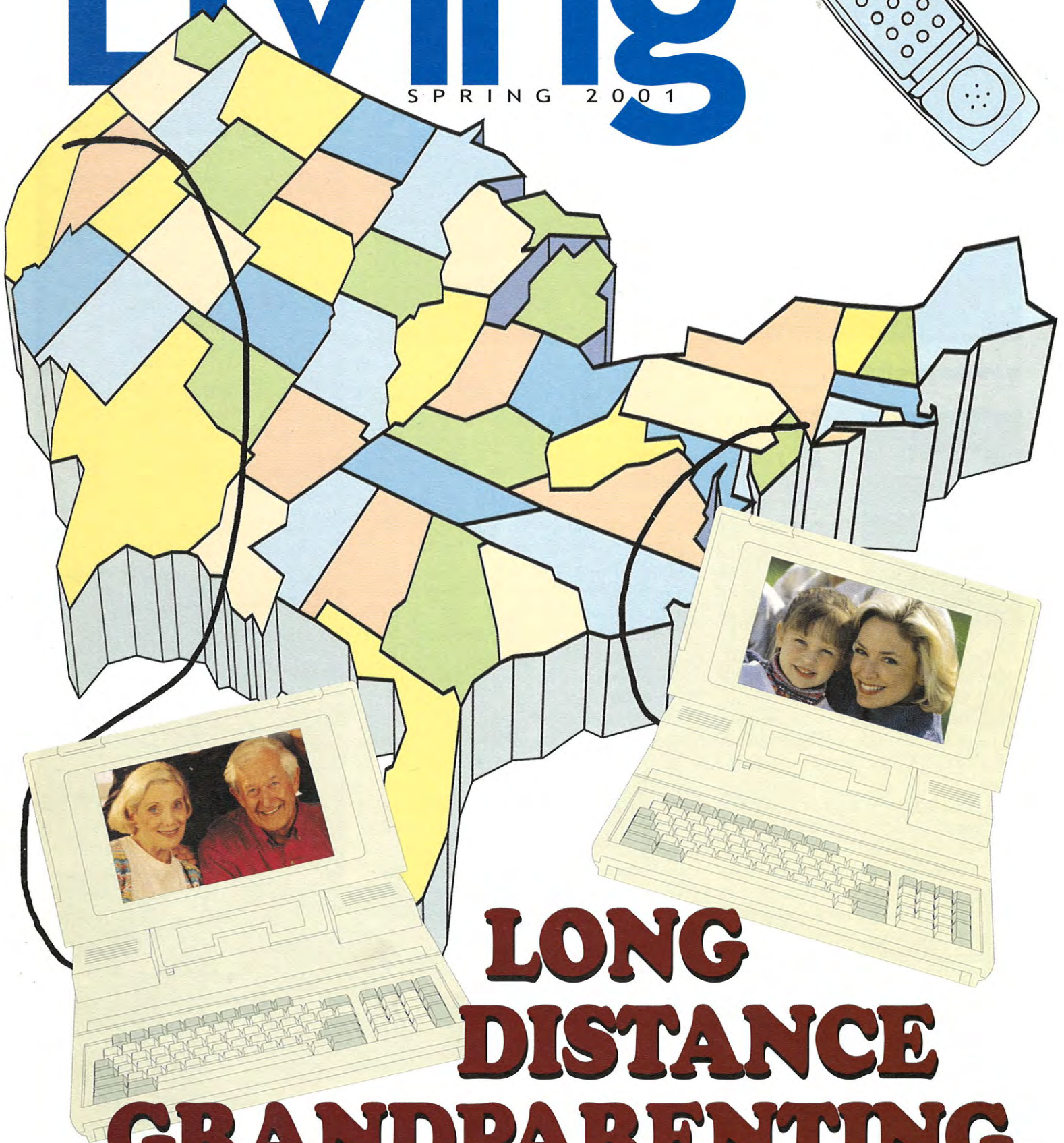


PSYCHOLOGY FOR
Living
SPRING 2001



**LONG
DISTANCE
GRANDPARENTING**

New LIFE at Easter



by Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.



Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

Easter! What a wonderful time of year! Spring gardens are brimming over with colorful signs of new life. Flowers cover hill-

sides and valleys. And for Christians, these signatures of new life bring fresh reminders of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the new spiritual life that faith in Christ has brought to us.

In this issue we are featuring several special articles dealing with new life. I am so pleased that we can publish a great article on long-distance grandparenting by my daughter in law, Kathryn Coad Narramore. Kathryn has lived most of her life separated from her dear grandmother by thousands of miles. Now as a young mother, she is drawing on her experiences to help other grandparents keep in touch with new lives in their families even though separated by many miles. Since Kathy and I live nearly 3,000 miles away from

Richard and Kathryn and their sons, Jeremiah and Thomas, we are paying special attention to this article! I have even slipped a picture of Kathy and our first grandchild, Jeremiah, into this issue!

I am also grateful that we can include a wonderful article on the potential emotional impact of the death and resurrection of Christ by my longtime friend and colleague, Dr. William Kirwan. In his article "The Darkness of the Cross and Our Emotions," Bill shows us that the crucifixion and resurrection were not primarily about Jesus' physical suffering. And they were not solely about our eternal redemption. They have immediate relevance to our feelings and our emotional adjustment today. "Some of our most troubling emotions can be comforted, soothed, and healed by a proper understanding of what already has been psychologically accomplished for us by Christ in the darkness of Golgotha."

In "NCF IN ACTION" you will find exciting reports of renewed life coming to Christians around the world through various NCF ministries. Kathy joins me in praying that you will have a most blessed season celebrating the new life the Christ brings to all who know Him! 

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Rules Don't Change Us Relationships Do

by Leslie Vernick

When I was fourteen, my life radically changed. I was the oldest of three children, and we lived with our mother in a tiny one-bedroom apartment on the north side of Chicago. I slept on the couch; my siblings slept on the floor.

Mom was an alcoholic and

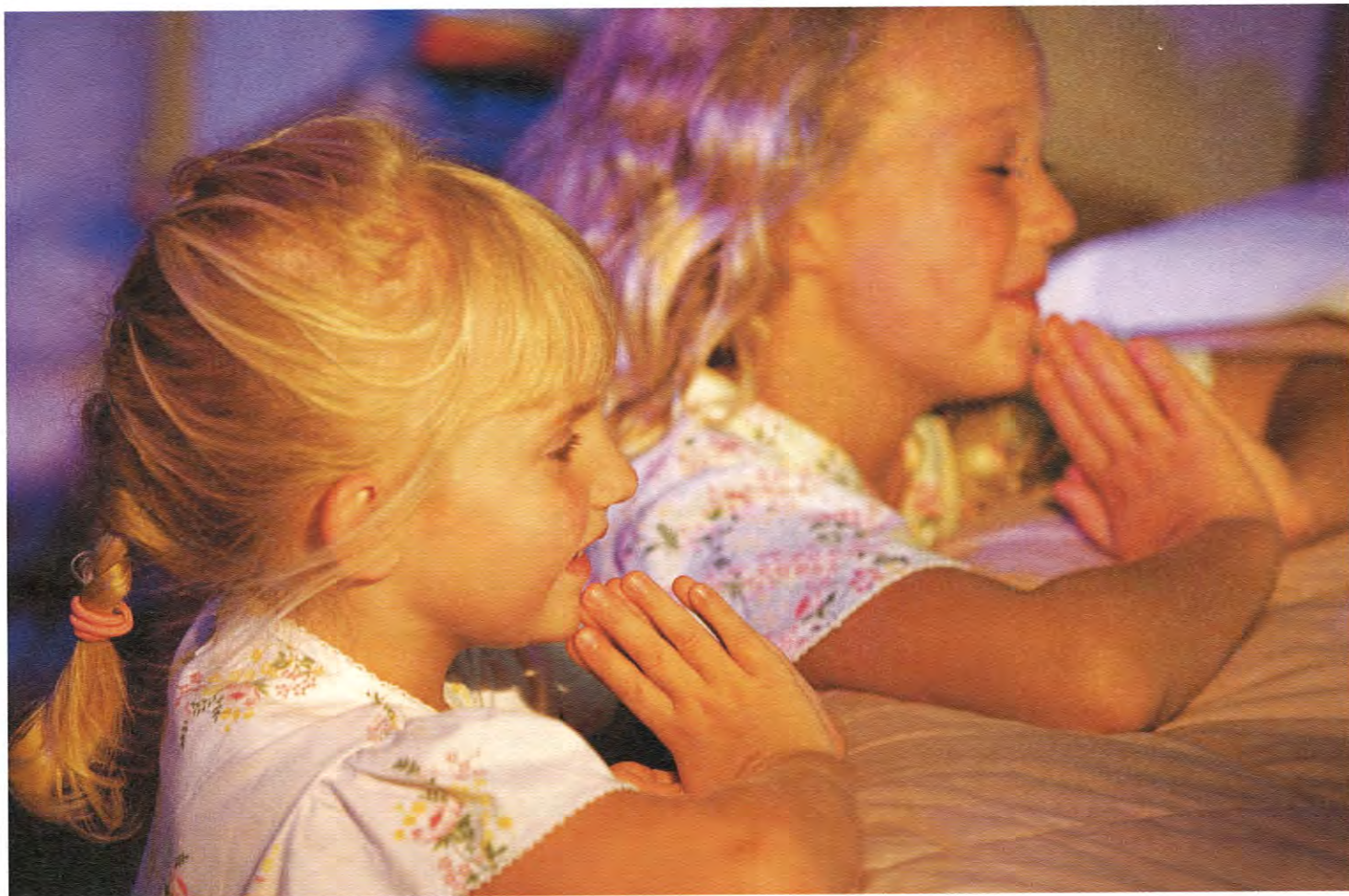


Leslie Vernick

had many emotional problems. She gave us little supervision. As a fourteen-year-old girl, I thought that was great. I could do whatever I wanted. I had no one telling me what to do, no rules other than, "Don't get in Mom's way."

