myth that plagues those who are bereaved. Most people understand that at least one year is required as a minimum to experience all the “firsts” such as birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, and the like. Research seems to indicate, however, that individual differences are common. Various factors affect the length and nature of the grieving process such as the surviving spouse’s personality, how previous losses were handled, and the nature of the marital relationship itself. Taking two or even three years to reach the other side of grief is not unusual. Do recognize, however, that there needs to be some gradual decrease in the emotional intensity of one’s grief over the course of a few years. If this doesn’t occur, a referral from a professional specializing in grief work is highly advisable.

4. Types of Death Are Different – Not Better or Worse.

Sometimes we tend to compare which type of death may be most or least painful. Which is the hardest to bear? But the myth that one type of death is more difficult or painful than another needs to be disputed. No death is easy. All are extremely

difficult and challenging to work through. They are all different in some way, each presenting their own unique problems. Recognize the differences but avoid making comparisons in terms of harder or easier.

5. Anticipatory Grief Does Not Decrease Grief Work.

Another myth that we challenge is the notion that a death which is anticipated decreases the time and intensity of the grief after a loved one dies. As persons who knew our spouses were dying, we recognize that our grief was still deep and devastating. Knowing that your spouse is dying may allow you to make financial, family, or funeral arrangements. Such knowledge may allow you time to work through troublesome issues in your relationship which may reduce the guilt or shock following the death. But we do not believe there is any way prior to death to anticipate how terribly painful grief is. Whether or not one knows that death is coming, grief is still grief for everyone—regardless of the circumstances.

6. Life After the Death of a Spouse Can Be Equally Good or Better.

There is “the other side of grief,” a place where the pain of the loss is gone and a new, exciting beginning becomes visible. We believe in order to reach that place at the end of the grief journey, a widowed person will need to accomplish certain tasks of grieving. Those tasks can be summarized as:

- Recognize and accept the fact that his or her partner has died and is unable to return.
- Allow the bereaved to experience all the feelings associated with the loss.
- Find a place for memories of the deceased spouse which honors what the couple had together but also provides room for the surviving spouse to move on.
- Adjust to life as a single person by deciding who one is as an indi-


vidual without his or her partner.

- Reinvest in life according to one’s own personal desires and interests.

Working at these tasks helps the widowed person move into another phase of life – a phase which brings new interests and opportunities.

Given time and effort, those who are widowed can eventually get to the other side of grief. They can come to a point where the pain of the loss no longer controls them. They discover that hope is the central message. The Bible promises new beginnings. Growth and new joy can rise out of suffering. God entrusts His children with a new opportunity through the death of a spouse, and they have the responsibility and privilege of using this new beginning wisely. No, they did not ask for it, and they certainly didn’t want it. But the new beginning comes. Those who are widowed can trust that God through Christ will give them a new sense of purpose and a deeper relationship with Him.

If you have been widowed, give yourself time to work through your loss and pain. But don’t stop there. Give yourself the freedom to truly live and love again. When you do that, you have moved to the other side of grief.

Susan J. Zonnebelt-Smeenge, R.N., Ed.D. is a clinical psychologist at Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services in Grand Rapids, MI. Robert C. De Vries, D.Min, Ph.D. is Professor of Church Education at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI. This article is adapted from their book, *Getting to the Other Side of Grief: Overcoming the Loss of a Spouse* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 1998). Each of the authors experienced the death of their former spouses following extended illnesses. They now speak extensively at professional conferences and conduct training workshops for those who minister to bereaved persons. They recently married and reside in Grand Rapids, MI. 

Marriage and

by **Karen Johnson Zurheidi**

My husband once married a famous actress. And I got to be there for the occasion! You see, my husband is a pastor, so he marries lots of people, and I attend many of his weddings! I've heard countless sets of wedding vows—many traditional, some a bit different.

One of the contemporary phrases my husband offers couples composing their vows, in place of "for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health..." is "through all the changing seasons of life..." I like that seasonal image, for in 23 years of marriage, my husband and I have seen a few seasons come and go.

Time brings different seasons to a marriage. Simply growing older causes change. How many of us can expect to look or act the same on a 25th or 50th anniversary as on our wedding day? For better and for worse, we change.

Children bring many seasons to our marriages. After 11 years of "just the two of us," bringing home a baby was an adjustment! And as our children entered different seasons of their lives, so did we. Eventually we will experience the empty nest. Perhaps we will see our children marry and make us grandparents someday.

Changes in employment—who is working and who is not, how much income is available, a new job in a different city—all usher in new seasons in a marriage.

Educational pursuits and special projects are seasons unto themselves. The first half of our marriage included two masters' degrees and a doctorate. For others, there may be "seasonal" projects of building or remodeling a house or of learning a new trade or hobby.

