

PSYCHOLOGY FOR

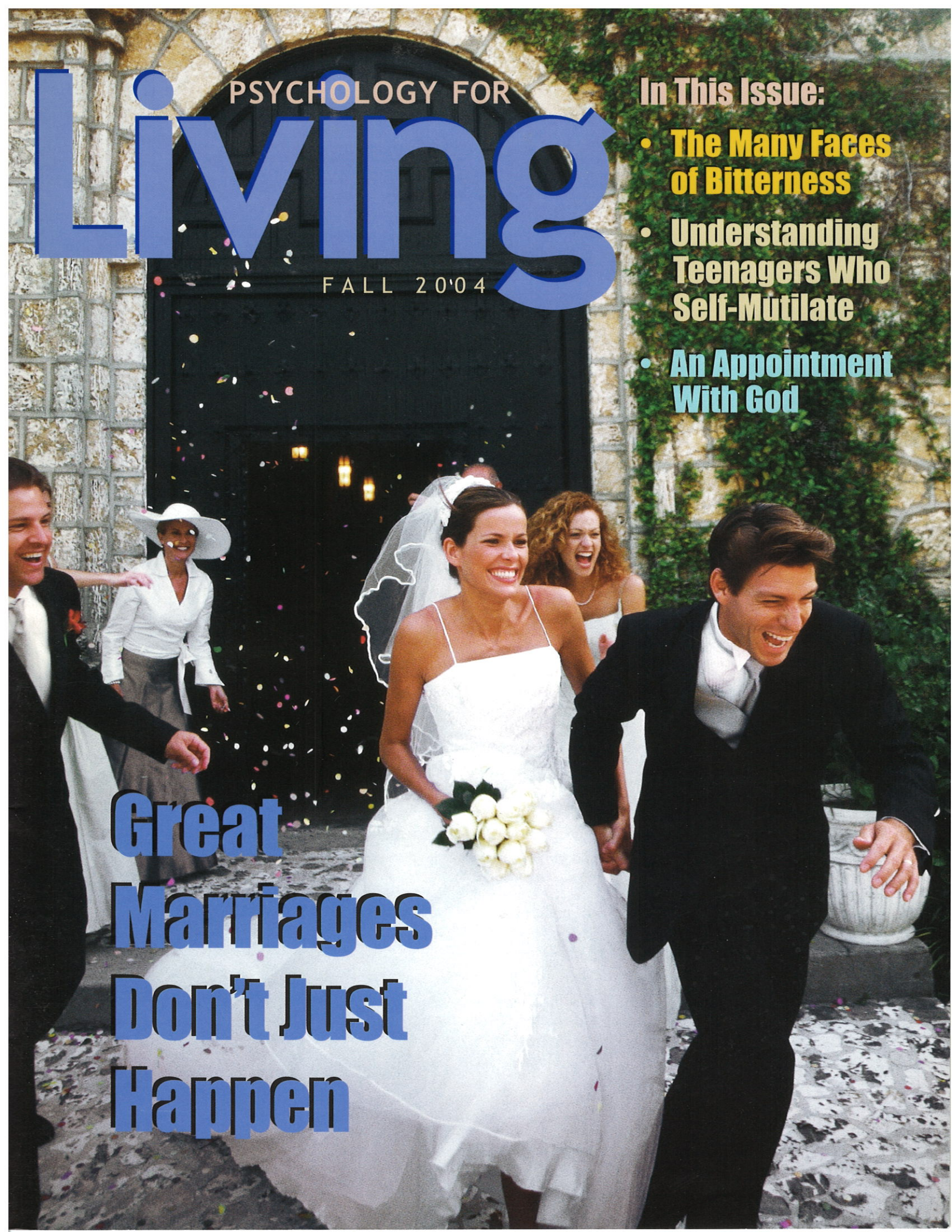
# Living

FALL 2004

In This Issue:

- **The Many Faces of Bitterness**
- **Understanding Teenagers Who Self-Mutilate**
- **An Appointment With God**

**Great  
Marriages  
Don't Just  
Happen**



# Thanksgiving

by Dr. Bruce Narramore

Thanksgiving and Christmas are my two most favorite times of the year. They bring fond memories of



Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

my childhood with family on the farm in Arizona. They bring opportunities to be with my adult children and their families. And they encourage me to refocus on the many

incredible blessings I have received from the Lord. These seasons bring out my gratitude and thankfulness.