Then the unthinkable happened. My father was awarded custody of us. After my parents' divorce, he recommitted his life to Christ, remarried, and moved to the Chicago suburbs.

I had to move to his home where there were rules. Lots of rules ... including attending church twice on Sunday and once during the week ... plus going to school regularly and doing my ➤



homework! I was angry – very angry – and my heart was as warm as a stone in Alaska. I didn't like all the rules, and I especially didn't like having this God business shoved at me.

But my father and stepmother were patient with me. They understood that I was experiencing a radical change. I remember my outbursts, and their kindness when I deserved punishment; my stepmother taking me shopping for new school clothes after I arrived with nothing but the clothes on my back; and getting three meals a day.

Their love and prayers began to dismantle the brick wall I had built around my heart. It was their love, not their rules, that began to affect my life. Yes, the rules helped to provide me with some structure, but my heart was responsive only to the love that was behind them.

Psychologists and counselors have known for years that the most important ingredient for successful therapy

is a good relationship. As a counselor, I might have great skills and all the information necessary to help someone, but if that person doesn't trust me or can't relate to me, I will never impact his or her life in a positive way.

We Christians sometimes lose our way toward spiritual maturity because we focus more on the rules of the faith than on our relationship with Jesus. He offers us far more than forgiveness — a personal and intimate relationship with Him in which He calls us His family and His friends.

For a long time I was content with being saved and making sure that my doctrine was correct. My devotions, when I had them, consisted of reading the Bible and looking for what I was supposed to do or obey. I did not know God deeply or intimately, nor did I experience the joy of the Lord or of God speaking to my innermost heart, about which I'd heard other

Christians speak. I knew the right things to believe, but my belief didn't result in any significant change of heart. I was the same person, struggling over and over again with the same sins.

Over the years I have learned that being a Christian is much more than getting a ticket to heaven. Jesus explained this when He said, "This is eternal life: that they may *know* you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3, *italics mine*). Knowing God starts now and lasts throughout eternity. We will never know Him completely because He is infinite. But knowing God will change us, for we cannot encounter the eternal I AM and remain the same.

As a young Christian in my late teens and early twenties I related to God mostly by asking Him for things. I prayed for good things to happen and bad things to stop happening. As I matured, I asked God for more

spiritual things. I wanted the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Then I wanted experiences with God. I wanted to see miracles. I wanted to feel the Holy Spirit's power in my life. I talked to God, telling Him what I wanted and needed, but I didn't take the time to listen, to allow Him to reveal His heart to me.

Recently God showed me this through my own son who was away at college. During a typical phone conversation, Ryan was making requests for money and other needs when he suddenly stopped and asked, "Mom, how are you doing?" I nearly dropped the phone. His question marked a radical change in our relationship. I was no longer a parent who just provided for my child's needs; I was a person in a relationship with another person who cared about me!

My prayers have changed. I no longer think of prayer as presenting my list of needs or wants to God and then waiting for Him to respond with a yes or no. More than anything else, I want to *know* God. Beyond enjoying His gifts, I want to know the Giver. As the Apostle Paul prayed, "I want to know Christ" (Philippians 3:10). My prayer life has turned away from getting answers from God toward *knowing* God.

But how? What does it take to know Him, to have an intimate walk with Him?

Knowing God Involves Talking With and Listening to God

Knowing God intimately involves a relationship where there is a communion of persons.

It is difficult to feel close to someone if no meaningful conversation takes place between you. When you ask Him your heart's questions, do you wait for an answer? It is often in the labor of waiting that trust is born.

Knowing God Involves Learning to Discern God's Voice

As children, many of us played that game in which we were blind-

folded, spun around, and then pointed toward a destination that we had to reach while still blindfolded. The voices of the crowd shouted every-which-way to go. Some tried to confuse the blindfolded person to stop her reaching her goal. Usually one loyal friend in the crowd tried to give accurate directions. But which voice was the one to be trusted. When the blindfold was removed, she found out if she'd trusted the right voice.

Jesus tells us, "My sheep listen to My voice" (John 10:27). Sometimes we confuse the voice of God with our own internal voices or even that of the deceiver, Satan. These may be voices of self-righteousness, self-pity, self-indulgence, or the tyrannical voice of self-condemnation which says, *You miserable failure! You really blew it. Who do you think you are?*

Don't be misled. These voices are not God's. Deepening our relationship with Him involves coming to recognize His voice and learning to tune out the ones that distract and lie to us.

Intimacy with God Involves Valuing What He Says

A couple was squabbling in my office. "He never listens to what I say," she cried. "I hear exactly what she says," he retorted. "I just don't think it's very important!"

Those simple statements revealed much about the quality of their relationship.

God loves it when we believe Him, and our relationship grows deeper when we value what He says. Only as we allow faith and trust to permeate our inner life can our outer life begin to change.

Walking with God Intimately Needs to Include Obeying Him

Sometimes we think that obeying God means gritting our teeth and following the rules. But Jesus doesn't desire external conformity or an intellectual commitment to orthodoxy any more than a parent desires robotic children. He desires us to

love Him and trust Him by willingly yielding our will to His.

Jesus tells us in John 14:21 that when we obey Him, we show our love toward Him. No one drifts into intimacy with another person. It requires time, commitment, and sometimes plain hard work. God will not disclose Himself to those who are not interested in the things that He is interested in or who are not willing to trust and follow His voice.

Intimacy with God Involves Loving Him with our Whole Heart

Rules won't change us, but a growing relationship with Christ will. The Scriptures teach us that we love Him as a response, because He first loved us (I John 4:19). It is this union, our abiding in Him and He in us, where change begins to take place in our innermost being: our heart. This is where we begin to take on the character of the one we love – Christ's nature within us.

Loving God Changes Us From the Inside Out

Jesus tells us that we cannot bear fruit unless we are rooted in Him (John 15). Just as a branch is in essence and nature like the vine from which it sprouts, we are to reflect God's image in us, and God is love. He tells us that when we love Him, we will obey Him. Rules don't bring heart obedience – but love does!

God wants and longs for us to desire and seek a personal and intimate relationship with Him above all else. In order to do this and to grow up into maturity and become more like Jesus, we need to begin by seeking what God is up to during the more difficult times and understanding our troubles from His perspective.

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LONG DISTANCE GRANDPARENTING

by Kathryn Coad Narramore

Our son has inherited a tragic family trait from me: long-distance grandparents. All of his grandparents live at least 1000 miles away and have lived there since his birth. It is the kind of long distance that requires plane tickets from New Jersey to Florida or California and vice versa. At least my grandmother and I lived in the same town until I was twelve. Then my family moved to the other side of the world, from New Zealand to America, and we suddenly learned a lot about distance and its effects upon relationships. Now I am using those lessons again while my young family navigates the relational issues that 1000 miles can produce.

Nobody seems able to move, though my husband and I seriously discussed relocating for grandparents before Jeremiah was born. I remain hopeful, however, that our son will also inherit another grandparent family trait from me: my grandmother remained a person with a special influence on my life in spite of our long-distance relationship. Gram didn't have

buckets of money to provide frequent trips and phone calls from New Zealand, but she still reached out to me all the way across the Pacific Ocean with her grandma love, always making sure I could feel the love that she was sending.

When my parents "hijacked" four of her grandchildren to America, Gram had to find new ways of expressing her love as a grandparent. Now instead of having us over for lunch, she sent us letters telling of her news and asking all about our lives in the States. The phone rates were too high for casual conversations, but she creatively recorded audiotapes, sending messages to each grandchild as well as general greetings to the family. She always remembered and celebrated each of our birthdays and special events even when she couldn't make a birthday cake or come to a party.

Our visits, though infrequent, were the best of all: No longer could I go and stay with her for a week, all on my own, during school holidays, but I stayed with her during my few trips back to New Zealand. And Gram came to America to visit us several times. I knew she enjoyed the time with my mother — her

own daughter — during these visits. I was perfectly aware that she loved my brothers, my sister, and my father, and that she came to see them as well as me. I also could figure out that a trip to America was an exciting one for her, something quite different to talk about over the teacups back home. But I never doubted that she really had come to see me. Our relationship had a constancy surpassing 6500 physical miles.

Now my husband and I have been working on ways to lessen the distance between our son Jeremiah and his grandparents, so we are updating my Gram's long-distance love techniques. Visits have also been our most important tool in growing this relationship, but we have some other long-distance techniques as well. We recently sent off our first video featuring Jeremiah's latest accomplishments: walking, opening Christmas presents, playing peekaboo. A tape from grandparents reading some favorite children's stories is under construction. He smiles delightedly when I hold the phone to his ear to hear greetings from both grandmothers, although he has yet to figure out that he can talk back. We look at photographs and name our relatives so he knows who owns the voices on the telephone. Our most exotic grandparent technology is certainly the Web camera that his daddy is setting up. Soon we will be able to have video phone calls, and Jeremiah will become familiar with his grandparents' faces as well as their voices.

The longest videoconference in the world will never replace the optimal arrangement — grandparents living one block away and seeing him just as often as they and he and we would please. But visual images do make grandparents a presence and so break the ground for deliberate times together during visits.

Yet even with grandparents in our neighborhood, it would be little benefit if they didn't develop a relationship with Jeremiah that would make him feel special and loved. Videos, photographs, and fancy technology help, but to do so without love would make his grandparents just another image on a screen, no more than a happy face in an age when images are so plentiful and cheap. The challenge facing long-distance grandparents hasn't changed. It is still about maintaining a quality relationship in spite of all the miles between.