Sooner or later, it's practically guaranteed that all marriages will also encounter some seasons of crises. Expected, but difficult seasons, are dealing with aging parents or learning to live without them. Unanticipated seasons like job loss, serious illness, or tragic death may force themselves into our lives. Our own first baby who

lived but a day brought an unnaturally dark season to our lives a dozen years ago.



Li


Nothing stays the same for long. And married people in particular encounter many changing seasons—for individuals and for our relationships. Whether the new seasons are welcome gifts or painful intruders, the challenge for a couple is to embrace change and allow it to strengthen rather than break their relationship.

Growing Together or Drifting Apart

People who divorce for "irreconcilable differences" presumably are not so different from each other. And



the Seasons of



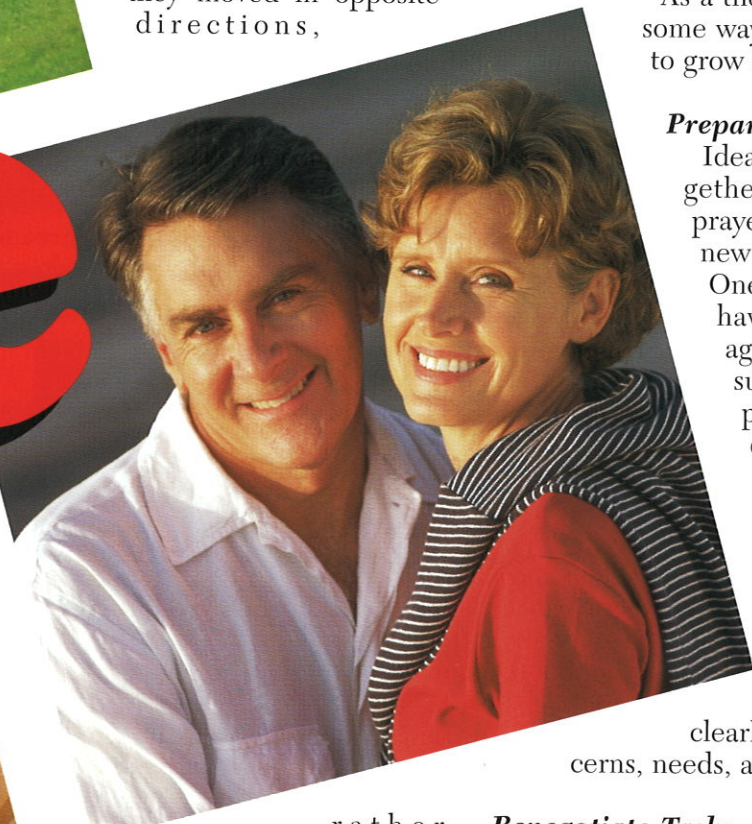
couples who “drift apart” were once “together.” Early in their relationships they considered themselves compatible or they would not have married. So what happened along the way? Seasons changed for one or both partners and they moved in opposite directions,

equally daunting circumstances solidify their marriage commitments and become stronger through the struggle.

The changing seasons we share with our spouses can be opportunities for marital growth. But without conscious effort and commitment, they can easily have the opposite effect. Growing together over time does not just happen for most of us.

As a therapist, wife, and mother, here are some ways my husband and I have learned to grow together instead of drifting apart:

Prepare



Ideally, a couple chooses change together, after mutual discussion and prayer. One spouse doesn't just accept a new job without consent of the other. One partner doesn't decide it's time to have a baby without the other's agreement. We will all have enough sudden crises for which we can't prepare. So whenever there is the opportunity, couples should be prepared.

Express


Don't assume that your feelings about potential change are unimportant or that they are automatically understood by your spouse. Instead, state clearly your feelings, perceptions, concerns, needs, and personal perspectives.

Renegotiate Tasks

Remember that much of life consists of the small everyday stuff. Sometimes changing seasons require a shift in household responsibilities. When our new jobs had my husband home at 4:00 p.m. while I returned at 7:00, it made perfect sense for him to prepare supper most week nights.

Share Developing Feelings

Keep your mate informed along the way. Feelings are not stagnant. Share yours and seek to hear and understand those of your spouse. Don't let resentments build. ➡



rather than moving together on a single path.

We've all heard it said of an especially difficult situation that it will “make or break” a marriage. Parents of children with significant special needs are said to have an 80 percent chance of divorcing.

Parents of children who die also have an exceptionally high rate of divorce. Yet others facing

Renegotiate Some More

Stay flexible. Circumstances evolve. Marriage has responsibilities which can sap a couple of their joy if one partner carries an excessively heavy load. Be sensitive to your own needs, and empathic to those of your spouse.

Discover

Learn about yourself and your spouse as life unfolds. Some disappointing discoveries will require acceptance or forgiveness. Some wonderful ones will lead to new shared activities, deeper understanding, and a stronger, more joyful bond.

Play

Everything does not have to change! Remember what you loved to do together during earlier seasons, and enliven your marriage with those pleasures—or some new variation of them—now.

