

PSYCHOLOGY FOR
LIVING

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1998

**SAFE
SURFIN'
ON THE
INTERNET**

**TALES OUT
OF SCHOOL**

**HOW TO BE A
SUCCESSFUL
FAILURE**

**THE AMERICAN
DREAM**

**HUMILITY:
THE UNWANTED
CHARACTER
QUALITY**



by Clyde M. Narramore

FINISHING THE COURSE

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR athletes are actively running and competing in various track meets. Thousands of others also are running in an effort to stay or get in shape.

But we who are Christians are running the most important race of all — **the race of life!**

The Bible has much to say about the way we run this race. In II Timothy 4:7 we read these words: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

In this epistle, the Apostle Paul addresses his close friend, Timothy. The final chapter of the book reaches a dramatic point as he admonishes Timothy to “preach the Word.” Paul goes on to challenge this young man with even more details about his commission: “Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (II Timothy 4:3, 4).

Paul then shares about his own ministry, telling Timothy, “I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.” Still speaking of himself, he goes on to say that he has “**fought the good fight,**” has “**finished the race,**” and has “**kept the faith**” (4:7).

One of the finest compliments that can be given a person who loves the Lord is that all through his (or her) Christian life, he has never been sidetracked. No one has gotten him off course. Regardless of tough times, he keeps on running the race and is determined to finish the course.

How sad it is to see a person who has trusted Christ as his Savior and has been following the Lord, only to later fall by the wayside. He has strayed off the course and is now struggling down a detour.

What causes this?

There are many reasons. Sometimes



there are personal problems. Jim, for example, was the Sunday School superintendent of a church. But eventually Jim began to drop out of the spiritual picture. Little by little, Jim slipped out of church and away from God’s blessings. He and his wife began having marital problems, but instead of seeking help, they sank deeper and deeper into their own misunderstandings and difficulties.

Sometimes people are lured off their spiritual track because they are greedy for money. Bill had that problem. In his twenties and early thirties he appeared to be one of the most promising Christian leaders on the American scene. But as he associated with people who were financially successful, he began to feel that he was losing out dollar wise. So he started dabbling in a number of things to make a fast buck. “My,” he told a Christian friend, “just think of all I could do for the Lord if I only had more ready cash!” What he should have said was, “My, what God could do through my life if I had a closer walk with Him.” As time went on, people noticed that Bill’s devotion to Christ had lagged. The last time I saw him he was still walking down a dubious side road.

One of the wisest verses in the Bible is “godliness with contentment is great gain” (I Timothy 6:6). When Paul told this to young Timothy, he followed this astute declaration with, “For we brought

nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.”

Many people have a problem with materialism. We snap on the television and see “beautiful” people who are inundated with a plethora of *possessions*. They have grander homes, fancier cars, and many more expensive gadgets than we do. It doesn’t take long before Satan gets people caught up in the make-believe world of *things*— a world which offers neither peace nor contentment.

Other powerful persuaders that can prevent us from running the course and finishing the race are close associations with people who are spiritually uncommitted. **Very little exerts more influence on a person than his associations with other people.**

It’s better to walk alongside a person who is humble and godly than to play “footsies” with an “in-crowd” that does not have the mind of Christ. “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6).

As you and I walk through life, we need to keep asking ourselves, *Am I on the right course? Am I living and sharing the faith? Am I consistently heading for the finish line?*

Staying on course begins by desiring more than anything else, a close walk with Jesus. Secondly, it involves the **regular reading of God’s Word and obeying His precepts.** “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). This must be followed by a **strong prayer life.** “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16). Staying in God’s path and finishing the course is encouraged as we **associate with godly people.**

Life offers no greater joy than daily walking with the Lord, faithfully serving Him, and resisting temptations that would get us off course. When we do this, in time we will finish the greatest race of all and win the highest of all prizes: *dwelling with Jesus for eternity!*

Clyde M. Narramore

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STAFF



Founder and President:
Dr. Clyde M. Narramore

Editor:

Ruth E. Narramore

Editorial Assistant and Staff Writer:

Eva Hallam Solberg

Art Director:

Donald Ensign

Photographer:

Benjamin Burnweit

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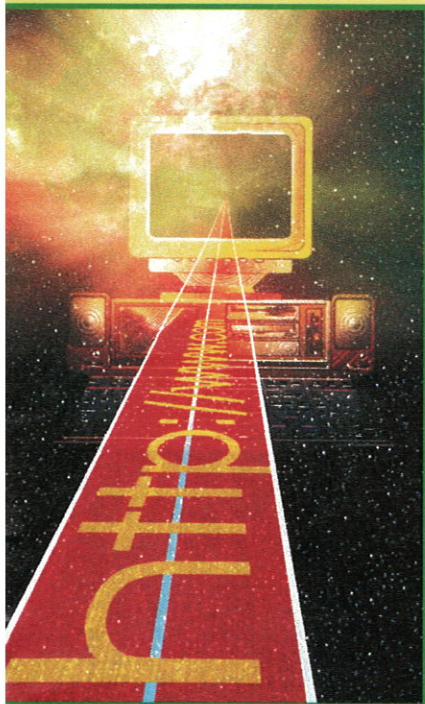


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TO OUR WAY OF THINKING, God doesn't always make sense.

Take the fish story recorded in the fifth chapter of Luke (verses 2-7). Jesus sat in a borrowed boat preaching to a crowd that had gathered along the shore of Lake Galilee; Peter, the boat's owner, was busily mending his fishing nets. When Jesus had finished speaking, he told Peter, "Now go out where it is deeper and let down your nets and you will catch a lot of fish!" (verse 4).

"Sir," Simon (Peter) replied, "we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing" (verse 5a).

That was the argument. After all, they had been laboring in that area of the lake the entire night without even getting a nibble. So *why* would anyone expect fish to be there now? It didn't make sense.

Fortunately, Peter moved beyond *reason* to the realm of *trust*. So he continued speaking, and said, "**But if You say so,**

TO THINK ABOUT

by Ruth E. Narramore

we'll try again" (verse 5).

With that they followed the Lord's instruction and when they did, they had more fish than they were able to handle (verses 6, 7). In that instant, *faith* became *sight*.

When God created humans, He supplied them with brains. But as fantastic as the human mind is, it is fettered by limitations. And compared to the wisdom of God, our reasoning is extremely myopic.

Because God sees the whole picture and knows the end from the beginning, to our finite way of thinking, His requirements do not always appear reasonable. But they don't have to, because "His ways are higher than our ways" (Isaiah 55:9). The sooner we come to terms with that



eternal truth, the better it is for us.

It is important that, like Simon Peter and his fishing partners, we learn to trust. *If You (Lord) say so*, even though humanly it doesn't seem feasi-

ble, *we will do it!* We can trust God with complete confidence because He is always trustworthy. In Proverbs 3: 5, 6 we read: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths."

When God directs our paths, He may point us down a road of seeming impossibilities. But because God is giving the orders (and that's the way it has to be), the "impossible" becomes a reality. "With God nothing is impossible." (See Luke 1:37; 18:27.)

Thus, impossibilities are ways in which God demonstrates His power.

Many people are willing to offer "free advice"—some valid, some not. God also intends for us to use our brains. But in the final analysis, He is our ultimate authority and our plans must be "God-approved" if they are to be successful. (See Proverbs 19:21.)

There are many areas of life in which God has "said so." We read them in His Word. On those things, we already have His instructions and there is no need to keep asking. We're not going to get God to change His mind. What He has said will stand ... forever.

Trust means taking God at His Word and believing that He means what He says. It doesn't include others who come up with divergent ideas. The important thing is to be certain that God is the One who "*says so*." And that's reason enough! □

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

IT CHANGED MY LIFE

In God's providence, you sent me a booklet about dealing with the fear of rejection. This has changed my life.

Thank you for your part in doing this.
Elmer J. Vos
Pella, Iowa

"PERSECUTED CHURCH"

I want to say how much I appreciated the article by Kevin Narramore on "The Persecuted Church." It is an encouragement to those of us who minister to them. Thank him on behalf of the Open Doors ministry.