My grandmother had a good relationship with me going into our distance adventure. My outgoing and busy family didn't understand me since I was shy and preferred a good book to outdoorsy activities. I slowed down family vacations because I was terrified of boats and couldn't swim, and so I felt that I didn't fit in with their idea of fun. Although I had an ally in my mother in my love of books and solitude, she was a busy preacher's wife and my three siblings were louder than I. My dad has told me that it took him years to get a grip on my quiet and sensitive personality, and perhaps as a consequence, it also took me awhile to understand myself.

Understanding my own unique personality might have taken me much longer without having one person, Gram, who always made my quiet and introverted self feel complete-

ly at home. Her personality differs from mine, but she had the wisdom to accept me without trying to make any changes. She also had the time to let me just be. She was the family member with whom I didn't feel weird or out of place.

Remembering the way my grandmother made me feel so accepted also helps me as a mother since my son is radically different from me. I keep reminding myself that the noise and action he craves and creates isn't obnoxious, but a part of his unique and God-given personality. This kind of love is my grandmother's legacy, one she still works on and one that will remain long after she is no longer with us.

Active grandparenting, even if it has to be from a distance, is God's plan; the greatest promises that God makes to the Israelites involve the generations who will follow. God promises Abraham, "I will continue this everlasting covenant between us, generation after generation. It will continue between me and your offspring forever. And I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you" (Genesis 17:7). We see repeatedly the importance of family generations in the Bible and how older generations influence younger ones. God doesn't just promise land to the Israelites for a season; He promises them a homeland that will last for generations if they are faithful.

The inheritance that we leave to grandchildren is not merely material. Our spiritual legacy is even more important. As the Psalmist writes, "But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear Him, and His righteousness with their children's children" (103:17). Paul also remembers this spiritual legacy when encouraging Timothy, reminding him that his faith has descended to him from his mother and grandmother (II Timothy 1:5).

In fact, the responsibilities of forefathers to their descendants as depicted in the Bible can seem formidable since we see the sins, as well as the virtues of men and women affecting the generations following them. But we also see the joy that an older generation has in their grandchildren: children's children are a crown to the aged (Proverbs 17:6). I always felt sure of my grandmother's joy in me. Developing this easygoing and nondiscriminating love is a classic grandparent trademark. I have watched my own parents become utterly smitten with each of their eight very different grandchildren. In fact, these differences seem to be a large part of their grandparental delight and they can list each child's funny quirks and favorite activities.

Sometimes as a tired mother, I find it unbelievable when I see the energy and patience my parents and my parents-in-law can expend on Jeremiah's behalf, and I am inspired to keep my phone and cameras handy. I want to keep all lines of communication ►



open so that our children will experience their grandparents as an active and available presence. I'm excited that Jeremiah has four extra grown-ups in his life who love him and who will share good times and bad with him. I only had one active grandparent in my life and what a difference she made. My parents and parents-in-law all love Jesus and are passing on a priceless faith legacy to their grandchildren.

Here is a short list of ways for grandparents to stay emotionally connected with their grandchildren when they are separated by many miles. It isn't a list of the available technology or of creative ways to communicate; rather it consists of a few thoughts on how to use those technologies most effectively to stay in touch with a grandchild.

Listen. Make phone dates with individual grandchildren and keep those dates. The conversation length will probably depend on the age of the grandchild, but prepare for the call by thinking of specific questions to ask or stories to report.

Organize. Call during or after big events: birthdays, Christmas, school plays, etc. and listen carefully to descriptions of those events. You might be expecting to hear about a sixth-grade graduation, but a grandchild might need to talk about a confusing relationship with a friend.

Persist. Without the luxury of close proximity, being a familiar presence takes commitment. Sometimes this is a financial commitment, like encouraging collect calls if a child needs to talk. But it might also mean navigating through difficult family circumstances or a period of adolescent struggles or rebellion.

See your grandchildren as often as possible and build lots of individual grandchild times into those visits. Encourage older grandchildren to come and stay a week on their own, without parents or siblings, if that is possible.

Accept. Grandparents are more aware than anyone how

the world has changed and how fast those changes have taken place. Grandchildren's problems, and even their joys, might seem a little bizarre at times, but focusing on the differences doesn't help.

Pray. We've all heard stories about the power of a praying grandmother: be one! (Grandfathers too.) Hundreds and thousands of miles do not limit the power of prayer.

Share. I have always found my grandmother's life fascinating. Although she didn't always realize it, I loved hearing her stories, even her sad ones. I learned a lot about how the world works and how people survive within it. Letters and emails are perfect venues for sharing lives from a distance.

Ultimately, the quality of the relationship is the only goal of these long-distance activities. I don't think Jeremiah or any child will look at all our trouble with Internet connections and videotapes and see love in the technological details. He will know his grandparents love him because of the time shared together, whether on the phone, via a Web camera, or during a visit, and because they remember the fine points of his life.

A letter addressed especially to Jeremiah will seem marvelous when he is three, but he will feel even more singled out and loved when the content of that letter addresses him as a unique person. Perhaps a grandparent will express sympathy with his intense dislike of green

peas or mention a particularly friendly dog that he would like to meet. (Jeremiah really hates green peas and adores dogs, so these would be very personalized messages.) Maybe as an older child he will know about their love because he can talk to them in a way he may even find difficult with

his own parents. Relationships, even long distance ones, can flourish because grandparents have more time, patience and wisdom when it comes to listening.

At the age of eighty-five, my grandma is updating her communications. I recently received my first email from her. "I feel like I am back at primary school learning this EMAIL," she writes. After giving me some news updates and asking about my husband, son, pregnancy, and new home, she signs off: "Maybe I will do better [on the email] next time. The main thing is just to say I love you and miss you. Bye for now. Love you. Gram."

Katherine Coad Narramore has a master's degree in English literature and is a full-time mom. She resides in Jersey City, New Jersey, with her husband Richard Narramore and their son Jeremiah. Bruce and Kathy Narramore are two of Jeremiah's four long-distance grandparents!



Pray. We've all heard stories about the power of a praying grandmother: be one! (Grandfathers too.) Hundreds and thousands of miles do not limit the power of prayer.

When A Loved One Takes His Life: A Father's Painful Legacy

by Penny Schlaf Musco

Dad used to be fun. He made fudge and wove elaborate stories as I sat on his knee as a child. He was also a generous man, always ready to help someone in need. But even as a young girl, I sensed he was driven — a workaholic in pursuit of the money and recognition he felt equated with success. I also realized that Dad had a lot of burdens: He had to support a wife, her parents and three children on a salesman's commissions, and his own father was not well. Still, I didn't really care about any of that; what I wanted was my daddy.

Since I was a sensitive child, acutely tuned in to all the unspoken stresses and strains in our household and determined not to add to them, I always sought to be the good girl. I hoped to win my father's approval and attention and lessen his stress with exemplary behavior and grades. At the same time, I was also working to gain approval from my heavenly Father, assuming that God was as demanding of me as my dad. In tenth grade, however, a guest speaker for our church's youth group spoke of God in a much more personal way than I had ever heard before. That day, I cast my lot with the One whom I eventually discovered loved me unconditionally.

A few months later, Dad took a better job, which brought greater financial security but increased pressure. I knew my father had formed the habit of frequenting bars in the last few years; now he began bringing liquor into the house. The next year brought yet another position and more money, but Dad still was not satisfied — he was "a failure," he kept telling my mother. He continued drinking and started taking tranquilizers, a lethal combination. I hated it when he came home late at night with his reddened eyes and quietly belligerent manner. I usually made him dinner and tried to humor him, but he often reduced me to tears and I would escape to my room, pleading with God to do something.

Christmas break during my sophomore year of college was a nightmare. Dad watched football on television, downing a series of drinks, preoccupied with his own thoughts and hardly paying attention to anyone. Earlier that year he had been fired from his job, and the new business he started was failing. One evening I sat next to him on the couch, longing to shake him, to do anything to make him talk to me so I could tell him I was sorry his work was not going well,

that I loved him, and I knew things would work out. I never got the chance. I went back to school with a heavy heart.

It was the last time I saw him. On a cold January night, he left his wallet and a brief note on his office desk, went outside and, sitting against a roll of snow fencing, propped a rifle against his jaw and pulled the trigger.

After an initial hysterical reaction, I was numb. That carried me through the funeral and the many changes that followed. The rage and grief that should have come never did. I plunged back into school, soon meeting the man who would become my husband and marrying him the next year.

It was another six years before my suppressed emotions rose to the surface. Stuck in a dead-end job and uncertain of my future, I found myself contemplating suicide. The thought terrified me. What if I was destined to be like my father in his work — unhappy and unfulfilled? Was his death my fate as well? After a series of panic attacks — episodes of intense fear — I knew I needed help, but was afraid to admit it. *Christians didn't need therapy, Christians shouldn't even have thoughts like mine*, I wrongly assumed. *And where was God in all this, anyway? Why wasn't He helping me?* Only my husband's gentle prodding and the realization that I couldn't live like that, yet didn't want to kill myself, drove me to visit a psychiatrist.

What I discovered shocked me: I was very much like my father. The paralyzing fear of failure — the need to "be somebody," never satisfied with what I had accomplished — all came out. When the doctor asked me if I wanted to die, I cried out, "No!" My suicidal thoughts were labeled obsessive. I was repulsed by them, but because I identified so strongly with my father, I was fearful I would be like him in that way, too.

It took about a year and a half of therapy working through varied emotions such as grief, anger, abandonment, confusion and overcoming a reluctance to take medication before I could begin to heal. The drugs helped tremendously, but most of all I learned to take care of myself emotionally. I discovered that I don't have to constantly prove my worth to myself — I am valuable just as I am because God says so.¹ Nor do I have to be at the top of my profession or earn a lot of money to feel satisfied. As a matter of fact, I've come to realize I don't want to make the sacrifices necessary for that to happen. What I enjoy most

Legacy, continued on page 13

Truth of Consequences

Teaching Teens Responsibility When “Helping” Doesn’t Help



by Jeenie Gordon

“My daughter *will* take the PSAT exam,” screamed a mother with a contorted face as she came flying into my high school counseling office unannounced. “And it’s *your* responsibility to see that she does!”