Pray

As changing life swirls around you, God is your constant, faithful companion, embracing you with everlasting, unconditional love, supporting you along the way. Together and individually, pray for yourself, your spouse, and your marriage.

Retreat

Sometimes change washes over us like a tidal wave. When that happens, we may need to back up and do some damage control. Getting back to basics can help. One tool for doing that is a marriage retreat that takes you away from stressful circumstances for a few days and helps you rediscover what you and your spouse have loved about each other. Such a “time out” can open up communication when harried and difficult circumstances have closed the door. You may be surprised how a few simple, basic renewed understandings and renegot-


tations can make a difference in this season of your marriage.

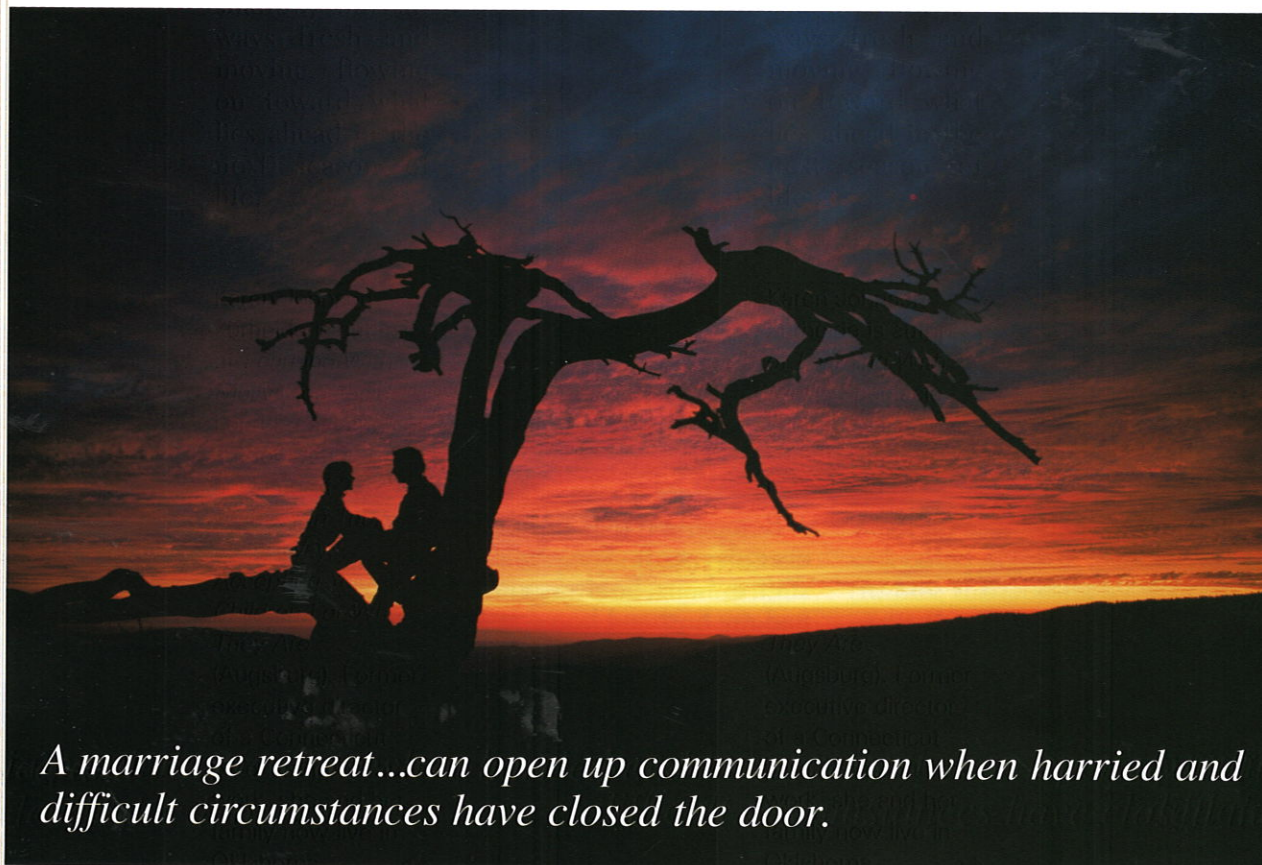
Change has the amazing potential of drawing couples closer as they rely on God and commit more fully to each other to manage its challenges.

No, I’m not who I was 23 years ago when I said my wedding vows. And neither is my husband. Hardly! The changing seasons have changed us both. But with God’s unfailing grace, through the years it has caused us to grow together even stronger. And we can look ahead with a confident hope that the future—with unforeseen seasons, both difficult and beautiful—will be much more than survivable.