I also appreciated the great article by Lee and Gloria Bendell in the March-April

issue about Easter. It really speaks for all of us. I wish we could hear Gloria's lovely voice singing, "Because He Lives!"
Rey Johnson
Fullerton, California

BRUSHES WITH BAKING SODA

An article in your "Health Watch" column stated that baking soda is hard on the enamel of teeth.

I have brushed my teeth with soda for over 40 years, many times twice a day. I'm lacking three teeth pulled over 60 years ago. I had either one or two fillings 20 years ago or longer. Otherwise, my teeth are still good.

I think I'll continue using baking soda as I am now eighty plus!
Stanley Allen
Greenfield, Indiana

IT'S BIBLE-BASED

We enjoy your literature because it is always Bible-based. In my thinking, that's the most important issue. Keep up the good work!

Herman W. Reuselia
Kenosha, Wisconsin

YOUR "BEST FRIEND"

I listen to your radio program every morning when I'm home. Every one of them is a blessing, but the one about women knowing their husbands really caught my attention.

I like the way you describe your wife as your "best friend."

May God richly bless you and your ministry.

Dorothy Durand
Dominica, West Indies

EXCITING

Thanks for your wonderful program, "Psychology For Living" that I heard on the radio the other night. I remember hearing your broadcast when I was a teenager, and now I'm almost fifty! How exciting to discover that you are still on the air in my neck of the woods. God bless you.

P. Molina
Granger, Washington

SAFE SURFIN' ON THE INTERNET

How to access the
Good without the
Bad and the Ugly.

by William M.
Kruidenier

Imagine life under the following stressful scenarios. **First, the Life-threatening Library:**

"Mom, can I walk up the street to the library?" Billy called. "I need to find some books for my science project."

"Sorry, honey," Billy's mother replied. "I can't go with you right now. And you know the library is too dangerous a place for you to go by yourself."

Next, the Malevolent Mall:

"Bob, would you be willing to go to the mall with me tonight? I have to get some things for Jeff's camping trip," Marge asked her husband.

"Only as a last resort, Marge," her husband protested. "Call me old fashioned, but I still prefer to go shopping and see people with all

their clothes on. I don't mind encountering new people and things. I just prefer they be dressed."

Finally, the Revolting Restaurant:

"That does it. That's the last straw," John seethed, lowering his napkin down on the table. "Lately, for every decent item I select from this menu I get three side dishes that are inedible.

Actually, that's putting it too nicely. They're revolting! What's going on?"

See a pattern in these predicaments? What if the places in your community that you now think of as assets suddenly became liabilities? The library, the mall, your favorite restaurant—you know they contain things you need and want, but the process of getting them has become far too dangerous and threatening. Without a doubt, at some point you would be motivated to take action. You would either try to clean up your former favorite hangouts—or join with others to implement strategies for maintaining family values in the marketplace.

In some ways, the above scenarios are what has happened to the Internet. **What began as a useful tool for accessing information has already become a liability**—especially for families with children. As the purveyors of pornography, drugs, violence, and other crude forms of entertainment have launched sites on the World Wide Web, it's almost impossible not to encounter them. Whether through an innocent entry in a search engine or clicking on an enticing banner ad, anyone who uses the Internet for very long can quickly find himself in deep immoral water. And this is just the situation with responsible adults. **The number of young people who have intentionally or accidentally become mired in pornography is shocking.** Why is this happening? And what can be done?

First, here's what happened. Beginning as a Defense Department communication network connected by telephone lines, the Internet gradually extended links to educational and corporate research facilities. At this point, e-mail and database queries were the Internet's primary uses. But when a young computer scientist in Switzerland invented something called hypertext markup language, the ability to jump from one computer to another—anywhere in the world—became as simple as clicking a mouse button. And when a program called Mosaic was written (the forerunner of the Netscape Navigator web browser), information from anywhere in the world where a computer is connected to a telephone line can now be formatted with text and pictures. Content formerly available only in traditional media formats—text, pictures, movies, sound (plus new formats such as virtual reality 3-D panoramic images)—can now be published and accessed by anyone, anytime, anywhere in the world. The Internet actually combines into

What began as a useful tool for accessing information from a myriad of sources has become a liability—especially for families.

one delivery system the abilities of the three most revolutionary communication advances so far: the printing press (around 1450), the telephone (1876), and the television (1928).

The implications of this information publishing revolution are staggering. For the first time, a "publisher" whose office is his kitchen table can reach the same

audience as a multimillion-dollar publisher. On the upside, anyone with creative skills and a strong message or product can let the world know. On the downside, the exact opposite is also true. Anyone with a destructive or depraved message or product can also get on board.

Before the Internet, individuals or small publishers were consigned to a small group of potential customers due to the costs of marketing and publishing. With the Internet, costs have become minimal and the whole world is your potential customer base. On the Internet, it costs no more to reach a billion people with your message than it does to reach one. (No one is charging anyone anything for duplicating electrons which travel at the speed of light around the globe!)

If your product is print or graphics, your customers pay the production costs since they use their own printers to turn what's on the Internet into hard copy. Unfortunately, these production and distribution economies have spawned a tidal wave of pornographic and unhealthy content. **Every person with a file full of pornography can now share his or her collection with the world.** And many of them are doing just that. Can you say "Revolution"?

The revolution has happened in two stages. Initially, existing publishers of information (whether G-rated or X-rated) began setting up web sites as quickly as possible, offering their wares for free. The costs were minimal, the technology easy to learn, and the audience eager. People who used to pay for magazine subscriptions were now viewing them on-line for free. "Wow!" said John Q. Public. "This is awesome!" The same people who used to publish pornography in books, magazines, movies, and videos discovered that far more people were eager for their wares than they had previously known about because now pornography can be viewed in the privacy of the home. No purchases, no subscriptions, no returning videos to the local video outlet. Just point and click. Those for whom the public purchase of unwholesome content provided a check on their actions were now free from that restraint. As a result, **the stories of those becoming entrapped in pornography on the Internet are legion.**

The second stage is now in place. Instead of giving information and products away for free, vendors have now learned how to charge for services over the Internet. Currently you can buy almost anything over the Internet that you can buy in person. And shoppers

are lining up to do so, bringing some popular shopping sites to a standstill during peak hours, especially those selling on-line access to live pornography shows. People who would never venture into an adult bookstore or video parlor in their hometown are now being tempted to do so via their credit card over the Internet.

As hard as it is to believe, all of this has happened in the space of five years (as opposed to the almost five centuries from the printing press to the television). And because *no one owns the Internet game*, everyone has been allowed to play. That includes the good, the bad, and the ugly, which translated means the edifying, the unwholesome, and the pornographic. Internet users have discovered that they are being bombarded with advertising for products and services that are completely offensive. They don't even want to see the ads, much less the product. As a result, many have signed off the Internet in order to protect themselves and their families from an onslaught of content to which they don't want to expose themselves or their families.

But is this the only alternative? As in the opening illustration, must we give up the use of what is an amoral medium simply because it has become filled with immoral junk? Or is there a way to "fight back" and keep the best of the Internet without having to wade through the worst?

There is a way, and it is called Filtered Internet Access. Eighteen to 24 months ago, software filtering programs for home computers began to appear. These programs were loaded on an individual computer and updated regularly with key words and Internet addresses that would be blocked. When an Internet site with a forbidden address or key word tried to pass through the software filter, it would be prevented from appearing on the screen.

In an initial wave of enthusiasm, eager parents purchased these programs for their home computers. In a second wave—this time of ingenuity—creative kids figured out how to disable the filters whenever they wanted. And in a final wave—let's call it resignation—most of these filters went the way of the proverbial exercise machines littering America's homes. A good idea waned with the realization that effort and discipline were involved to make it work. The majority of people who bought individualized software filter packages do not use them effectively.