Her daughter had not met the registration deadline to take the exam although nearly 300 other students had. But this parent insisted on an exception for her child. And the mom was a junior high teacher – she

should have known better.

An hour later, a doctor whose son had also missed the deadline walked into my office. When I explained the number of times and ways the students had been notified, the father replied, “He will just have to miss it. He ignored the instructions and will have to accept the consequences.”

Both of these parents deeply loved their teenagers and wanted them to take the preparatory test for college entrance. Both of the adolescents neglected their responsibilities. The big difference, however, was that the

junior high teacher insisted on rescuing her daughter, while the physician allowed his son to accept the natural consequences of his behavior.

As a private therapist for 10 years and as a high school counselor who has dealt with more than 8,000 adolescents, I have observed the devastating results of parental rescuing. Rescuing helps teens cop out. It encourages them to believe there are no consequences for their actions. It makes them think someone will fix things every time. And it robs them of the opportunity to learn self-suffi-



was panic stricken.

Robert had a pattern. He would get caught breaking the law, wind up spread-eagled as the handcuffs were clamped on, take a ride to the police station, and be booked. As soon as he got to a phone, he'd call his mom. Mom would beg and borrow the bail money and race to the city jail to rescue Robert. Not only was it getting expensive, but it was taking an emotional toll on her.

Finally, she called me. "Robert is back in jail," she cried. "This time the bail is \$1,000. I just don't know how I am going to get the money. I have cleaned out my savings, taken salary advances, used my credit card and borrowed from friends and family. What should I do?"

"Leave him there," I replied.

A touch of terror came into her voice. "I just can't," she sobbed.

"Robert has been in and out of jail so many times, I can hardly count them," I reminded her. "I have repeatedly heard this story, seen your tears and witnessed the traumatic effect it has had on you. It is time Robert spends a night behind bars. Unless he is faced with the consequences of his behavior, his chances of changing are slim."

Until Mom was willing to "go to the wall," there simply was no reason for Robert to change because he had the best of both worlds. He also had little respect for his mother. It didn't matter to him that she nearly hocked her soul to get the bail money, and paying her back was out of the question. He took the freedom and ran – back to crime and drugs.

But this time, Mom built up her courage and left him in the cell overnight. When she became unwilling to assist him in his destructive pattern, he came face to face with reality. He had to contend with a night in a dank, dirty, smelly jail cell among people he considered to be the dregs of society.

Soon, Robert chose to make some healthy changes in his life. A year later, he told Mom that the night of incarceration was the best thing that ever happened to him.

The 'Wailing Wall'

One place where consequences are learned is in my school. Around graduation time, my office might well be named the Wailing Wall. It's the place where the game is up. Tears flow and promises are made — all too late.

Report cards are mailed home six times a year, and parents are called and sent numerous letters. For four years, students are told what they need in order to graduate and are contacted for needed make-up courses in adult school.

About six weeks before graduation, however, panic sets in. The annuals and the graduation announcements have been ordered. The cap-and-gown pictures have been taken, expensive clothes have been bought, and Grandma's plane ticket has been purchased.

But something is missing. The student has courses to complete in adult school. Time has run out. There is no way to complete the requirements in time to march across the stage. My heart goes out to these students and their families for the pain and disappointment they suffer. It is difficult to watch tears flow down the bronzed cheeks of a 190-pound football player.

Teaching Consequences

How can we as parents effectively teach our children the consequences of their actions?

Betty Chase in her book, *Discipline Them, Love Them* (David C. Cook Publishing, 1982), talks about two kinds of consequences – natural and logical. Natural consequences occur when the parent stays out of the way and allows nature to run its course. This permits children to learn the results of poor choices.

Logical consequences are intentionally produced by the parent, who intervenes and structures a plan that is not naturally there. The parent decides on a negative consequence for the child that is logically related to the misbehavior. The child is able to see a correlation between the consequence and the act, and the parent can easily apply the consequence to other behavioral concerns. ➤

ciency and independence.

Single parents often rescue their teenagers out of guilt because the child doesn't have two parents in the home. Money is scarce and time is limited, so they reason that the family has already suffered too much pain.

The Rescued

Robert was fun, enjoyed life and possessed a free spirit. He was also a drug user. To support his habit, he got involved in a variety of illegal activities, and his single-parent mom

Until Mom was willing to go the wall, there simply was no reason for Robert to change.

When she became unwilling to assist him in his destructive pattern, Robert came face to face with reality.

1. Chores

When my daughter was in junior high, one of her chores was to fold laundry. She hated it, and I grew tired of hearing her complaints.

There's got to be a change around here, I thought.



"Kathi, I've got good news,"

I announced. "You won't have to fold the family laundry any longer."

After the cheering stopped, I added, "You are becoming a young lady, so you are now totally responsible for all your own laundry – washing, drying, folding, hanging and ironing."

From then on, there were a couple of times I heard, "Mom, where are my jeans?"

Digging through the hamper, Kathi found them on the bottom and asked, "Hey, how come these weren't washed? That's what I wanted to wear today," or "I don't have any clean underwear. What am I supposed to do?"

Feigning empathy, I said, "Oh dear! How awful your clothes are still in the hamper."

Eventually Kathi realized I would not rescue her, and she quickly learned the natural consequences of her actions. She either had her clothes laundered and ready, or she found something else to wear.

It is important for your adolescent to understand that everyone is responsible for certain jobs in the home. Assign your teen several chores. Then build in the logical consequences of what will occur if they don't get done. Make the consequences distasteful enough to discourage continued, neglectful behavior. Examples might include:

"If the lawns are not mowed by 6

o'clock on Saturdays, you will not be allowed to go out with your friends that evening."

"If the bathrooms are not cleaned Monday and Thursday, there will be no TV."

"If dinner dishes are not cleaned up Monday through Thursday, you cannot make or receive any phone calls that evening."

Kids soon discover that they are unwilling to pay the consequences. It's not worth it.

2. Designer Clothes

I see many students in my office who dress so well it makes even adults envious. Barbie was one of these students. She was constantly sporting new outfits.

"Where do you get all those clothes?" I asked.

A giggle escaped her pretty lips. "Well, I just ask Mom," she responded. "She gives me the credit card and I go to the mall."

Over the years of raising a teen, I used some ideas that have proven successful for maintaining balance in this area.

Give a clothing allowance. Determine a monthly amount you feel is fair and can fit into your budget. Certain items like winter coats, boots, school shoes and underwear may need to be purchased outside the allowance by the parent. Decide which necessities are to be additional.

Your teenager will soon learn how to look for sales, shop at discount stores and use the allocated money wisely. Occasionally, there may be an item of clothing that will take two months' allowance. Consider giving an advance. Teens feel the sting of natural consequences when they must wait two months for more money. They may decide that such future purchases may not be worth it.

Have them pay a fair share. If you have contracted to purchase two

pairs of school shoes yearly and your adolescent wants a more expensive pair, negotiate!

Teen: "Dad, I want these shoes, but they cost \$50 more."

Dad: "Well, son, I would like for you to have them, too. Tell you what I will do. My budget for shoes is \$40. When you have the remainder of the money, I will add my part and we will get them."

Dad set the boundaries, then let his son make the final choice. The son was able to see the natural consequences of whatever he chose to do.

Allow work for additional money. If it is in the family budget, you can pay your teen to do windows, clean the garage, wax the car, clean various rooms, reorganize closets, bake, update photo albums, trim bushes and trees, plant flowers, wax floors, cook dinner, polish silverware, bathe the dog or pull weeds. Pay only when the job is completed. Your child may also get such jobs in the neighborhood.

3. Wheels and Deals

Many adolescents at my high school lay rubber and screech all over the parking lot. Most of them not only did not help purchase the car, but they also are not accountable for gas, upkeep or insurance. Unreal!

I suggest you set aside an amount you can afford for a car. Ask your teen to match the amount by working. When he earns as much as you've put aside, both of you can go car shopping. Your teen needs to have a job so he can pay at least half the expenses for insurance and all the gasoline, lube and oil jobs.

Studies show that when a student gets a car, his grades generally plummet. Teenagers, however, who have worked for their cars and their upkeep tend to do better in school. They learn to budget time and money and become more appreciative.

Becky was upset over her daugh-



ter's failing grades after she received a new car. "I'm at my wit's end," Becky exclaimed. "What should I do?"

"Take the car keys," was my suggestion.

"I couldn't do that," she feebly replied. "Besides, what if she has another set made?"

"Sell the car," I answered.

The mother's mouth flew open, her eyebrows arched, and she looked as though I had asked her to shoot her offspring.

Mom was unwilling to set firm rules for the privilege of car ownership or to build in logical consequences when they were ignored. The kid had use of the auto carte blanche, while Mom wrung her hands.

4. The Big "T"

Telephones. Teenagers and phones are almost synonymous. Not only do they see most of their friends at school all day, but they also are on the phone half the night discussing the same stuff they talked about during the day.

Phone conversations can be a healthy outlet, especially for girls, when usage is not out of control. Because teenagers aren't terrific with self-restriction, parents need to set the limits.

Decide on the number of phone calls each day.

Set a time limit per phone call or for total time.

Choose when the phone may be used – after dinner, following completion of homework or when chores are done.

Decide who answers incoming calls.

Have the teen pay for his own long-distance calls.

When the adolescent chooses to ignore the telephone limits, logical consequences should occur. For example: "No outgoing or incoming

calls for two days."

It is easier for everyone concerned to install a phone in the adolescent's bedroom. I am totally against the idea, however. Monitoring becomes nearly impossible, the teen is more apt to feel violated when the parent wishes to set limits, and a power struggle can ensue. Save yourself the hassle.