May our marriages not dry up as an arid desert or stagnate like a putrid pond because we are unable to cope with the stresses of change. Rather, may they know the refreshing strength of an ever-changing mountain stream—sometimes fast, sometimes slow, wider or narrower,

deeper or more shallow, but always fresh and moving, flowing on toward what lies ahead in the next season of life.

Karen Johnson Zurheide is author of *Learning With Molly* (Spectacle Lane Press) and co-author with her husband of 23 years of *In Their Own Way*; *Accepting Your Children For Who They Are* (Augsburg). Former executive director of a Connecticut parent-support network, she and her family now live in Oklahoma. 



A marriage retreat...can open up communication when harried and difficult circumstances have closed the door.

Missionary Fired for Helping the Poor

In one of the best-kept secrets in recent Christian missions, a small La Habra (California) based organization leads an evangelism, discipleship and community development ministry that has seen approximately 20,000 Filipinos turn to Jesus Christ and begin the process of becoming Christian disciples.

Gene Tabor, President of REACH Ministries, leads the organization's 11 career missionaries, seven national staff, and approximately 40 self-supporting lay workers who regularly minister in 21 locations throughout the Philippines, India, and Hong Kong. Sixty percent of the lay staff

have either master's or doctoral degrees and

most are working with university students.

REACH has creatively merged its objective of serving the poor with its desire to impact an entire nation by targeting faculty and students at Philippine graduate universities where traditionally poor but gifted students receive scholarships for their graduate training. By discipling an average of 1,000 new converts each year and following up with them as they enter their careers, REACH has seen a large number of converts take influential leadership positions in government, industry, and education while still serving as lay staff for the discipleship-making mission organization.

Teody Solsoloy, converted to Christ while a student at the University of South Mindinao, is now a research scientist and faculty member at the Cotton Research Institute in Batak, Ilocos Norte, a ten-hour bus ride north of Manila. His wife, Ida, also a research scientist, was named one of the 10 most outstanding women in the Philippines in 1996 for developing an organic pesticide to control insect infestation in cotton and other agricultural crops. Together, the Solsoloys are the REACH ministry team leaders at the Mariano Marcos University. One

of REACH'S creative community outreaches is making small loans to the very poor to enable them to begin small home-based businesses to support their families.

Gene Tabor hasn't always been involved in such a holistic ministry. He and his wife, Helen, a special education teacher in El Monte, California, originally went to the Philippines with a Christian evangelistic ministry. But when Tabor started helping poor Filipinos to develop small self-supporting farming and business operations so he

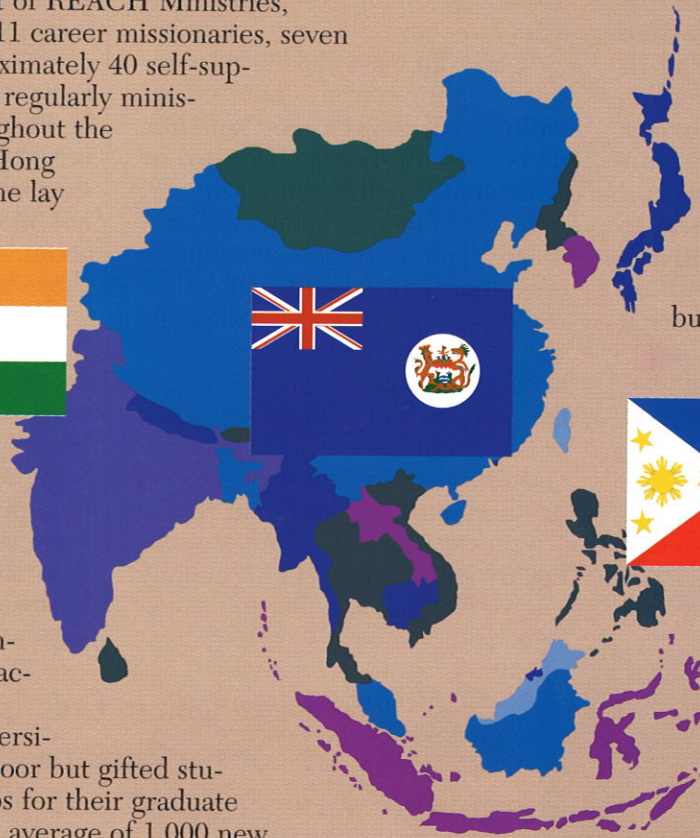
could minister to their economic needs as well as their spiritual ones, he

soon found himself out of favor with the organization's leadership. They thought Tabor was wasting valuable time that could be spent evangelizing, so they

told him to either quit helping the poor or give up his position in the organization. Tabor thought he was following Jesus' command to serve the poor, so he left and began REACH Ministries.

Twenty-five years of fruitful, holistic discipleship-making ministry and 20,000 new Christian believers have shown that Tabor was right. We don't have to choose between evangelism and economics. True discipling impacts people in every area of their lives.