Now, however, there seems to be a filtering concept that works. Known as Server-Side Filtering technology, this idea once again incorporates the concept of filters to exclude objectionable material. But now, the filters are removed from home computers and placed on the huge server computers through which a family, individual, or business connects to the Internet. The subscriber is now given filtered access to the Internet without installing or

Because no one owns the Internet game, everyone is allowed to play. And that includes the edifying, the unwholesome, and the pornographic!

maintaining any software on his home computer. And best of all, the filters cannot be tampered with by creative techno-teens. The sponsoring Internet Service Provider takes the responsibility for the cost and maintenance of the software filters. Server-Side Filtering appears to be an idea whose time has come.

The first company to implement nationwide Internet access using Server Side

Technology is Rated-C On-line, a service of 711.NET located in Charlotte, North Carolina. A Christian owned and operated company, 711.NET is a Christian Internet marketing and services company seeking to serve the Body of Christ by applying biblical values to the implementation of information technology. Says Chuck Stevens, president and a founder of Rated-C On-line, "We simply decided that it was time to provide a *choice* for families and individuals who wanted the best of the Internet while avoiding the worst." Rated-C On-line filters out 11 major categories of objectionable content—pornography, "adult" humor, violence, unlawful activities, ethnic hate, and others—and allows only that which is wholesome and edifying to reach our subscribers' home computers. The filtering also includes chat areas, news groups, and the other areas of the Internet which have so quickly been filled with degrading material. Families can now access the Internet and surf all day long without fear of what they will discover.

While there is a moderate charge, it is only pennies a day more than Internet service providers who do not offer filtered, safe Internet access. The slightly higher charges go to pay the costs of daily maintenance on the filtering databases. The Internet is monitored daily by a team of Christian professionals who add new sites to the filtering databases as they are discovered. With thousands of new Web sites, chat rooms, and news groups coming on-line weekly, the only way to effectively and accurately filter the flood is daily.

Filtered Internet Access is the wave of the future for the safe and responsible use of a revolutionary new medium. Don't be crowded out of the marketplace! As a Christian with high moral standards, you now have a choice on how to access the Internet's unlimited resources. □

Note: Those interested in Filtered Internet Access for themselves and families can subscribe by calling 1-888-711-6381, or visit the Rated-G On-line home page at <http://www.rated-g.com>. Currently, Rated-G On-line has local access numbers in more than 180 metropolitan areas nationwide, with over 1,000 planned by the end of 1998.

William M. Kruidenier is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary. He is a full-time freelance writer. He and his wife and five children live in Charlotte, North Carolina.



TALES OUT OF SCHOOL

After putting 31 years of love into my job, it has paid me back with a lifetime of loving memories.

by Joan Clayton

WHEN I FIRST BEGAN MY TEACHING CAREER, the school where I taught had no kindergarten. This meant that my class of first graders experienced “new separation anxiety” in the worst way. They were so bewildered that they would cry uncontrollably for hours. That school looked mighty big and foreboding in their young eyes.

I had one little first grader whose daddy was a preacher. One morning several children were crying as usual. I comforted them the best I could, but some continued to cry. I gave the children an assignment (over all of the crying and wailing), explained it carefully, and then gave them time to complete their tasks.

I walked around the classroom spotting those who needed help. Suddenly my little preacher’s kid (PK) student started singing:

“When I see the blood, when I see the blood, when I see the blood. . . I will pass, I will pass over you.”

My first impulse was to walk over and tell my student that he mustn’t distract the children, which was a joke...they were already crying. However, I felt a check in my spirit. So instead, I walked over to the doors that opened out to the hall and quietly closed them. To my surprise, the children had stopped crying and picked up their pencils. Some were even working. My student’s singing had brought peace to my classroom.

The entire incident was strictly “student-initiated” and I was not going to take away his right to *free speech*.

Now, 31 years later, that special moment comes to me. That moment comes when I need it the most...when a serious illness threatens a loved one...in the hospital room

with my dying mother...in the painful agony of my dad's sorrow. My student's song comes to me in the wee hours of the morning and gives me peace.

One of my students greeted me one morning, hugged as far as he could reach, and said:

"Teacher, I prayed for you last night."

"And what did you ask the Lord to do for me?" I asked.

My student replied, "I asked the Lord to keep you."

My student's blessing pursued me all that day and still warms my heart today.

I shall never forget the beautiful young lady who knocked on my classroom door one day. I was in the middle of story time and when a child asked her in, I motioned for her to sit down.

When story time was over she said, "Do you remember me, Mrs. Clayton? I was in your first-grade class 10 years ago!"

It was then that I recognized her. We hugged and she said, "Remember I had to go to California to live with my mother? I felt so alone and frightened. You took me in your arms and told me that everything would be all right because you would never stop praying for me. I'm in college now to be a teacher like you."

I cried and thanked the Lord all at the same time.

On the second day of school one year, one of my students bounded into my room with roses and a card which read, "Teacher, I love your class."

I was touched. His card made me think of three college professors whom I remembered as having a real impact upon my life. These three were the only ones I knew of who were still alive. I hurried home that day and wrote them a thank-you letter and told them how their faith in me and their many kindnesses had shaped my career that I loved so much.

Over the next week I received a thank-you note from all three. In very shaky handwriting they all thanked me and said I was one of a very few who had ever thanked them or expressed gratitude.

During the next six months, each one of my beloved professors had slipped into eternity. I'm so glad I wrote those notes!

Some of my "teaching blessings" were humorous. One incident involved *picture day*. My students looked beautiful. But as we were lining up for their pictures, the principal's voice came over the intercom informing us that the photographer had made a mistake in booking, so he would not be coming to our school until the next week. One little girl with curls precisely in place and wearing ruffles all over exclaimed, "Oh no! I took a bath for nothing!"

My favorite incident concerned cute little Carl. He came in crying every morning, and the tears lasted most of the day. I tried my best to find out the problem, but to no avail. He was still crying a month later. Finally, after much pleading on my part, he finally blurted out, "I'm scared of the bus driver!"

"Well, tell your mother about it!" I exclaimed. And Carl promptly responded, "She's the bus driver!"

An unforgettable "special moment" involved our youngest son when he graduated from high school. He was my baby and the hardest to let go. My husband, who was the high school principal, always treated our boys like any other student while they were at school. On graduation night, my husband properly handed the graduate the diploma and shook the graduate's hand. I had teased Lane beforehand and told him I was going to run up on the stage, grab him, and say, "This is my baby!"

I was teasing and Lane knew it, but he did something that night that is forever engraved in our hearts.

As my husband started to hand him his diploma and shake his hand, Lane reached out with those big, strong, hefty arms and hugged his dad with all his might. The crowd cheered and I cried.

As beloved Mother Theresa once said, "It's not what you do in life, but how much love you put into it."

I put years of love into my job. And I committed each of my students to God's love as well. Now after 31 years of teaching and loving, my job has paid me back with a lifetime of loving memories! □

Joan Clayton and her husband live in Portales, New Mexico. She is now retired from teaching but keeps active as a freelance writer. She is currently the religion columnist of the Portales News-Tribune.

HUMILITY: THE UNWANTED CHARACTER QUALITY

The purpose of the process is never to belittle or degrade, but to allow God to do us good.

by Norman Thiesen

WHEN FACED WITH A LOSS, crisis, or tragedy, we invariably react by asking, "Why?" The struggle to make sense of our lives and the events that surround them often occupy our thoughts during these times. We want to know—in fact, *need* to know—the reasons these events and difficult circumstances have entered our lives.

I have occasionally wished that life had an eraser on it or that it was like a chalkboard: one could simply wipe away the mistakes and start over again. But that is impossible. **We must live with the con-**

sequences of our decisions and actions. This was forcefully brought home to me a few years ago when I encountered the result of some bad decisions. After feeling a range of emotions from anger to depression, I finally went to the Scriptures to help me sort out the difficult situations confronting me.

I chose to study the word "humility" because that was the biblical term that best described my experiences and feelings. I found I could categorize the term into seven different headings, which in turn, led to seven principles. When

placed in this new perspective, I was better able to understand and accept my situation.

I. HUMILITY—AN ATTRIBUTE OF OUR LORD. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is God's clearest declaration and expression of humility. Christ laid aside all the privileges He had as God to become man. His obedience led Him even to accept the disgraceful execution of the cross (Philippians 2:8). The attitude or mindset which led Christ to accept this role should be our model (Philippians 2:5).