The Bible describes several parents who rescued their children to "death." Eli, a respected priest in Israel, raised his charge, little Samuel, in the actual house of God. But Eli's own sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were allowed to perform horrendous deeds right in the temple as Eli stood by.

One would think that since Samuel observed all this while growing up, he would have been different with his own offspring. But his sons, Joel and Abijah, took bribes and otherwise perverted justice. A group of elders talked to Samuel about them, but it was too late. Samuel had failed to correct his sons and to show them the consequences of their actions the way Eli had done.

Then there was King David. His son, Amnon, raped Tamar, his half-sister. Though David was angry, he refused to confront his son. Later, Amnon was killed on his brother Absalom's order. The spoiled Absalom also went on to disgrace his father and die an early death.

These were godly fathers who were brokenhearted over their children's waywardness. And these were sons whom the fathers rescued. Rescuing is the easy road. Accountability is hard. It takes guts, stamina and consistency.

God has given us the responsibility of guiding our children, and they deserve parents who love them enough to quit the rescuing game. Rescuing your children makes them unaccountable.

So let your adolescents take their lumps! They must learn responsibility for their actions. They must learn the truth of consequences.

Jeenie Gordon is a single mom and a marriage, family and child therapist.

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is being with my family and friends, participating in church, school and community affairs, and working part-time. A loving and caring husband who is nothing like my father, a delightful daughter who is just like her father, and a few good friends who know my circumstances help keep me on track.

I also fight back with what I know to be true. I bask in God's love, remembering that His plans for me do not include condemnation and harm, but hope and a future.² I have proven the apostle Paul's words that God's grace is sufficient, because His power can be seen even in my weakness.³ I have also had many opportunities to support and comfort other people with emotional problems, and can only stand back in awesome thanks and wonder at how many good things have come out of so much bad.⁴

In the book, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Edmond Dantes is unjustly imprisoned and, in a moment of anguish, contemplates taking his own life, but then recoils at the thought: "Die? Oh, no! It would hardly have been worthwhile to live, to suffer so much and then to die now. No, I desire to live, to fight to the end. I wish to reconquer the happiness that has been taken from me."

As I read this in the midst of my despair, I determined this would be my response as well, that I would work through my pain and come out better with God's help. And I have. I only wish Dad had, too.

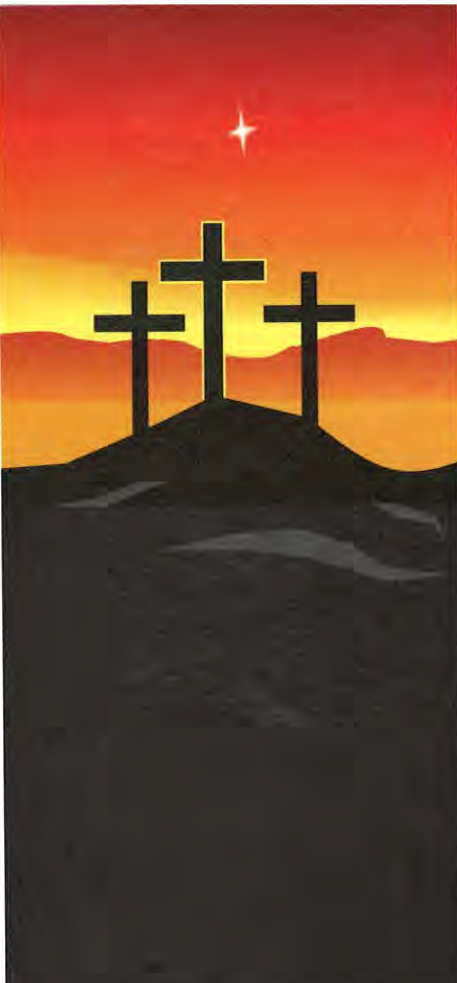
1 Psalm 139:14

2 Jeremiah 29:11

3 II Corinthians 12:9

4 II Corinthians 1:3-5

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The Darkness Of The Cross and Our Emotions

by William T. Kirwan

This summer I was a coach at a Christian sports camp where every evening several hundred high schoolers gathered to hear a certain gifted youth speaker. On the third night he spoke on the cross and the crucifixion of Jesus. His message, delivered with great emotion and vivid detail, pictured Jesus' back a mass of open flesh, thrust against the rough cross. His hands and feet pierced through with jagged five-inch nails while struggling to breathe, and so forth.

Inwardly I kept saying, *Tell them what really happened; give them the whole story.* The Romans crucified slaves and prisoners on a regular basis. On one occasion, it was reported by Josephus that they crucified 3000 Jews for insurrection and rebellion. Crucifixion certainly was one of the most cruel and painful executions in the ancient world, but we need to understand that it wasn't the physical death and suffering of Jesus that was the focal point of His crucifixion on Golgotha.

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke all state: "And it was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour" (Matthew 27:45, Mark 15:33, Luke 23:44).

Jesus was crucified about 9:00 in the morning, and the accounts in the Gospels are clear that it was a busy time as He was humiliated and shamed by the thief, the crowd and the Jewish leaders. But suddenly at noon when the sun was at its zenith, a miraculous darkness fell over the entire land, and all the busyness came to a sudden and jarring halt.

We hear nothing of those three hours, nothing of the crowd or the leaders, nothing from Jesus on the cross. However, I would believe those three hours of darkness were the central moments in Jesus' atoning death for humankind. The physical crucifixion was mere child's play compared to the materials of punishment that God the Father now applied to Jesus the Son.

The hymn writer states:
*Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in
When God, the mighty Maker, died*

For man, the creature's, sin.

The Significance of the Darkness

In the darkness, Jesus was condemned as our substitute. He took our place and absorbed the condemnation due us because of our rebellion and sin. He was condemned to "outer darkness," a term He used to describe death and hell (separation from God). William Hendriksen says, "Hell came to Calvary that day, and the Savior descended into it and bore its horrors in our stead." In those darkness hours, Jesus redeemed us from our enslavement to evil, and He reconciled us with His Father, who was to us an enemy and an adversary.

The truths of what Jesus did for us have enormous implications, not only for our eternal life beyond, but also for our emotional life down here. Some of our most troubling emotions can be comforted, soothed, and healed by a proper understanding of what already has been psychologically accomplished for us by Christ in the darkness of Golgotha. Just as humanity's emotional life was radically disturbed and distorted by the "Fall" in Genesis 3, so too there is magnificent healing potential for us at the cross. There we are reconciled with the Father, and restoration from the Fall is begun.

The Abandonment of Jesus

First, in the darkness, Jesus was deserted and abandoned by His heavenly Father. The darkness lifted at 3:00 p.m. and as it did, Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" The word "forsaken" means "to be left behind, deserted, abandoned, or left in the lurch." Because of our sin and rebellion, *we* deserve abandonment or desertion by God. However, in the darkness, *Jesus* absorbed the abandonment which is due to each of us.

One of our greatest terrors and anxieties is the fear of being abandoned or rejected. We fear being abandoned by other people, of course, and this is true especially if we grew up in a home situation where rejection was threatened or actually took place.

Perhaps even more revealing is the universal fear that we all have of death

and dying. People especially do not want to die alone. Implied is the fear of being alone, cut off, deserted, and abandoned in the life beyond. This would include the anxiety of being deserted by God in death; that is, to die and find that God has turned His back on us as He did on Jesus in the hours of darkness.

The great truth is that Jesus, by enduring the Father's desertion in our place, destroyed the deepest basis for our fears of abandonment. Because of Christ, we will never be abandoned by our Creator, God.

The Punishment of Jesus

Second, in the darkness, Jesus took God's anger and rage due us because of our evil hearts and behaviors. Jesus cried out, "It is finished," meaning that God's anger or punishment had been fully absorbed and put away. The apostle John states, "He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). Simply put, "propitiation" means the turning away of wrath by an offering. Jesus offered Himself on the cross, and absorbed God's anger and wrath in order to free us from any punishment or penalty or "hell." What a marvelous truth for our emotional life!

We all can vividly remember a parent, teacher, or coach being angry with us, and how anxious and frightened we felt. On one occasion I watched some of the Russian female gymnasts in the Olympic Games make several major errors, which eventually cost them the gold medal. One gymnast in particular, made a slip and the coach gestured angrily on the sidelines. The gymnast, standing atop the balance beam, having to complete the exercise before a worldwide audience as well as the judges, looked over at the coach, so distracted was she by his anger.

How much more do we, knowing of our selfishness and our sins, feel anxiety that God is going to somehow angrily "get us? We see disease, catastrophe, ruin, etc. and think, *God is angry; I'm going to get it*. Let us remember, friend, that Jesus absorbed all of God's wrath and rage due us when He went into the darkness. Gratefully, we can rest assured that our Savior's atonement for us was sufficient to completely appease

God and remove His wrath from us.

The Shaming of Jesus

Third, in the darkness, Jesus was shamed. The writer to the Hebrews says, "... Jesus, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, ignoring the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

It was not only the public humiliation that shamed Jesus, but in bearing our sins, God the Father "cursed Him"; that is, He actually shamed Him as the bearer for our sins. Paul says, "Christ became a curse for us – for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'" (Galatians 3:13).

Shame is one of the earliest emotions, and it has enormous ramifications in our personality development and functioning. It is noteworthy that shame was the first emotion Adam and Eve felt after their fall. Their sense of shame caused them to feel anxiety and fear, which then caused them to run and hide. The universality of shame and its appearance in the earliest stages of our development points to its crucial role in our lives. When we feel shamed, either by God, others, or ourselves, we must defend against it. Rage and anger is one way we cope; withdrawal is another. Indeed, our whole personality may be shaped around malignant feelings of shame.