One of the strategic ministries of the Narramore Christian Foundation is to provide Christian counseling and training services to missionaries and national Christian workers around the world. NCF recently sponsored an intensive training seminar on interpersonal relationships for the national staff of REACH Ministries in the Philippines.



Hope for Borderline Personality Disorders

by Bruce Narramore

Question: I am a single male, age 45, who is presently on disability. I have been diagnosed by a psychiatrist as having a primary dysthymia second to a borderline personality disorder. What can you tell me about borderline personality disorder? I understand it is very hard to treat. Can you recommend any books about the disorder and any counselor in my area that specializes in it? Thank you.

Dear Mr. B.T.,

Thanks for your letter sharing your struggles and diagnoses of dysthymia and borderline personality disorder. Your letter reflects a high level of desire and commitment to work on these problems and that is the crucial starting point.

Before commenting on borderline personality disorders, let me make a couple of observations about your dysthymia. Dysthymia, and other levels of depression, can now generally be treated quite well by good psychotherapy, antidepressant medications, or a combination of the two. Since your difficulties are strong enough to disable you at this time, and since you are working with a psychiatrist, I assume that you are receiving medication for your depression, and I encourage you to continue.

Medication for your depressed mood, however, will not impact the

underlying borderline personality disorder. The diagnosis of borderline personality disorder includes a wide range of symptoms that usually involves several of the following: unstable and even chaotic relationships (shifting from intense and idealistic feelings toward another, to feelings of hatred, disregard or devaluation of that same person), serious mood shifts, fear of abandonment (bringing on an intense effort to avoid being alone), difficulty controlling angry outbursts, self-destructive behaviors (including things like substance abuse, sexual promiscuity, suicidal attempts, or dangerous risk-taking behaviors), and persistent feelings of emptiness or boredom. Underlying these symptoms are often the lack of a healthy sense of personal identity or a solid acceptance of oneself.



Bruce Narramore Ph.D.

“A personal faith in God can be a major source of strength, encouragement and support as you work through difficult issues such as the ones you are facing.”

The symptoms of borderline personality disorder grow out of longstanding personality patterns, and do not change quickly or easily. There has been a great deal of progress, however, in our understanding of borderline personality disorders and our ability to successfully treat people suffering from them.

Effective treatment requires a well-trained therapist who is able to help patients work through their in-

tense feelings and, sometimes, chaotic reactions. It also requires the therapist him/herself to be able to tolerate these strong, chaotic feelings and the emptiness or depression beneath them because those feelings and reactions have to be lived through and resolved during the therapy hour in the relationship with the therapist. They cannot, in other words, just be “talked about.” Patients only learn to reshape longstanding styles of coping with pain when the therapist is able to allow the patient’s strong feelings and relational style to be lived out in therapy without being threatened by them.

Successful therapy also requires a therapist who is able to set clear boundaries for the patient rather than allowing himself or herself to be manipulated or giving in to the patient’s strong emotional demands.

In short, the therapy can be difficult and take a long while, but with a strong commitment on the part of the patient and a well-trained therapist, major growth and changes can take place.

You asked about a book on borderline personality disorders, and fortunately, there is an excellent one. It does not have a distinctive Christian perspective, but it does give a clear and thorough discussion of many of the symptoms, dynamics, and treatment issues facing people with borderline personality disorders. It is entitled, *I Hate You—Don’t Leave Me*. It is authored by Jerold Kreisman and Hal Straus and published by Avon

books. The title sums up one of the core conflicts of borderline personalities—badly craving love and acceptance but being easily wounded and turning on loved ones in anger. I highly recommend this extremely helpful book.

I also notice that you did not mention having a personal relationship with God. Although Christians are by no means exempt from the whole range of mental and emotional problems, a personal faith in God can be a major source of strength, encouragement, and support as you work through difficult issues such as the ones you are facing. If you do not already have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, I would encourage you to read the book of John in the New Testament and talk with a pastor or Christian friend who could help you in your spiritual walk.

Thank you again for writing and sharing with me. I will pray that you will find an excellent therapist who can help and encourage you to follow through on the long, hard work ahead. If you do, you will be deeply rewarded with a much stronger and more settled sense of self along with a significant, lasting relationship with God and with others.

Your Questions Answered

If you have a question for Dr. Narramore, please address it to:

Ask Dr. Narramore

Narramore Christian Foundation
250 W. Colorado Blvd., Suite 200,
Arcadia, CA 91007

Fax: (626) 821-8409
Email: ancf@msn.com

Touching the World

Some people slow down during summers, but not the staff and associates of the Narramore Christian Foundation. Please pray for our staff and the many people they will be ministering to this summer.

Amsterdam — Dr. Richard Mohline, member of NCF's Board of Directors, will be ministering at the Amsterdam 2000 Conference for ten thousand pastors and evangelists from third world countries. The conference, sponsored by the Billy Graham Association, will be held July 28-August 10. Dr. Mohline will be consulting and counseling international pastors and evangelists who seek out personal guidance and support during the conference.