(Continued on p. 11)



THE AMERICAN DREAM

Some advice for the young set!

by Jack Williams

LISTEN UP, KID! I hear you kicking the dog about how tough life is and what you're doing without. Make up your mind, Sport! Do you want a free ride or a chance to make it on your own?

You say you want to be treated like an adult? That's fine. But if you play on the adult team, bring your own bat and glove to the game. We can't schedule life for your convenience. It's the same for everybody. Show up when you're supposed to, ready for business. And bring a smile.

What if it's raining? Then don't forget your umbrella, because life happens, rain or shine. *If you don't feel good?* Take an aspirin.

Your car won't start? Catch the bus. Call a friend. Get up earlier and walk. No excuses. Just be there when it's your turn. Punch in like the rest of us and take your place in line.

You say you don't have what your parents do? Neither did they at your age. Put a sock in it, Junior. When you turn eighteen, the rules change. Everybody starts at "Go."

Now you can pay taxes and go to work while the kids play. It's called responsibility. There's a wonderful world out here, but somebody has to pull the weeds.

You thought it was all parties and fast cars? Sorry, that's only in beer commercials. In real life, working men know they can't punch in at 7:00 if they boogie till dawn. You'll get used to it.

This isn't fair? Of course it isn't fair. Weren't you awake in civics class? "Fair" in the adult world means doing your own job and then picking up the slack for a buddy with a real problem so he can make it to the hospital for his wife's

surgery. You can send a get-well card.

You thought you were finished with homework after squeaking through geometry? Here's a little get-ahead principle: When the boss down at the plant gives you a briefcase full of papers to read, do yourself a favor and read them.

If you don't, the boss may slip something extra in your pay envelope. He may hand you a pink slip and let you take it home and explain it to your wife and kids.

That's cold, you say? Tell it to the guys waiting for a chance at that job you just threw away. While you were staring at the goof tube, they were trying to get ahead.

Can the criticism. Everybody has all he can carry. If you've just got to say something, find a way to put a positive spin on it. Unless you're an art critic, nobody wants to hear that you're unhappy with the office decor.

HUMILITY

(Continued from p. 9)

Stop looking around for somebody to blame. If you broke it, fix it. If you lost it, find it. If you dropped it, pick it up. If you borrowed it, return it.

You're probably not looking for advice, but here's your first lesson in America 101. You see that old man behind the cash register at the diner across the street? Yeah, the one who walks with a cane.

Fifty years ago that old man was a scared teenager a long way from home. He and his buddies were spending a day in France dodging machine gun bullets on a sandy strip of horror called Omaha Beach. The machine guns stitched a souvenir up his left side.

By the time he turned twenty, he had a Purple Heart, a unit citation for bravery under fire, six operations and an honorable discharge from the U.S. Army. He doesn't think he's anything special, but I sure do.

The next time the American flag passes by in a parade, salute it. If you can't do it for the old man, then do it for his buddies who never came home from that June day at the beach.

Go to church, Junior. It's still the biggest event in the nation every Sunday. There's a reason why America gets up every Sunday morning and drives to a house of worship. It's a reality check.

Life is not built on advertising slogans. That's why the man behind the pulpit is so important. He delivers a clear message in a complicated society. For a few hours each week, the entire nation lifts its collective eyes to something noble and good and holy. Listen to the preacher, Kid; he knows something you need to hear.

You can have the American dream. The price is the same for everybody. Some Americans paid that price one cold winter at Valley Forge. The Blue and the Gray paid full measure at Gettysburg. Your grandfather, your father, and your uncle signed their names in blood across Europe, the Korean peninsula, and the jungles of Vietnam.

Now it's your turn, your country, your piece of the dream. Finish school, Kid. Get a job. Raise a son. Build a home. Honor God. Love your wife. Leave it all better than you found it. *We're counting on you!* □

Jack Williams is editor of Contact, the official magazine of the National Association of Free Will Baptists in Antioch, Tennessee.

All four gospels illustrate Christ's character of servanthood (Matthew 20:28). In the humbleness of His life and heart, we find rest from our weary, heavy burdens (Matthew 11:28-30). The emphasis is seen in His obedience and absolute dependency on God the Father.

Principle: Our model for humility is illustrated in the attitude and life of Christ.

2. GOD HUMBLER. The very character of God requires that His people walk humbly before Him (Micah 6:8). And when they fail to do so, God will *humble* them. He does this through circumstances that He allows to enter their lives. This fact is most clearly seen in the Old Testament as God deals with His people. The time in the wilderness for the children of Israel was to test their obedience. And their times of hunger were to test their dependency upon Him (Deuteronomy 8:2, 3). The process of being humbled was allowed so that God could do *good* for them (Deuteronomy 8:16).

God is in the process of conforming us to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29). This process often requires that He exercise His right to humble us in order to build the qualities of His Son's character into our lives. The circumstances surrounding us are God's tools. This humility is characterized by obedience and dependence on God. The purpose of the process is never to belittle or degrade, but to allow God to do good in our lives.

Principle: God humbles His people to test their obedience and dependence, so in the end He can bless them.

3. MAN HUMBLER. When we attempt to humble another person, we violate a prerogative that is God's alone. You and I are only to humble *ourselves*, not others. Most occasions that speak of humbling another refer to sexual abuse (Judges 19:24, Deuteronomy 22:24, 29).

When we attempt to "put someone down" or "put a person in his place" we are exercising an authority that belongs to God alone (Romans 12:19). To use or abuse another person, whether sexually or in any other way, is to offend God (Psalm 51:4).

Principle: Only God has the right and authority to humble another.

4. HUMBLE YOURSELF. The greatest number of verses in the Bible on humility speaks of humbling *yourself*. The Old Testament indicates that the humbling process entails either repentance or the acknowledgment of God's authority. In almost all cases, those who humbled themselves had their prayers answered and punishment was diminished or delayed. Those who did *not* humble themselves brought on punishment. (Exodus 10:3; Leviticus 26:41; I Kings 21:29; II Kings 22:19; II Chronicles 7:14; 12:6,7,12; 32:26; 33:12,23; 34:27; Jeremiah 44:10; Daniel 5:22).

As we humble ourselves before God, He responds by lifting us up (James 4:10). Too often we exalt ourselves rather than waiting for God and His timing. Humbling ourselves should result in childlike attitudes (Matthew 18:4). **God's sovereignty moves in the fabric of our lives to humble us, and then conform us to His image.** At the proper time, God will exalt us.

Principle: We are responsible to humble ourselves (or allow ourselves to be humbled) before God. He will then exalt us.

5. THE HUMBLE. When addressing those who are humble, the Scripture always refers to blessings and the promises that accompany them: God hears their cry (Psalm 9:12), He hears their desires and encourages them (Psalm 10:17), God gives grace (Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6; I Peter 5:5), He dwells with them (Isaiah 57:15), lifts them up (Luke 1:52), and comforts them (II Corinthians 7:6). It is evident that God personally provides bountiful spiritual resources for the humble.

Principle: The humble receive many provisions and blessings from God.

6. HUMBLE BEHAVIOR. The Scriptures prescribe humble behavior in two major ways. First is our service to the Lord (Acts 20:19). There is no other way in which our service is acceptable to a righteous, holy God.

The second is our behavior toward one another (Ephesians 4:2, Colossians 3:12, I Peter 3:8). Attitudes of acceptance, servanthood, and honor (Philippians 2:3) are to characterize our interpersonal relationships. A haughty, proud spirit has no place.

God instructs us to minister to and associate with the humble (Romans 12:16). While we often desire and seek

out the rich and famous so-called "beautiful people," Hollywood stars, or prominent athletes, He focuses on building His kingdom with the poor and the lowly (I Corinthians 1:26-29).

Principle: Humility is to characterize our service to God and our relationships to one another.

7. HUMBLE CIRCUMSTANCES. When we find ourselves in uncomfortable circumstances, it is not necessarily the result of our personal sin, but a part of the human condition. Some are poor, some dislike their work, some are single, and some have a handicap. These conditions may be humbling. The Scriptures give two principles in how to deal with uncomfortable circumstances. First, learn to accept them (Philippians 4:12), and second, rejoice in them (James 1:9). These trials provide opportunities to humble ourselves and acknowledge God's sovereignty and authority in our lives.