Guilt is a more mature form of shame. Shame is about who we feel we are — inferior, flawed, inadequate, etc. Guilt is about what we have done: "I have sinned, I lied, I cursed, etc." It involves breaking a rule or commandment and feeling bad, sinful, or evil. Shame and guilt are intertwined in such a way that it is hard to distinguish them at times. One may feel guilt: *I blew it*, and shame: *I am so weak and pathetic because I blew it*. Both feelings can be felt over the same failure.

In the darkness of the cross, Jesus took both our shame and guilt. He experienced these crippling emotions for us in order that we might not have to be in bondage to them. In being "cursed" by His Father, He stood in our place to remove these feelings and their power from us.

"I asked the heavens, 'What foe to

God has done

This unexampled deed?' The heavens exclaim,

'Twas man;' and we, in horror, snatched the sun

From such a spectacle of guilt and shame."

Our Identification With Jesus

Having examined the emotions that Jesus took for us in the crucifixion, it remains for us to see how these truths might apply to us and our emotional lives. Paul says in Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me."

This means that the Christian believer is identified with Christ in His crucifixion and in His resurrection. "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ ... For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:1-3). The truth is, that when Jesus was shamed and abandoned and punished in the darkness, we were shamed, abandoned and punished with Him. We were identified with Him *then*, and we are identified with Him *now* as He is seated at the Father's right hand.

Jesus was our substitute; He took our place. And now, by virtue of our identification with Him, the shame and guilt, rejection and abandonment, anger and punishment, have been dealt with for all of eternity. Since we live in a fallen world we can still be prone to feelings of shame and guilt, rejection, abandonment, and fears of punishment. But we know that ultimately Jesus has settled all these emotional issues.

We Christian believers need to penetrate the darkness of the crucifixion and experience the relief and healing that Jesus purchased for us. "You are not your own; you have been bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:19b-20a). Understanding our relationship to the Jesus of the darkness can secure these gifts deep into our emotional and spiritual lives.

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Humility Is Not Inferiority (Part 2)

by Bruce Narramore

In our last issue, Dr. Narramore demonstrated that humility is not inferiority, underestimation of our abilities, self-hatred or passivity. In this issue he discusses what true humility really is.

The Old Testament records many miracles that God performed during Israel's years in captivity in Egypt. He sent plagues of insects, frogs, and boils to the Egyptians. He parted the waters of the Red Sea, allowing the Israelites to escape the fierce Egyptian army. And He repeatedly provided food and water for His people as they wandered in the wilderness. You would think these would be enough to demonstrate that God is great and that they needed Him. And it should have been enough to keep them humble. But apparently it wasn't! In spite of all these miracles, God needed to give Israel a written reminder of all the purposes of their time in Egypt.

And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know. . . that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. . . Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; a

land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates . . . Beware lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; lest, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived in them, and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply and all that you have multiplies, then your heart becomes proud, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery (Deuteronomy 8:2-4, 6-8, 11-14).

Humility Is Recognizing Our Need of God and Being Obedient

Through Moses, God summarized the purpose of Israel's wilderness wandering. It was designed to teach His children to depend on Him — to learn personal and national humility. Similarly, God wants us to recognize our need of Him. He wants us to acknowledge that He created us, that He built into us the elements of His image, and that we must rely on Him to provide each of us a full and meaningful life (Matthew 6:33). This is the framework for Biblical humility.

Recognizing our need of God and our place in God's creation is the essence of humility. God is the Creator, we are the created. God is the central character; we are the supporting cast. He has built order into the universe and into our genetic structure. Although we can accomplish many things, we cannot function at our best without a recognition of our need of Him and without living by His laws.

Humility Is Realistically Evaluating Our Capacities

Once we recognize that we are valuable children created by God

Himself and that we need Him, we can begin to realistically evaluate our strengths and limitations. Every person who has ever lived has had some talent, some gift, some contribution that he could make to life. Paul writes that we each have different gifts and should "exercise them accordingly" (Romans 12:6 NASB). But he also writes earlier in that chapter that we should not think so highly of ourselves that we elevate ourselves above others in the body (Romans 12:3). The church, the spiritual body of Christ, requires many members with different gifts operating together in love (1 Corinthians 12). A humble person takes stock of his gifts in order to use them as a member of the team. He neither lifts himself above others or lowers himself to the dregs.

Humility Is Being Willing to Serve

Shortly before His crucifixion, Christ and the disciples were together in the upper room. During the meal, a dispute arose among the disciples as to who was the greatest. To settle the squabble, Jesus said, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them and those who exercise authority over them are given the title Benefactor. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves" (Luke 22:25-26).

Like many of us, the disciples had a problem about who was the greatest. But Jesus shook their human standards when He said that Christianity has a different measuring stick. While the secular world has a hierarchy of strength, power, and wealth, God values loving service to others. Christ was the greatest, but He served. He washed the disciples'

Humility, continued on page 19

How Can I Overcome Passivity?

by Bruce Narramore

Q "I have difficulty taking charge of my life. I am passive and just wait for things to happen. Usually God or people bail me out. My dad has interrupted the consequence of my passivity by sending me money to pay the rent, buy a car, etc. How can I begin to move in positive directions?"



Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

A Thank you for sharing about your struggle with passivity. I notice several things in your letter. To begin with, you already have a lot of intellectual understanding. You recognize that you are being passive and that when others bail you out, it doesn't really help you. It's too bad your father didn't realize this years ago since his rescuing probably helped create your passivity.

Your comment that God or people bail you out also caught my attention in another way. Whoever is bailing you out, it isn't God! Being a perfect Father, will never do anything that is harmful to you. Since rescuing you when you don't need to be rescued is harmful, you can rule God out. I don't doubt that some of your friends may be rescuing you under the mistaken belief that they are helping. But isn't, He will forgive you and save you for eternity. But He won't keep rescuing you. The Bible says "Whatever a man sows, that will he also reap." God never robs us of our responsibility.

You ask what you can do to move in positive directions. Before discussing that, I would encourage you to consider some of the likely causes and dynamics of passivity. First, passive people tend to have unresolved dependency issues. Above all, being passive is a way of saying, "I don't want to grow up and emotionally leave my mother and father. Even though I am physically an adult, mentally and emotionally I still want someone to take care of me."

But the Bible tells us to leave mother and father (Genesis 2:24), and that "each should carry his own load" (Galatians 6:5). Dependency is the opposite of carrying our own load. In it, we convince ourselves that no matter how badly we mess up, someone will magically come to our rescue.

Passivity also tends to involve strong feelings of anger — generally repressed. Anger comes from several sources, but frequently it results when a young child does not feel properly cared for emotionally. When he does not, he both resents

his parents and becomes passive in order to force them to take better care of him.

Other children become passive as a way of secretly rebelling against overly controlling parents. Since most young children cannot directly stand up to an overly controlling or even abusive parent, they find subtle ways of taking charge of their own lives. When the parent says "Hurry" they slow down. When the parent says "clean," they think "dirty." What better way to gain control over a domineering parent than doing the opposite!

Passive people also typically have a lot of anger because their parents, through their inappropriate rescuing, have deprived them of growing up and becoming responsible citizens. As much as they manipulate others or wait for them to step in and bail them out, at some level they know this is not good for them.

Another common source of passivity is a fear of failing or of being alone. Mature, independent people who don't wait for others to bail them out will take some risks. But risks can mean failure or rejection. So passive people may continually put things off to avoid taking any risks.

Whatever the sources and dynamics of your passive style, I strongly suspect that you will need good professional counseling to work through your problem. A passive personality style is rarely altered by a new intellectual understanding or a renewed commitment to do better, stop procrastinating, or to be more responsible. Instead, the childish cravings to be cared for, the fear of taking responsibility, or of being alone, and the angry feelings that accompany the problem need to be re-experienced and resolved within the counseling process. Only as you work through these underlying issues will you

make the lasting changes that in your better moments you know you want to make.

And even if you seek out a good counselor, these changes will not take place magically. There will come

a time when you will need to step out of your comfort zone and risk whatever it is that is frightening you. That will be a critical time in your counseling since you will come face to face with the necessity of giving up your defensive avoidance of responsibility which is designed to protect you from whatever hidden, perhaps even terrifying, emotions have led you to self destruct for so many years.

I wish you well in facing these inner hurts and frightening feelings. But be assured that they can be faced and overcome. 

Another common source of passivity is a fear of failing or of being alone. Mature, independent people who don't wait for others to bail them out will take some risks. But risks can mean failure or rejection.

Sharpening Your Ability To Relate To People

By Clyde M. Narramore

One of the greatest joys in life is having friends and getting along well with people. Regardless of our age, it's important to understand others and have good relationships with them. Unfortunately, many people do not know how to do this.



Dr. Clyde M. Narramore

For example, the majority of employees are reasonably competent, but I often meet people who says they don't enjoy people at work.

Even in our churches people have run-ins. Most pastors who are asked to leave their churches are not asked to leave because they do not know the Bible or teach it, but because they have poor relationships with people. Most church splits come as a result of church members not getting along with others or not knowing how to resolve differences.

The same is true in families. Most marriage break-ups are the result of two people not being able to get along well with each other. Counselors' offices are filled with husbands and wives who are wanting help with their marriages.

Children and parents are often unhappy because they do not get along well. As a result, many children leave home, often to a more troubled situation than the one they left.

But we don't have to go through life having poor relationships.

Entering the other person's world

One of the most important factors in having good relationships is to realize that although someone else's world

may not be interesting to you, it is to them. So the first key in having a good relationship with a person is to concentrate on his or her interests, rather than your own.

Capitalize on strengths

All of us have weaknesses and strengths. It's important in relating to other people to accept them on the basis of what they are, rather than for what they are not.

When you think of your pastor, do you concentrate on his strengths or on his weaknesses? And how about your spouse? You can pick at people until you die, but it seldom changes them. If, during our childhood, we have not had parents who were looking for our good points, it is natural that as adults, we look for people's faults rather than their strengths. One of the most important factors in getting along well with others is to recognize their strengths and, as much as is possible, overlook their undesirable traits.