France — Dr. Keith Edwards and his wife, Ginny, will be ministering with Drs. Larry and Lois Dodds at a retreat for missionaries from throughout Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. The retreat/seminar will be held near Grenoble, France, at the facilities of the Greater Europe Mission.

Nairobi, Kenya — Dr. Nancy Duvall will be leading a team of three doctoral students in psychology from Rosemead School of Psychology, Biola University, to teach and consult with faculty and students at Daystar University, Kenya's main evangelical Christian University.

Kenya — Dr. Charles Chege, a Kenyan national who received his doctorate in psychology from Rosemead School of Psychology, will be conducting seminars for pastors and other Christian lead-

ers throughout Kenya. His wife, Winny, will be teaching an intensive course at the Regions Beyond School of Ministry.

Hong Kong — Kathy Narramore, wife of NCF president Dr. Bruce Narramore, will be a keynote speaker at the first conference on missionary member care ever to be sponsored by the Hong Kong Mission Association. Kathy will also be dialoguing with the mission leaders regarding selection procedures and various ways of supporting missionary families on the field to reduce the dropout rate of missionaries and strengthen the impact of their ministries.

Southern California — Drs. Bruce and Clyde Narramore will be ministering along with the staff of Barnabas International in our annual MK Reentry Program. This year we are anticipating more than 50 young adult missionary children, who are returning to the U.S. from overseas, to begin college. The MK's take vocational and personality tests, listen to insightful presentations on life in the U.S., discuss cross-cultural reentry issues, participate in small group discussions and counseling, while also enjoying a few of Southern California's recreational activities.

Thailand — Dr. Nancy Duvall will be teaching a two-week intensive course on member care for missionaries enrolled in Biola University's graduate extension program in Chiang Mai in August. The program is set up so that missionaries can receive additional training in Southeast Asia without having to return to the United States.

Vote For Me!

Dr. Clyde M. Narramore, founder of the Narramore Christian Foundation, has had a world-wide ministry for nearly 50 years. He is currently writing an intriguing book sharing many of his interesting experiences as a pioneer in the field of Christian psychology. For the next several issues, *Psychology For Living* will be running this feature giving Dr. Clyde's reflections and perspectives on a variety of experiences. —Editor

by Clyde M. Narramore

The 2000 political campaign is beginning to heat up along with the summer temperatures. In fact, it's just a little over 120 days to the election.

And how we vote is very important.

I began to get my first insights into politics when I was about eleven years old.



Dr. Clyde M. Narramore

It happened on a warm August evening in the small ranching community where I was raised in Arizona. I was surprised at the "large" crowd of 80 or so. But everybody in the area seemed to know about it.

State and county elections were coming up shortly, so candidates came to tell us why we should vote for them. The rally was held on our local school grounds. A big flatbed truck was the stage! I remember how it was decorated all around with red, white and blue bunting.

One at a time, the candidates stepped up a short ladder to the bed of the truck. And there they talked to us. Each candidate tried to convince us that he was the best one for the job. All the speeches seemed to follow a similar pattern. Each speaker usually started by cracking a joke, mentioning the summer heat, then would say something nice about our community before he started his spiel.

We were gathered around the truck sitting on the ground or on benches listening as though we could hardly wait for the next words of wisdom to fall from their lips! After all, this was a big event for our little community. However, we kids had another interest—we kept one eye on the big box near the truck. That's where the ice cream and cokes were!

There was a clear "pecking order" for the speakers. Those who were running for local office spoke first. Those running for county offices came second on the program. I especially liked the one running for the U.S. Senate. I liked the way he looked and spoke. In fact, the thought crossed my mind, *Maybe someday I can be a Senator. He probably gets to travel, and makes lots of money.* Interestingly, nine years later I had the privilege of working for a U.S. Senator!

Finally, the one running for governor spoke last. The weather was hot, terribly hot, as much as 110-120 degrees. But he slipped on his white coat just before getting up to speak. That impressed me. No one in our family owned a white coat, and seldom wore a coat of any kind. The weather dictated that!

This candidate, Governor Hunt, had no opponent. He had been governor for years and it was taken for granted that he would win again.


After all the speaking had run down, we kids made a beeline for the big box filled with ice cream bars and soft drinks. It was kept frozen by dry ice which was like magic to us. In fact, we got a big kick out of playing with the ice which was both cold and hot. I'm sure we were more interested in the dry ice and refreshments than the election!

Time passes and changes come. Little did I realize as a kid that someday I would have the opportunity to go to the White House myself, speaking to the staffs of several Presidents!