Principle: We must learn to accept

and rejoice in our humble circumstances.

Conclusion. When we think of humility, we may think of losers like Charlie Brown. It is not a quality which people usually aspire to. Thus, in the crucible of suffering or unpleasant events, we fail to learn important lessons that God has prepared for us.

When seeking answers to the "whys" of our life, humility lends itself to three conclusions that can help give us proper perspective.

First, humility is the only right attitude toward God. It acknowledges God's authority as well as our complete dependence on Him. God uses events in our lives to teach us these fundamental truths.

Second, humility is the only right attitude toward ourselves. A humble spirit allows one to be open to growth, correction, and instruction. Those who do not view themselves humbly risk fostering and nurturing pride that

inevitably leads to destruction.

Third, humility is the only right attitude toward others. A humble spirit among believers promotes community, body-life, and the building up of one another. We are to follow the model of Christ in His servanthood.

Scripture places humility as a central aspect of our vertical and horizontal relationships. To overlook its importance is to miss a major point of the Bible. As Augustine once answered when asked about the precepts of Christianity, "that road is first humility, secondly humility, and thirdly humility! And as often as I am asked about the precepts of the Christian religion, I should choose to answer nothing else than humility." □

Norman Thiesen, Ph.D., a graduate of the Rosemead Graduate School of Psychology, is the director of a counseling program at Grace University, Omaha, Nebraska. He also counsels part-time in the Grace Counseling Center, an arm of the university outreach.

HOW SHOULD WE HANDLE OUR EMOTIONAL PAIN?

Many of us — if not all — have been hurt or disappointed in one way or another.

by Clair Schnupp

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY to 30 high school students who had lost seven of their classmates to suicide in one year?

This was the scenario that faced the Native American youth on one school campus in northern Canada. How were they to deal with it? Needless to say, they were confused, and they were suffering. As a counselor, I shared with these Native American young people as they struggled to cope with their emotional pain.

Many of us—if not all—have been hurt or disappointed in some way. Some become bitter and hold grudges. These grudges hold them down, like heavy weights.

As a newborn, Allan (not his real name) had been tossed into a garbage can where someone found him. He was unwanted and was placed in many different foster homes.

As Allan grew it became obvious that he had a keen mind. He could sing well



and was a top-notch hockey player. He was also a good artist. But Allan was lonely. He had suffered a lot. He felt rejected and unwanted and was angry at the world. To prove his worth, he felt that he had to be number one in everything. He felt this way because he believed a lie which was telling him, "You're not good enough; you're not adequate."

Satan, the father of lies, deceives many people into believing some core lie that has its roots in woundedness. Emotional

turmoil plus the depravity of their lost condition often leads people to choose wrong methods in their efforts to cover their pain.

Allan tried to compensate for his low self-esteem by being extremely competitive. So he became boastful; always bragging about himself. He was pushy and rough with others. True, Allan had been sinned against, but in turn he sinned against others. He was attempting to put his fractured life together in a sinful way—without God.

Emotional pain greatly shapes your and my decisions. Everyone has some degree of pain. All of us live in a fallen, sinful world. We have all been hurt or disappointed in some way. But the question is, "How do we handle our pain?"

Young people living along the northern seas know about icebergs and the damage they can do to seagoing vessels. And it didn't take the film, "Titanic," to make them aware of this. These young people know that most of the iceberg is



Opposite page: A young mother carries her baby in the warmth of her fur-lined parka.
Above: Native North American young people study together.

below the water line. The smallest part is what you see above the surface.

In this iceberg analogy many youth are aware of only a small part of the problem: their pain and depression. The suicide tendency arises out of much deeper emotional hurts—hurts they are not willing to face. They would rather suppress them than try to deal with them. So they play out their lives by reacting to their emotional wounds. The result is that they often fall victims to depression. Among many of these youth, bitterness, hatred, and grudges run deep. These are rooted in severe, internalized pain. When they are allowed to fester and grow, they eventually destroy these young people through drugs, alcohol, and suicide. And when these young people marry, they carry their bitterness and anger with them which not only destroys their marriage, but their children and grandchildren as well.

Everyone feels rejected at times. Everyone has been belittled, laughed at, or teased. The question I asked Allan was, "How are you putting your life together with all this hurt?"

One way people try to put life together without God is to react. Allan was reacting. He put up a tough front to show that he was adequate—that he was worthwhile. Sometimes he reacted by behaving like a clown. But underneath that funny exterior was a lot of hurt. He also put on a talkative front. He would talk compulsively in order to hide his misery and feelings of inferiority. Still other times Allan would become violent and vandalize the world that had abused and disappointed him.

Media reports confirm the sad fact that violence is increasing across the northern reaches of our continent. I must conclude from my work with young people in this region that the increase in violence points to a high level of emotional distress in their hearts and minds.

Another way some people respond to their pain is by living in a constant state of self-pity. They see themselves as victims. These people often withdraw from society. They seldom socialize or reach out to others. Then they wallow in their misery.

Violence, clowning, self-pity, and over-performance are all reactions to pain. These people have been emotionally damaged by neglect or abuse. Everything seems hopeless.

"When and where did all this pain start?" I ask young people. Then I explain: "When God created man, He made the garden of Eden beautiful. Adam and Eve lived in a perfect environment with peace, satisfaction, freedom, and contentment. Then Satan came and tempted them. They yielded to Satan's temptation. When they did, the Fall occurred, and for the first time, there was fear, shame, guilt, and bitterness. I believe that thorns and thistles represent the judgment of God on this earth because of sin. Pain was part of God's judgment upon humankind for choosing to be independent of God."

So how should we handle *our* pain?

Jesus Christ lived, died, and rose again. The only way we can hope to handle pain properly is through the power of Christ and His resurrection. Reaction to our sin-cursed world is not a valid

way to handle our problems. At best, it is temporary and unsatisfying. To see oneself as a victim and wallow in self-pity is not a satisfactory way to handle hurts and disappointments. It only magnifies our misery.

Allan came to me when he was sixteen. He was planning to take his life because he was so depressed and the future looked so dark. But Allan confessed his sin, faced his pain, cried out to God, and asked Christ to take over his life. **And God gave him a new life.**

Out of his pain, Allan developed a friendship with God. After four years of discipleship, Allan married a fine Christian girl. Today he has three children and writes Christian songs about his painful past and God's healing. He is thankful that he did not take his own life when he was sixteen. He gave up his wrong responses and took responsibility for living with the help of Jesus Christ and his Christian friends. The Holy Spirit became Allan's great comforter. His strong faith in God brought healing at the point of his deepest pain.

Allan has chosen the best way to handle his pain. Instead of living in violent reaction or withdrawing into a shell, he has become a responsible agent for change with the help of God and God's people.

Young people often say to me, "Take away my pain." I cannot do that! I can talk with them about how their suffering can be an agent for change in their lives, but they must take the responsibility for bringing God and Christian people into their emotional distress. Jesus died to help them bear their suffering. He died to forgive them of their sins, as well as to help them forgive others who have hurt them.

Anyone who insists on justice and fairness in this life is going to be disappointed. Hurting people need to bring their pain and frustration to the cross. It is there that God offers comfort and strength.

Friend, how do you handle *your* pain? Your life's message can come out of your deepest wounds through the power of Christ's resurrection, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and the help of other believers. What was once ugly and scarred can become beautiful and radiant. What a marvelous way to live! □

Dr. Clair Schnupp is Director of Northern Youth Programs and serves as counselor and workshop leader to the aboriginal people of Canada, U.S., and Central America.

HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL FAILURE

The secret is to learn how to *use* failure, rather than letting it abuse you.

by Vernon C. Lyons

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS WAS OBSESSED with the idea that he could get to the east by traveling west, but by sailing west he never did reach India. He failed. Changing the course of history by discovering America, he also discovered that a good failure can be a great achievement. If you set out to do something great enough, what you do incidentally may be more important than what is accomplished on purpose by someone else.