Courtesies

We can go through life roughly or we can go through it smoothly. The difference is the oil of courtesy. Two pieces of metal can be rubbing and scratching each other; but with oil they can function smoothly.

My mother used to tell my brothers and me, "Courtesy costs nothing, but it can buy almost everything." Life is not so short but what there is time for courtesies. This is summed up well in Proverbs 15:1: "A soft answer turns away wrath..."

Courteous people are in demand.

Sensitivity

People who get along well with others are sensitive. They realize that people are humans and not machines. They have moods – sometimes happy, sometimes sad, some-

times angry or apprehensive. If we can train ourselves to recognize the moods people are in, this gives an immediate identification with them.

Not too much

People often need insight and instruction and usually appreciate a helping hand. But there is a fine line between helping a person and robbing him of his own contribution. Adults as well as children need the feeling of accomplishment. We need to help people, but we should get them on their own as soon as possible. People feel insignificant and cheated when someone else does everything for them.

Appreciation

People respond favorably to those who encourage them and show them appreciation. Those who enjoy good emotional and mental well-being find it easy to select good qualities in their friends, then honestly compliment them. Appreciation goes a long way.

Include them in your plans

Most individuals don't like surprises sprung on them. In the home and in the workplace, people will appreciate us more if we include them in our planning. When they know in advance what to expect, they are likely to accept changes positively. When people are involved early regarding future plans, they know they were in on the planning, and that the new plans are actually partly theirs.

Minimize personal problems

People who are successful in their relationship with others have learned it is best not to talk much about their own problems. There is generally resistance toward those who continually talk about themselves and their

own interests.

We all have a tendency to talk about ourselves. But unless you are seeking professional help or are sharing privately with a good friend, it is best to minimize your own personal problems. People have their own without taking on yours!

Comfort

No one likes to suffer pain and discomfort. Be sure to observe other people's comfort. Seating arrangements, the amount of light, temperature of the room, as well as its size and attractiveness have a definite effect on how people feel. People interpret comfort as respect. In turn, they will usually respond favorably.

Encourage talking

Talking meets a basic need in life. When we encourage a person to talk, we are enabling him to meet one of his basic emotional needs. Many individuals have unresolved conflicts and problems. Talking helps a person relieve those tensions. As he talks, he will drain off strong feelings and begin to feel better. When he expresses his thoughts aloud, he gains more perspective about the true significance of his concerns.

When a person tells us something, instead of responding with our own point of view, you might reflect on what he has just said and ask him to tell us more. This helps him, and it causes him to like you.

Fitly spoken words

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11). We should express our ideas tactfully. Well-chosen words are like cushions. They keep ideas from becoming harsh and difficult to accept. People are not nearly so threatened or hurt by an idea as they are by the words used to express it. Even negative statements may be expressed well. As we seek to relate better to people, we should give spe-

cial consideration to our tactful use of words. Questions are usually more tactful than direct statements.

Transparency

Credibility is a basic factor in true confidence between people. No one trusts a person whom he feels is not honest.

Human beings tend to be dishonest about many things. But Christians are called to be honest about every detail of life. A person may lie or become dishonest in order to impress others. When we have an adequate self-concept, and when we know God loves and accepts us, we do not need to falsify information to defend ourselves or impress others with our worth.

If we are forthright and transparent, people are much more likely to accept us and have confidence in us.

What God Can Do

The human race knows much about problems but very little about solving them.

The most profound and long-lasting changes in our behavior come as we look to the Lord for help. The man or woman who knows Christ personally is indwelt by God's Holy Spirit. He or she has a source of strength and power to make definite changes in his or her life. "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

Jesus modeled a compassionate style of relating. In fact, the most frequent word used to describe Jesus' emotional life is compassion. And we are called to become like Him.

The greatest thing we can do to improve our attitudes and behavior is to submit to our Creator and be committed to following Him in our daily life and relationships. As we do, we will increasingly reflect the very image of Christ Himself. This will truly help us to get along better with others!

feet and suffered utmost humiliation for others. Through these and other acts, He demonstrated another aspect of humility: the willingness to serve. This service, however, comes from inner strength, rather than weakness. Some people become servants because they think they can't do anything else. They serve out of weakness instead of strength. But this is not humility.

Jesus didn't go passively to the cross because He was the least desirable of all Christians. He didn't say, "Someone has to die and I guess I'm the least important of everyone so I'll volunteer." Instead, conscious of His own identity before God, He *confidently* became a servant — even to the point of death. Likewise, when we reach out to others from an attitude of inner strength, we are experiencing a key ingredient of humility.

Biblical humility can be summarized as follows:

Humility Is Not:

1. Inferiority
2. Underestimation of our abilities
3. Self-hatred
4. Passivity

Humility Is:

1. A balanced self-esteem, realistically evaluating our abilities
2. Recognizing our need of God and obeying Him
3. Being willing to serve others.

We are God's uniquely created children and we are deeply loved by Him. We should accept these fundamental facts about ourselves and others. And because we are all God's creations, we should neither lift ourselves above others nor place ourselves below. We all have our own gifts and contributions to make in this life and for the life to come



Refresh and Renewal Conference brings a time of restoration, personal and spiritual renewal for missionaries and their families.

Refreshing & Renewing in France

This summer, NCF Staff Associate Dr. Keith Edwards and his wife Ginny will again be traveling to Europe to help lead the annual Refresh and Renewal Conference for missionaries and other cross cultural workers from through Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East. This annual time of restoration and personal, spiritual and family renewal is led by Drs. Larry and Lois Dodds of Heartstream Resources.

The two-week program offers missionaries the opportunity to take a break from their often demanding ministries under difficult circumstances in order to relax and find relief from the many stresses they are facing. The Edwards and Dodds lead workshops on stress management, marriage and parenting enrichment, and other practical topics. Participants also have the opportunity to receive group or individual counseling. Other team members provide activities for children and lead daily devotional and worship times for all of the families

in attendance.

One of last year's conferees said, "We have been on the field for your years and under extreme stress to the point of despair, burnout, and marital distress. This time has been literally lifesaving. It gave us the tools to take steps back to all that God has made us to be and all He has for us individually, in our marriage, ministry and relationships."

If you have missionary friends that need a life-renewing break and the opportunity for some personal counseling and helpful seminars, they can find further information by phoning our headquarters office or by emailing: heartstream@compuserve.com

Please pray for the Dodds and Edwards and all of the staff and participants at this year's Refresh and Renew in France!

New Life on the Internet

"I am a South African and I live in Johannesburg. I am a full-time Christian worker for the Salvation Army in South Africa as the National Youth Ministry

Coordinator. I am twenty-one years old. I just wanted to express my gratitude for the good work that has enriched my life in a new way. I have my quiet time daily, and it is so refreshing every day to receive your *Daily Encounter* when I check my email. It is very easy to understand and powerful enough to challenge, rebuke, and comfort when needed. I just want you to know that what you are doing is making an eternal difference in people's lives."

This is just one of scores of responses received daily from the email and web ministry of ACTS International in partnership with the Narramore Christian Foundation. Dot-com business web sites may be faltering and some are failing, but Internet use continues to expand.

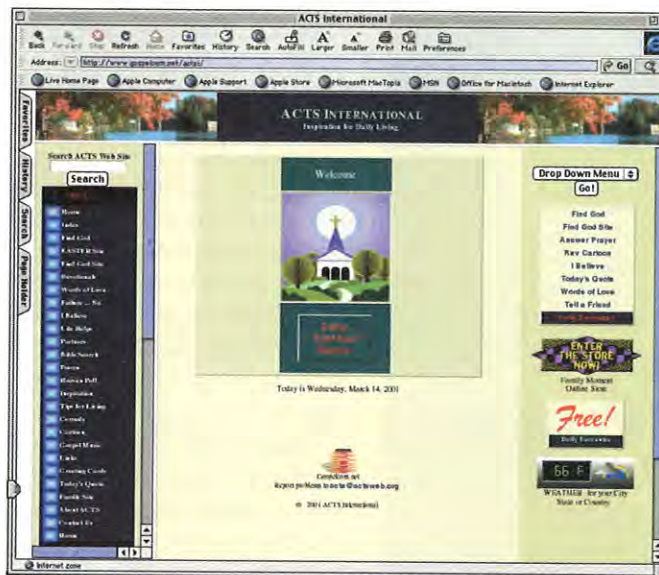
According to a report in *Newsweek* (June 12, 2000), 64 percent of Americans twelve and older have gone online during the past year. Thirty-one percent of all U.S. residents twelve or older go online daily, and 86 percent of these are email users, providing an extremely effective and economical means of communication for this day and age. A survey by the Pew Internet and American Life Project showed that online users in the U.S. grew by 16 million in the second half of 2000, reaching a total of 104 million. Women now account for just over 50 percent of the Internet population.

ACTS has three email ministries going to subscribers around the world: *Daily Encounter*, a practical life-focused devotional goes to almost 14,000 subscribers every weekday. *Weekend Encounter*, an inspirational e-zine (electronic magazine) goes to more than 6,000 subscribers every weekend. And *Prayer Encounter* goes to over 2,000 subscribers twice a month. This amounts to 3.95 million email biblically-based messages every

year going out for *no* printing and *no* postage costs!

Between ACTS email ministry and the web ministries of the Narramore Christian Foundation, salvation responses are being received almost every day. Last year more than 1,000 people from 45 countries recorded decisions for Christ.

Each person who records a salvation response is followed up with a personalized email message directing them to the ACTS follow-up site at www.actsweb.org/living. This site provides ten articles to help new Christians grow and to find a good church home. They also receive a printed copy of *How to Grow*, and a gift



subscription to ACTS *Daily Encounter*, so they will receive a Scripture verse with a practical life application every week-day of the

year!