Looking back at it now, I wonder why those politicians would come to our little community where there was only a handful of people. I suppose one reason they did, was because in those days there weren't many more people in other places in Arizona! But I think there is an important lesson here. The politicians knew that if they could touch a few people at a time they could eventually be elected and make a difference. Most of us won't influence millions or even thousands. But if each of us reaches out to the 80 or so people around us, together we can make a difference.

These childhood experiences with elections were important. They showed democracy in action and they were proof that each one of us Americans is important and we can be proud of our country.

Now in 2000, the politicians are up and at it again. Not on flatbed trucks, but on television. Kids are no longer looking for the soft drinks and ice cream. But some large corporations and special interest groups are very interested in their own sweet deals.

And, praise God, we have the opportunity to cast our vote along with others, and thus help to determine the future of our great country! God bless America! 



Ruth E. Narramore

The Storm That Kept Them Safe

by Ruth E. Narramore

Edwin and Alice were a young couple in their early twenties when they felt God beckoning them to come to China as missionaries. Neither of them had ever traveled very far from New York and New Jersey where they had grown up. But they had dedicated their lives to the Lord and were now heading for the Orient taking their six-month-old baby daughter with them.

As they were saying their farewells to family and friends, Edwin and Alice asked this support group for their prayers. One specific request was that they would have a safe and smooth journey. After a train ride across the country to the west coast, they would be boarding the British ocean liner, the *Empress of Asia*, on which they would be sailing for two weeks before reaching the port of Shanghai. Since Alice had a problem with motion sickness, many prayers were raised in her behalf. They asked God to give this family a smooth trip—and a safe one.

The first two and a half days at sea were pleasant and uneventful. But by nightfall on the third day, all that had changed. The sky had become dark and foreboding, the winds howled fiercely while rain and hail pelted the ship unmercifully. They were in the midst of a violent ocean storm. The ship rocked, pitched, tossed, and rolled. Passengers were not faring well at all. In fact, every one—including the crew—was sick and nauseated. The only passenger who wasn't sick was the missionary couple's baby daughter. She seemed unfazed.

For everyone else, it was a miserable experience. The storm was unusually harsh and continued on for days. It cer-

tainly did not appear that God had answered the prayers of the folks back in Brooklyn who were asking God to grant Alice and Edwin a smooth, safe journey.

Oh, but God *was* answering the most important part of that prayer. He would keep them safe. And the storm was what He was using to accomplish that.

At long last the storm abated and the battered *Empress of Asia* limped into the port of Shanghai—*two days late!* From Shanghai the little family was scheduled to board a train that would take them to Tianfu in the Shantung Province. There Edwin and Alice were to work with a language tutor while helping in a Christian orphanage. But the storm had delayed their ship; consequently, they had missed connections with the train they were scheduled to be on.

Was the Lord really protecting them? He certainly was!

Because they had missed their train, they boarded the next one leaving for their destination.

This train was nothing like any they had ever experienced in the U.S.A. The cars resembled cattle cars with people herded in as closely as they could get them. Men were in one section of the train while women were in another. This meant that Alice and Edwin were not together and that Alice would have no help in carrying the baby and whatever supplies she might need. (The baby who had become seven months old while on board ship was lively and active—a real handful.) Fortunately, Alice was able to get a seat, although even that was far from comfortable since it consisted of no more than hard wooden boards, and the trip was scheduled to take two days.


As uncomfortable as it was, the train kept chugging along toward its

destination in the Shantung mountains. Then suddenly, somewhere around midnight, it screeched and jerked to a halt. There was no station, no town, no city near by. Yet the train stood still on its tracks and began blowing its whistle. No one knew what was wrong, but the whistle kept on blowing and blowing—a mournful sound echoing a warning throughout the mountains the whole night long, all the next day, and into the evening.

After awhile word began spreading throughout the train about what had happened. The Chinese talked excitedly among themselves. They appeared to be extremely nervous and upset. Alice sat there holding the baby, unable to understand a word that was being said. How she missed having her husband with her! With the mournful sound of its whistle blowing continually, the train waited almost 24 hours before continuing on its journey.

What had happened? The train that Edwin and Alice and their baby had originally been scheduled to take—and *would have been on* were it not for the horrendous storm that had delayed their ship—was derailed by bandits. Everyone was ordered off the train at gunpoint. Passengers were all marched into the mountains. A number of them were killed. But the new missionary couple and their baby were on the *next* train. They were safe!

Had God answered prayer? Indeed, He had. God had kept this little family safe from harm—even though it took an ocean storm to do it. God doesn't always answer prayer in the way we expect. But He *does* hear us and He watches over His own.

This is a true incident. You see, Edwin and Alice were my parents. And I was that baby. 

Living Memorials

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

✂ Clip out and return with your loving gift.

In Memory of:

Amount: _____
Given by: _____
Name: _____
Address: _____

Send acknowledgment to:

Name: _____
Address: _____

Mail to:

Narramore Christian
Foundation
P.O. Box 661900
Arcadia, CA 91066-1900

NCF LETTERS

Readers Respond

Dr. Clyde Narramore's "Reflections" column is sparking a lot of interest among our long-time readers. This month we decided to share a delightful response to Dr. CN's column.