If you always succeed, it is because your projects are too small. Failures are not necessarily bad. Some people's failures are better than other people's successes.

Thomas A. Edison recorded 1,093 patents. Most of these inventions were impractical or unmarketable. They were failures. But a man who invented the phonograph, the movie camera, the microphone, the mimeograph, and the electric light bulb could afford a lot of failures. He was so inept in business matters that he lost control of the profitable companies that he founded, and yet in the depths of the Depression, he died with an estate of \$2,000,000. Edison was a successful failure.

It is obvious that you learn as you fail. You also grow as you fail, but you must dare to fail. If you can fail enough, you will learn a lot. But if you are too proud to fail, then you will remain ignorant. If you are too afraid to fail, then you will not enjoy success.

Failure is okay — sometimes. If there is nothing to lose, then you can afford failure. Even if the risks are guarded and the losses are at a minimum, you can afford failure. No one can afford to fail in a single situation. That is, you cannot hang all of life on one hook that will not hold. You cannot afford to invest all of your money in a failing project. You cannot afford to get in an irreversible situation (such as a marriage that is headed for failure). Nor can you afford failure in final situations — that is, you cannot stake your hope of salvation on some shaky, unbiblical foundation, only to discover after you died that you were wrong! Your eternal destiny is at stake.

Abraham Lincoln was our most suc-



cessful president. It was strange that he was a man marked for failure, a man who endured long periods of depression throughout his life. He suffered from frequent nervous attacks, severe headaches, frequent indigestion, and nausea. He had a couch placed near his desk in the White House so he could quickly lie down when one of his spells came over him. When Lincoln was ten years old he was kicked in the head by a horse, and experts now believe that his skull had been severely fractured, leaving him with life-long problems. When he came to deliver his famous address at Gettysburg, he was coming down with smallpox.

Lincoln failed in business in 1831, was defeated for the legislature in 1832. The next year he suffered another business defeat, and in 1836 had a nervous breakdown. He failed to be elected speaker in 1838, and was defeated for elector in 1840, and for Congress in 1843, and again in 1848, and failed to be elected to the Senate in 1855, and defeated for the vice-presidency in 1856, and for the Senate in 1858. However, being elected President in 1860, he could afford all those failures. Abraham Lincoln was truly a successful failure.

The secret is to learn how to *use* failure rather than letting it abuse you. Failure leaves you either more depressed or more determined. Having failed, you either think that you were foolish for trying, or that God is using the failure to prepare you for ultimate

success. Success has ruined more people than failure. Awesome responsibility always accompanies success. God knows we must be ready.

Some people are slow starters and may discover God's purpose late in life. Moses was eighty years old when he began his life's work. All that time God was preparing him to do one thing — lead the Jews out of Egypt. It could be that you live to accomplish only one great task for God and that all the rest of your life is merely preparation for that heroic responsibility.

Sometimes we are overwhelmed with failures because we see our own, while failing to notice those of others. The athlete is not celebrated for the games he lost; the photographer throws away his poor pictures; the potter reshapes his marred jars; and the painter displays only his best portraits.

Perhaps God has different measurements for failure and success than we do. Paul the apostle was not acclaimed during his lifetime. He was rejected by Jews and held in suspicion by Gentiles. He was stoned, beaten, imprisoned, mocked by some, and ignored by others. He spent his life starting little churches that were soon overtaken with big problems so that they needed revisiting and letters written to straighten out the difficulties. He taught the truth only to discover that those who had one day received it were the next day turning to some false doctrine. No glory crowns his life, nor is any success evident when toward his last days his friends deserted him as he was held a prisoner and then shamefully executed.

But Paul was a successful failure. One half of the books of the New Testament are from his pen, and he is now hailed as the greatest Christian missionary of all time!

In the world of Christianity, his star shines brightly. Not many have reached his stature of success. □

Rev. Vernon C. Lyons has been senior pastor of the Ashburn Baptist Church in Chicago, Illinois, since 1951. Through the years he has also had a ministry in writing, radio and television.

by Kevin Narramore



Y2K BUG: HEADACHE OR HEART ATTACK?

SOLAR-POWERED WELL PUMP? —✓
 Hand-cranked ham radio? —✓ Soy
 milk? —✓ Antibiotic cream? —✓
 Water purifiers? —✓ Shotgun? —✓
 MRE's? —✓ Wheat grass? —✓

Sounds extreme? Well, it is. Yet gathered in homes, warehouses and private meeting halls are an eclectic mix of anxious citizens planning how they will respond to the dreaded millennium technobug, the "Y2K." Some of them are paranoid zealots, survivalists, and utopians. Others are well-informed professionals such as scientists, economists, civic leaders, and health practitioners. Many are Christians. The common denominator is that they see an unstoppable social and economic cataclysm just around the corner.

So what is the big Y2K snafu?

Put simply, it is the inability of many computers and embedded chips to process dates beyond December 31, 1999. On January 1, 2000, an estimated 20 percent of the world's computers are going to malfunction. Why? Because only the newest software and hardware in most computer systems are designed with clocks that can recognize the 20th century.

How bad is it? Experts monitoring the problem hold two opposing positions:

Outlook #1 Sound the Alarm! In the July/August 1998 issue of *Harvard Business Review*, economist Dr. Edward Yardeni predicts a major recession, business failures, civil unrest and a collapse of essential government services. Many in the alarmist camp, including House Majority leader Dick Armey, foresee the possibility of failed telephone systems, power outages, food and water shortages, non-functioning credit and ATM cards, unreliable transportation, incorrect mortgage interest billing, and increased unemployment. Some health professionals worry about widespread disease. The worst doom-and-gloomers think that this chaos might last for three to five years.

Imagine waking up in the morning chilled to the bone because there is no heat in the midst of winter. You go to the bathroom and there is no running water.

Throughout the house there is no food or electricity. In your neighborhood, stoplights are no longer functioning, and the local supermarket is out of food. And flying out of town is difficult because of air traffic control disruptions. So head for the hills!

Outlook #2 Y2K computer glitches will be **costly but not catastrophic**.

MIT programmers are working around the clock and will develop the software to fix most of the "mission critical" hardware and software problems. *The Wall Street Journal* and government establishment types think that America's Gross Domestic Product might suffer a bit and could even trigger a modest recession, but they do not predict the kind of prolonged interruptions that the naysayers envision. After all, we're the nation that rushed the Manhattan Project to completion and put a man on the moon.

America is known as the country that can "take a licking and keep on ticking."

Some analysts believe that in the long run, the Y2K glitch will force many companies to dramatically improve their computer systems.

So what *will* happen 14 months from now? On May 14, 1998, the Senate Appropriations Committee allocated an additional \$2.25 billion dollars for an emergency reserve that will fund federal agencies' Y2K conversion efforts. While progress has been made in increasing compliance among the federal government's various agencies and within the private sector, vulnerabilities still remain.

First, there is the possibility that computers which have been cured of the Y2K bug may break down because they are breached by other computers that still have the "virus." The effects of these interactions are largely unknown. Also, according to the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Y2K problem will be far worse overseas. Today's global economy means that European, Latin American, and Asian recessions can cause repercussions in the United States too. Lastly, there is the problem of mass hysteria. Just before the year 2000 there

could be a run on banks. Also, many investors could pull out of the stock market causing equities to suffer and in return, decreasing the value of some retirement accounts. Ironically, the public panic could be far worse than the inconveniences caused by the Y2K computer malfunctions.

Should Christians Prepare?

Proverbs 27:12 says that the wise man sees danger or calamity coming and seeks refuge, while the fool passes by and perishes. Survival, however, should not be our ultimate goal. Rather, it is to glorify God and be light and salt in the earth. The Y2K problem could be a tremendous opportunity to minister to the spiritual and physical needs of others. However, those who are not prepared for Y2K will not be in a position to help others in need. Proverbs 6:6-11 tells us about the ant who gathers in the summer. This means that we must do the work of preparation now, while we still have that option.