Due to the popularity and appeal of the ACTS web site, several other Christian ministries, including Back to the Bible, are using ACTS gospel messages on their site. Please pray for the incredible outreach around the world through the new medium God has provided for Christian ministries like NCF.

You can receive a free copy of the printed edition of *How To Be Sure You're A Real Christian* by writing or calling the Narramore Christian Foundation at 1-800-477-5893.

Visit the ACTS web site at www.actsweb.org and the NCF web site is www.ncfliving.org.

NCF READERS WRITE

I Finally Have My Life Back

You don't know me personally, but this letter is a personal "thank you" for helping me at a very low point in my life. I am a family nurse practitioner who suddenly experienced a severe panic attack. You referred me to one of your former students, and he immediately recognized that I was suffering from severe depression and Panic Disorder. Through therapy and medication I finally have my life back. In fact, this is probably the first time in my life that I am able to function effectively without crippling anxiety, depression, or panic.

I can't express how grateful I am for access to Christian psychiatric help because of your organization. God bless you and your family and staff.

—CD, Kansas

Muslim Writes for Help

I am delighted to inform you that as a Muslim I am fortunate to get your book on *How to Handle Pressure* – a perfect and highly prescribed medicine to relieve human stress, pressure and worrisomeness (stet). [All of my] problems have set me boiling inside and in despair. I shall be grateful for your other books that can get off these burdens of the heart. Thank you for the profitable job to save a soul. More grease to your elbow (stet).

—OST, Nigeria

Ed. Note: We answered this gentleman and sent him a copy of our booklet, *How To Be Sure You're a Real Christian*.

In Honor of Friends

I am enclosing a gift to the Foundation in honor of a very special couple, Willie and Sharon Miller, of Elkhart, Indiana. Years ago, Willie told us about NCF and the blessing it had been to his family. Although he wanted to encourage us to go to your headquarters and take a seminar, he was careful not to push. Instead, he subscribed to your magazine, *Psychology for Living*, for us. Before long we were getting a monthly impact of insights from your organization. In time we did attend your specialized seminar for business people. I must say this changed our lives. So that's why I want to recognize this wonderful Christian couple.

—DR, Texas

Living Memorials



**To Honor
the Memory Of:** **Presented by:**
Norma Fry Evelyn & Eddy Kiono

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: _____

Mail to:
Narramore Christian
Foundation
Address: P.O. Box 661900
Arcadia, CA 91066-1900

NCF HEALTH WATCH

Compiled by Eva Hallam Solberg

Self-Confidence and Exercise

In a study sponsored by the National Institute on Aging, fitness tests were administered to 46 low-active women divided into two groups. Regardless of how they had actually performed on the fitness test, members of one group were told they had scored in the highest of five levels of fitness, while the others were told that their performance had placed them in the bottom fifth of the group. All the women were then asked to work out on a Stairmaster. Those who had been told they had scored well on the fitness exam reported less fatigue and a greater sense of well-being from the exercise than the women who believed they had done poorly on the fitness test.

Although the study was small, its lesson is important: If you believe in your fitness potential, you are more apt to live up to your own expectations!

—Food & Fitness Advisor

Forgetfulness and Dementia

Forgetfulness as you grow older does not mean you have dementia. Moreover, there are many kinds of dementias, including Alzheimer's. If you are experiencing severe memory problems, you need a medical diagnosis. Some dementias are reversible.

Until further research is done on ways to correct memory lapses, forget the claims of supplement makers. So far, there's no brain supplement that will help you recall a name or find your keys. To keep your mind functioning at a high level, mental workouts are best. Use the powers you have. Cultivate your interests, learn something new, take a course, read more. Play games that exercise your memory, your powers of concentration, and your analytic ability. Physical workouts also help maintain your brain, as does a healthy diet.

—UCBerkeley Wellness Letter

Gamblers' 'High'?

Gambling for money can produce a "high" similar to alcohol or drugs and may be just as addictive, say German researchers in a recent issue of Biological Psychiatry.

"Physiological responses to gambling enhance mood, and ... winning has the ability to produce a euphoric state," according to a research team from Germany who studied the responses of 10 men playing blackjack at a casino.

When playing for money, the men's heart rate and hormonal secretions rose considerably more than when they played the same game without betting.

That release of hormones, producing a "rush" of excitement, could explain how people repeat the process and become addicted to gambling, the researchers note.

—AARP Bulletin

The Quake That Rocked The World

By Ruth Narramore

Earthquakes in recent years have been rattling Planet Earth in many locations around the world. They seem to be coming with greater intensity and much more frequency than ever before. Many of these quakes have



Ruth Narramore

claimed countless lives and brought untold terror and devastation. The most recent to shake up our own country occurred just a few weeks ago in the Seattle,

Washington, area. But this increase in earthquake activity should not come as a surprise: the Bible predicts this as a sign that we are in the last days. God sometimes uses earthquakes to announce an "earth-shaking" event. It's a way of getting our attention.

Circa 2000 years ago there was another very memorable earthquake in the city of Jerusalem. This earthquake held so much significance that it is described in the Word of God. Interestingly, an angel was directly involved:

"Behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it" (Matthew 28:2).

This was a most unusual quake. It didn't emanate from the depths of the earth as most earthquakes do. This quake resulted when an angel from heaven rolled back the massive boulder that had been placed over the mouth of the tomb

to keep the dead Christ in. After the angel had removed that earth-shaking rock, the Bible says he *sat on it*. No concern about aftershocks! The quaking was over.

So the angel sat on it! Doesn't that seem like an inconsequential detail? After all, what difference does it make if the angel sits, stands, walks – or even flies?

Oh, but it does make a difference. God doesn't toss words in the Bible just to fill up space. There's a reason for telling us that after rolling that boulder away from the entrance of Jesus' tomb, the angel sat on it.

First, it indicates finality – the job was finished! Done! And after working comes resting. The angel had completed the task for which he was sent, so he was entitled to sit. The sitting posture of the angel was another way of saying, "Mission accomplished!"

Could it also be that he perched himself on top of that huge rock in defiance of the soldiers who had been stationed there to guard the tomb? I think so. It was as though he was announcing to the world, "I defy anyone to try to close this tomb again." The door had been opened and the tomb was empty. No one could alter that fact, and the angel was there to be sure no one pulled a fast one and tried to do a cover-up job. The tomb was open to stay.

God sent the angel to roll back the stone, not so Jesus could come out (He was already out – nothing could keep Him in) but so that people could look in and verify the fact that our Lord was not there. He was no longer dead, but ALIVE!

It's interesting that God sent "an angel of the Lord" to do the job of removing the rock. God could

have done it without the angel. Just speaking the word would have been enough. But God gives His creatures the privilege and joy and excitement of participating with Him in His work. (He does the same thing for humans.) And to make the glorious pronouncement to mankind that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead had to be among the greatest of all honors.

Notice, however, that the angel remained anonymous. Had his name been stated, people would be focusing their praise on the angel and not on the Lord where it belongs. And had they known the angel's name, in only a matter of time the hierarchy of the church would have dubbed him a saint and started honoring him instead of Christ. But that would have robbed God of the glory that was rightly His. Thus the Scripture wisely omits the identity of the angelic being whose assignment was to open the tomb, except to say that he was "an angel of the Lord." And there's no better credential than that!

But God lets us know that this was a very special angel. As he descended from heaven, he came with a display of God's great power that rocked the whole earth with a violent earthquake. His appearance was so awesome that the big burly soldiers supposedly guarding the tomb fainted right there on the spot (Matthew 28:3, 4). But this same formidable being who struck terror in the hearts of the Roman guards, brings comfort and hope and great joy – not only to the weeping women at the tomb – but to all who love and follow Jesus: *"Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He is risen as He said!"* (verses 5 and 6).



"Every Person Is Worth Understanding."

The Ministries of the Narramore Christian Foundation

- **Insightful Literature:** NCF's quarterly magazine, *Psychology for Living*, publishes practical, biblically and psychologically-based articles addressing the needs of children, youth, married couples, families and singles. Approximately 50 booklets on a variety of psychological topics are also published by NCF and mailed to people around the world.

- **Seminars for Sons and Daughters of Missionaries:**

For nearly 20 years NCF has provided a 12-day seminar for MKs coming to the U.S. for college. Personality and vocational tests, plus counseling and orientation sessions, help these young adults transition to life in the United States.

- **Crisis Counseling for Overseas Missionaries:**

The Foundation sends Christian psychologists overseas to conduct seminars and provide intensive short-term counseling for missionaries who have recently undergone a severe crisis or trauma.

- **Correspondence:** Many people write the Foundation about problems and concerns. Appropriate booklets and printed materials are sent free of charge, usually with a personal letter.

- **Help by Phone:** People phoning for help and direction are able to talk with a specially trained

person who makes referrals throughout the United States.

- **World-Wide Internet Ministry:** Realizing the potential of electronic communications, NCF is now on line to serve and minister to pastors, missionaries, Christian workers, and individuals at home and around the world.



- **Seminars and Retreats for Pastors and Missionaries:**

In partnership with other organizations, NCF offers retreats and in-depth training for ministers, missionaries and other Christian leaders. Group and individual counseling is available to help participants work through personal, vocational and family concerns.

- **International Radio Ministry:**

Psychology for Living is a daily 15-minute broadcast dealing with solutions to everyday problems and is heard regularly on stations in the U.S.A. as well as in several foreign countries.

- **Videos:** Insightful videos on everyday problems such as the following: "Dealing

With Feelings of Anger," "Ten Danger Signals in Your Child's Behavior," and "Understanding Yourself and Others," by Dr. Clyde Narramore, are available for use by individuals, families, churches, schools and other groups.

For more information or help contact: Narramore Christian Foundation 250 W. Colorado Blvd., Suite 200 Arcadia, CA 91007
Phone: 626-821-8400 Fax: 626-821-8409 E-mail: ncf@ncfliving.org Internet: www.ncfliving.org



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