Dear Dr. Narramore, I appreciate Dr. Bruce very much, but please don't you desert us. This world still needs the older generation of experienced, wise Christians.

I pray daily for people our age to be blessed and continue to be a blessing. And for the Lord to keep you going and leave you here because we still need you. Billy Graham is eighty years old and is still going.

Ken and I were both born on a farm, and I have also churned butter many times. I also went to a country school where we had a stovepipe. I got in lots of trouble in that school—cutting up too much! My girlfriend and I dug a hole and filled it with water so we could trap a certain boy and kiss him. The teacher fell in it! (Do I need help?)

I "trapped" Ken at nineteen and we have two sons, fifty-three and fifty-seven (30 in our extended family).

Reading how you started out reminds us of our early days. I worked in the office at the airport near Kirksville, Missouri from sunup until sun-

down for \$12 a week when Ken was in college. Thank God, we were saved in high school.

Hope you and your wife are enjoying good health.

—Mrs. Joan Nicks, Florida

Don't worry, Mrs. Nicks. Clyde and Ruth are in good health and active in NCF ministry every day! They won't desert you—or us. They love working side-by-side with Dr. Bruce and helping expand our outreach even more. —The Editor

I'll Be Sharing It For Sure

The March/April *LIVING* came today and I enjoyed it all, but especially your pages, Dr. Clyde. I'll be sharing it, for sure. I liked your column too, Ruth. Your last paragraph is so reassuring. Dick, I liked your comparison of no feelings to "a trombone with a stuck slide." Bruce, I liked your Easter message.

M.A., Iowa

More News and More Help

Thank you so much for the "new" *Psychology For Living*. We enjoy it very much. Your extra pages add up to more news and helps.

May God continue to use you in His service.

The Duerrsteins, Ontario, CANADA

Christian Psychology

I've enjoyed your min-

istry through the years. I like the Christian approach to *Psychology for Living*. At times I don't know what I'd do without you. Please keep the magazine coming.

M.F., California

Literature Needed

We thank you for all the prayers and material to help with problems that we have asked for. The literature has always been just what we have needed for that time. We know the Lord is leading you always in helping others. We continue to pray for you.

B. & J.P., Nebraska

Helped Raise Our Children

We have received your *LIVING* magazine and been supporters since the 1970s or before. You have helped us raise our children to be good Christian citizens—and you have been there to help us get through some hard times. May God grant you many more happy, healthy years as you continue in His service.

The Ott family, California

Through the Years

Just to let you know your work and writings through the years have been very helpful. We enjoy reading your magazine with its many interesting articles. Keep up the good work!

H.S., Washington

Compiled by
Eva Hallam Solberg

Learned Optimism Yields Health Benefits

People who learn to maintain an optimistic attitude may not only avoid depression, they may actually improve their physical health, according to a controlled study by the University of Pennsylvania.



The study shows that university freshmen who participated in a workshop on cognitive coping

skills reported fewer adverse physical problems and took a more active role in maintaining their health. They learned to dispute their chronic negative thoughts as well as learned social and work skills that can help avert depression.

Workshop participants also reported fewer health problems during the course of the workshop, and were more likely than control subjects to see a physician for maintenance or checkup rather than waiting until they became ill.

American Psychological Association

Managing Traumatic Stress

The intense anxiety and fear that often follow a disaster or some other traumatic event can be especially troubling for children. Some may regress and demonstrate younger behaviors such as thumb sucking

or bed wetting. Children may be more prone to nightmares and be afraid of sleeping alone.



Performance in school may suffer. Other changes in behavior patterns may include having more frequent tantrums, or withdrawing and becoming more solitary.

There are several things parents and others who care for children can do to help alleviate the emotional consequences of trauma, including the following:

Spend more time with your children and let them be more dependent on you during the months following the trauma. Physical affection is very comforting to those who have experienced trauma.

Provide nonverbal play experiences, such as drawing for younger children, to help relieve tension.

Encourage older children to speak with you, and with one another about their thoughts and feelings. Respond to questions in terms they can understand. Reassure them repeatedly that you care about them and that you understand their fears and concerns.

Keep regular schedules for activities such as eating, playing, and going to bed to help restore a sense of security and normalcy.

Some people are able to cope effectively with the emotional and physical demands brought about by a natural disaster or some other traumatic experience by using their own support systems. It is not unusual, however, to find that serious problems persist and continue to interfere with daily living. When children are plagued with prolonged reactions that disrupt their daily functioning, parents should consult with a trained and experienced mental health professional. These professionals work with individuals affected by trauma to help them find constructive ways of dealing with the emotional impact.

APA, How Therapy Helps