It would be prudent, then, to make preparations for being self-sufficient for one to five weeks following the dawning of the year 2000. Now is the time to think about the storage of food, cash, water, and medicines. Now is the time to consider alternative heating, lighting, electrical needs, communication, transportation, and waste disposal. Now is the time to think about the protection of your property and financial assets.

For more information about Y2K emergency preparedness you may call my office at the Narramore Christian Foundation. I will be glad to send you a free Red Cross emergency preparedness booklet and a Y2K resource list.

James 1:2-3 says, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance." Will the Y2K bug be serious enough to provide an opportunity for outreach or to test our faith? Like the cliché says, "Only time will tell." And in this case, on January 1st, the year 2000, time most assuredly will! □

HEALTH WATCH

by Eva Hallam Solberg

UNRECOGNIZED DEPRESSION

People who consider themselves to be in poor health have a high rate of unrecognized depression, according to a study of emergency department patients. One-fourth out of 259 patients over age sixty-five were depressed, as indicated by their responses on a questionnaire. Emergency department doctors missed the diagnosis of depression in all of these patients.

(The Johns Hopkins Medical Letter)

POLYMYALGIA RHEUMATICA (PMR)

PMR is the most common inflammatory joint disorder that begins among individuals — on the average, at about age seventy. Mornings are usually the worst for the pain

in the muscles, but it may leave you feeling fatigued for the rest of the day. Women are twice as likely as men to have the disorder. There is evidence to suggest an immune system problem may trigger it. Heredity also plays a role.

The good news is that though there's no known cure for the condition, it generally goes away on its own in a year or two. Treatment with medication usually brings quick and complete relief from the symptoms.

(Mayo Clinic Health Letter)

CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE (CHF)

Considerable heart and lung damage can occur before the symptoms of CHF become severe. Any one of the following warning signs

should prompt a call to your doctor about the possibility of a full evaluation:

- Breathlessness or fatigue during activities that in the recent past could be accomplished more easily.
- Rapid weight gain (up to a pound a day) over several days or weeks.
- Swelling in the legs or ankles.
- Shoes that suddenly feel too tight.
- Waking up with the feeling that you're not getting enough air.
- Needing several pillows under your head to sleep.

(The Johns Hopkins Medical Letter)

STATISTICS FOR WOMEN

Leading medical problems in women ages forty

to sixty-four in order of rank are: Osteoporosis and arthritis; nose, throat and upper respiratory problems; orthopedic deformities and impairments of back, arms and legs; and cardiovascular diseases.

Leading causes of death for the same age group in order of rank are: Cardiovascular diseases; coronary artery disease; breast cancer, lung cancer.

Leading medical problems for those sixty-five and over: Nose, throat and upper respiratory problems; osteoporosis and arthritis; hypertension; urinary incontinence.

Leading causes of death for the same age group in order of rank are: Cardiovascular diseases; cerebrovascular diseases; pneumonia; influenza; and colorectal cancer. □

(Harvard Women's Health Watch)



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COMING NEXT ISSUE



* **Gratitude: A Rare But Vital Commodity**

* **The Music Box**

* **The Master Of Christmas**

* **Lighting Christmas Candles**

* **Christmas Is Worth The Trouble**

* **Lonely In A Crowd**

by Clyde M. Narramore

WHAT CAUSES CHILDREN TO BECOME SPIRITUAL DROPOUTS?

QUESTION:

Why do so many children drop out of church and Sunday School? Why do teenagers lose interest in church and often never come back? What is causing this spiritual exodus?

ANSWER:

This is a serious problem. It is serious for the family and for society, but especially for the child because his or her eternal destiny is at stake.

The most important thing a human being can do during his few years on planet Earth is to accept Christ as his personal Savior and become a committed Christian. But if a child becomes a spiritual dropout, he may never come to know and love God!

One of the difficulties in most Sunday Schools is the short time (perhaps 45 minutes once a week) that the child is there. This means teachers are handicapped because their impact is so limited in time. Of course, there are some who make the effort to spend more time with their class, and this often pays off — especially when a teacher works with his students on a one-to-one basis. God can use Sunday School teachers in a wonderful way even if their time with a child or teenager is limited.

Another cause for spiritual dropouts relates to the **atmosphere of a child's home**. Do the parents know Christ? Do they go to Sunday School *with* that child, or do they just send him or her while they stay home and watch the ball game on TV?

There are numerous factors that may mitigate against a child accepting Christ and living for Him.

• **The climate of the home**

Fighting — quarreling — disagreements among family members confuse and discourage a child. When parents do not have a happy marriage, the chips fly where they may — and they usually hit the child. If his parents claim to be Christians, he may conclude that if spiritual conversion produces these kinds of people, he doesn't need it. Christian parents need to heed the exhortation, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (Colossians 3:15).

• **Lack of Biblical Teaching**

Expecting a youngster to learn all about God and the Bible once a week in Sunday School and church is not enough. Church and Sunday School should augment and reinforce the Christian training received at home — not exclude it.

Christian parents have a responsibility to teach the Bible regularly in the home. Children who read God's Word and are encouraged to memorize Scripture are much more likely to remain true to God than one who does not have these high privileges. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). But many parents are weak in the Christian faith, or may not even know Christ themselves.

• **Sunday Christianity**

When God and the Bible and church are recognized on Sunday but neglected the other six days of the week, a

child or teenager does not see the relevance of Christianity to life. It's not real, vital, or meaningful to him. He is, therefore, not apt to surrender his life to Christ. The solution (and prevention) is clear: "Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31). Make your Christian devotion a part of all you do or say.

• **A Critical Attitude**

It's amazing what goes on in some homes. When a child continually hears his parents criticize the preacher, the organist, the choir, the deacons, and other believers, he often becomes disillusioned with Christianity. Boys and girls need to observe Christians who love one another. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

• **The mistreated child**

When a child is mistreated or neglected, he becomes angry at everyone, including God, and is much less likely to trust Him. For this reason God's Word says, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath" (Ephesians 6:4).

The child who is constantly badgered by his parents comes to dislike them. Since to him his mother and father are the representation of God, the child begins to feel that God is also "against" him. Consequently, he develops no appreciation for the Lord and may turn elsewhere in search of acceptance.

• **Lack of emotional relationships between child and parents**

One of the most serious

problems in many homes is the lack of emotional closeness between a child and his parents. Interestingly, there is a significant correlation between this relationship and a feeling of distance from God. When both parents are loving and kind, the child becomes loving and kind. He wants to follow the Lord. The joyful, loving Heavenly Father is mirrored in the lives of his happy loving parents!

• **The wrong friends**

Children tend to take their cues from their peers. When their friends are not Christians and come from secular backgrounds, the influence they exert may draw children away from the Lord. That's why it's important for parents to be aware of their children's friends.

If a child is associating with the wrong type of children at school, it may be wise for the parents to enroll him in a Christian school, if possible. It's well worth the investment. And if a family is attending a church where there are few young people or youth activities, why not change churches? It is essential that children become involved in a church where they not only hear sound gospel, but where they can develop fine Christian friends.

These are a few of the factors that influence children to either trust Christ or deny Him. Never forget that all behavior is caused. There are reasons why children become spiritual dropouts. As the issues are understood and remedied, many more children and young people will remain faithful to the Lord. □

by Lee and Gloria Bendell

OUR BUILDING PROJECT

WE HAVE JUST BEEN through the process of adding on an extension to the dining room of our home. It took a lot of planning that began long before we ever started. Our wise contractor (and Christian friend) told us that when our project was finished, it would appear like a part of the original structure — but with greater beauty and function — and would by no means look like an obvious add-on. An architect then took our ideas and incorporated them into drawings for city approval so they would satisfy the building codes. The initial task would be to pour the foundation and frame the structure, using extra concrete at critical weight-bearing corners. Cross beams would bear the weight of the roof and span open wall spaces.

Once construction started, it seemed like a long process with each step always a prerequisite for the following sequential steps. Skilled workmen had to be brought in for special phases of the project: to tape and spackle the wall board, to apply the outside stucco, and when nearing completion, to paint both the interior and exterior of the structure. It soon became obvious that we couldn't just carpet the new addition; since they all joined, we would have to continue the new carpet into the living and family rooms as well. Tying the new in with the old seemed like an unending task, but how pleased we were when we viewed the finished project!

There are many parallels between a home construction project and the work of building our Christian life — growing as a Christian. In Ephesians chapter 4 (KJV), Paul uses the word “edifying” three times. The purpose of God's gifts is “for the edifying of the body of Christ” (vs. 12). As the parts of the body work together, it “maketh increase of the body with the edifying of itself in love” (vs. 16). When we speak, it should be “that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (vs. 29). In the New International Version, this same word is translated into “building up” and “growing.” We also



recognize that our word for a building (an *edifice*) comes from the same root.

Have you taken time to plan your Christian life — your personal construction project? What steps should you take to please God in your Christian growth?

The great Architect is God who has a plan for us (Jeremiah 29:11). He tells us to meditate day and night on God's Word. This is His design for becoming successful (Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1:2). In Psalm 119, God encourages us to keep His statutes (vs. 2), hide His Word in our hearts (vs. 11), meditate on His decrees (vs. 23), obey His laws (vs. 44), and keep His precepts (vs. 36). God's Word provides the *blueprint* for Christian growth and a dedicated life!

Faith in Jesus Christ is the only *foundation* we need. “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid which is Jesus Christ” (I Corinthians 3:11). Hopefully, our faith also meets the *building codes* that ensure our foundational salvation: that we believe Jesus died for our sins, and that through Him we have eternal life when we invite Him to save us and be our Lord and Savior (John 1:12, 3:16; Romans 10:9-13; Ephesians 2:8, 9).

Like the essential *supporting corners and cross beams*, **our faith should center on the cross. Paul announced this as the focal point of his faith and preaching:** “For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus

Christ and Him crucified” (I Corinthians 2:2; also see Galatians 6:14). As disciples, we are told, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me” (Matthew 16:24). Each of us must identify the cross we carry. Is it health, children, finances, emotions, or relationships?

Sometimes skilled workmen are needed for special aspects of our Christian growth building project.

Perhaps talking with a pastor will resolve some spiritual questions. We may need a medical doctor's treatment for a physical ailment. Or if emotional problems are robbing us of joy in our Christian life, we would no doubt profit from the wise advice of a Christian counselor.

Similar to the finishing touches of a *paint job* are the changes to our interior and exterior life as we apply the knowledge of God's Word and our faith to our everyday life. As God's love permeates our lives, we are able to reflect and practice His love — a love that reaches out to God and others. The great commandment Jesus gives us is, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and all your mind...love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39). Paul summarizes this with, “And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love” (I Corinthians 13:13). Love, then, is the all-encompassing feature that blends the old person with the new creation. It's the bond that makes a house a home and changes us by making us more like Jesus.

What do you need to do to grow spiritually? **Building a Christian life is an ongoing project until the day when we see Jesus face to face.** When that takes place, just as a building inspector signs off from a job that has reached completion, we look forward to hearing, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Jesus will then remind us, “In My Father's house are many mansions.... I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2 — KJV). What joy will be ours when we take up residence in our beautiful new home in heaven! □



OUR WORLD TODAY

by Eva Hallam Solberg

SOCIAL INSECURITY

While most Americans are concerned about the viability of the Social Security system, many are ignorant about how the system works and changes that have been made for its implementation. About 60 percent of the surveyed respondents said they had no idea how much Social Security tax they pay. Only 14 percent knew that the normal retirement age had been raised to sixty-seven for Americans who are now under age thirty. And 76 percent said they need more information about the issues involved in Social Security.

(The Los Angeles Times)

DOES THE MOON AFFECT BEHAVIOR?

Many people still believe in the age-old idea of lunacy which says that the moon's phases can affect human behavior. But full-moon fever may be merely our own penchant for remembering strange events more clearly during times when the moon has waxed complete. Data from nearly 90,000 emergency trauma calls in 13 California counties show virtually no difference in the number of calls reporting intentional or accidental injuries during a full moon compared with other times. Previous investigations of lunacy have found no connection in either psychiatric patients or small numbers of the general population.

(HealthNews)

CRUCIFIX WITH AN ALARM

What's the well-dressed clergyman wearing in high

A wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.

—Ecclesiastes 8:5

crime areas? If a British company has its way, the answer will be a crucifix with a difference — a built-in alarm. The product introduced at the National Christian Resources Exhibition will cost nearly \$300. It looks like an ordinary crucifix, but one tug will set it off — and it's reported to be loud. According to a survey commissioned for the exhibition, one in three British clergy have been attacked while working.

(EP News Service)

HISTORY REVISIONISM

The *National Liberty Journal* reports that a New Orleans school board has removed the name of our first president from an elementary school because he was a slave owner. "To African Americans, George Washington has about as much meaning as David Duke," said self-professed civil rights leader Carl Galmon.

He went on to say, "Historic revisionism is a new wave of politically-correct dogma that is sweeping our nation's schools. The theory is that no matter how much good our forefathers did, the lone fact that they owned slaves makes them unspeakable villains. The truth is that Washington and Jefferson and men who shed blood,

sweat, and tears for this nation, hated slavery."

Quotes from the Founding Fathers include George Washington, who said, "There is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition of slavery."

Benjamin Franklin made the statement, "Slavery is an atrocious debasement of human nature," and John Adams asserted, "Every measure of prudence ought to be assumed for the eventual total extirpation of slavery."

(Pulpit Helps)

MYTH EXPOSED

People who say the soil is depleted and our food is no longer nutritious are unacquainted with the truth, or not telling it. They're usually trying to get you to take some sort of mineral supplements, according to Dr. Gary Banuelos, a soil scientist with the USDA Research Service in Fresno, California, and this echoes the conclusions of other experts.

If there's an inadequate amount of nutrients in the soil, plants may die because of insect infestation or disease, or they cannot be sold because of poor appearance.

If the fruits and vegetables you buy look healthy, you can be certain they contain the nutrients they should.

"The idea that the soil is being depleted of nutrients and thus our food doesn't contain nutrients is one of those myths we can't seem to eradicate," said Joanne Ikeda, a nutrition-education specialist at UC Berkeley.

(University of California, Berkeley Wellness Letter)

IMPLEMENTING ASSISTED SUICIDE

Changes are happening in Oregon where the nation's first doctor-assisted suicide law was passed, challenged, and confirmed by voters:

1. The State Health Division is going to extreme lengths to keep the public from finding out if doctors are "assisting" their patients into the after-life. A supervisor in the division's Center for Health Statistics threatened immediate termination of any employee found giving out unauthorized information.

2. The Hemlock Society is already casting off the safeguards it so loudly touted during the referendum debate by now endorsing the killing of individuals who are legally incapable of making the decision themselves, according to Burke J. Balch, director of the National Right to Life Committee's Department of Medical Ethics. The society has also moved beyond endorsing death for the "terminally ill" to include the "chronically ill." "In other words," Balch said, "this includes those whose quality of life does not meet the standards set forth by the Hemlock Society."

(Life in Oregon quoted in Pulpit Helps)

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NINETEEN WONDERFUL YEARS

For nineteen years the Narramore Christian Foundation has provided seminars for the sons and daughters of missionaries. These missionary kids (MKs) are about eighteen years of age and have just graduated from high school overseas.

Now they are coming to the United States, and in most cases they will be attending college. These world travelers are bright, well educated, and interested in devoting their lives to the Lord's work. Their potential is virtually unlimited.

This year the MK seminar is being given three times. This allows for more students to attend. It also enables the staff to give more personal attention to each one. Personality tests, vocational tests, individual counseling,

as well as group counseling are provided. Considerable emphasis is given on becoming better adjusted, as well as understanding the American way of life. Most of these students speak two or three languages. The pictures above are of just one of the three MK seminars. You'll notice them (1) posing for a group photo, (2) having fun, (3) walking across the campus with Mrs. Ruth Narramore, and (4) attending a lecture by Dr. Clyde Narramore.

Do pray for these seminars which are open to young people from all denominations and mission boards. Your sacrificial gifts make it possible for these future Christian leaders to receive the best of training as they arrive in their new home—*the United States of America!*

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