Gratitude is an aspect of godliness. It is the opposite of discontent, grumbling, jealousy, and envy. "Love envies not" (*I Corinthians*). We are to enter into God's presence with thanksgiving (*Psalms 100:4*). When I think of my relationship with the Lord, I am grateful for so many things, but especially for the loving grace-filled way He relates to each of us.

● I am grateful for God's *creating grace*. Without it, I wouldn't be here! Neither would this planet on which we live. "In the beginning, God created" (*Genesis 1:1*). "In Him all things hold together" (*Colossians 1:17*).

● I am grateful for God's *electing grace*. "For whom he foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son" (*Romans 8:30*).

● I am grateful for God's *reconciling grace*. "We were reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (*Romans 5:10*).

● I am grateful for God's *saving grace*. "We have redemption through His blood (*Ephesians 1:7*). "Having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (*Romans 5:10*).

● I am grateful for God's *forgiving grace*. "In Him we have...the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace" (*Ephesians 1:7*).

● I am grateful for God's *accepting grace*. "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (*Matthew 11:28*).

● I am grateful for God's *adopting grace*. "You are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God" (*Galatians 4:7*).

● I am grateful for God's *daily grace*. "Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need" (*Hebrews 4:16*).

● I am grateful for God's *eternal grace*. "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout.... Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up ... in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord" (*I Thessalonians 4:16-17*).

I pray that this season will be your greatest and most grateful ever! ☞

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A close-up photograph of a bride and groom smiling joyfully. The groom is on the left, wearing a dark tuxedo with a white shirt and a dark bow tie. The bride is on the right, wearing a white wedding dress with a full veil and a floral crown. They are both looking towards the camera with bright, happy expressions.

# Great Marriages Don't Just Happen

by Dick Innes

The chances of having a successful marriage are not encouraging. In North America, for every two marriages there is one divorce. Marriages between two Christians are more likely to succeed, but not by a whole lot.

According to insurance statistics, married people of all ages have better health, fewer emotional problems and a greater life expectancy than single people. This being so, why is it that so many marriages fail?

Perhaps the main reason is that we overlook the fact that successful marriages don't happen by chance. They take work and

effort. Here are seven S-E-C-R-E-T-S that will strengthen your marriage if you consistently live them out in your relationship with your spouse.

## **S = Sort Out Your Roles**

Times have changed. Economics, birth control, and societal expectations have changed dramatically. Wives and mothers are pursuing careers outside the home. In North America, only 12 percent of families live in an "intact" household where the husband is the breadwinner and the wife stays home to care for the children.

These changes have brought a massive confusion of roles that

contributes to the skyrocketing divorce rate. This is notably so among young couples under thirty who are four times more likely to get divorced than their parents.

Partners in successful marriages discuss and agree on their roles and responsibilities. If both are working (especially full-time), both need to share home duties and help care for the children. If the wife is going to be the primary bread winner, the couple needs to be sure that is what they both desire. Otherwise resentments build and couples drift apart.

In most marriages one partner is better with finances than the other. One is better planning ►



family activities. One is a better cook and one is better at entertaining or more gifted in some aspect of work or ministry in the community. Happily married couples learn to value each others' gifts and happily let their spouses take leadership in their areas of giftedness. Individuals in unhappy marriages often compete with each other or envy, resent, or attempt to squelch each others' gifts rather than supporting their mates and encouraging them to use their God given abilities.

### **E = Expectations That Are Real**

We all come into marriage with preconceived ideas of what it will be like. Our expectations, however, are often unrealistic. If you didn't feel adequately loved by a parent, chances are you may unconsciously try to get your marriage partner to compensate for your lack of childhood love. You may expect your mate to make you feel loved in spite of your years of feeling otherwise. In a sense, you may be unknowingly expecting your mate to be a kind of belated parent instead of a marriage partner. If you have that expectation, you will never be happy with the way your partner loves you. No mate can fill the void of a lost or

unavailable parent. It is like pouring water onto sand. It always disappears. We must first resolve our own childhood problems. Only then can we receive our mate's love for what it is, the love of one imperfect adult for another, rather than the belated love of a longed-for parent.

Or you may have grown up in a perfectionist home and become that way yourself. If you did, you may expect your spouse to be perfect. When he isn't, you become angry or critical or pressure him to keep the house or do things just the way you think they should be done. If he came from a less orderly or non-perfectionist family, he will resent your pressure. You will probably both need to adjust your expectations. In all healthy relationships, people learn to compromise and develop realistic expectations for themselves and their spouses.

### **C = Commitment**

I read about one lawyer who specialized in contract marriages, marriages established for a certain number of years rather than for a lifetime commitment. After three years, he gave up. Why? Because none of the marriages he contracted survived!

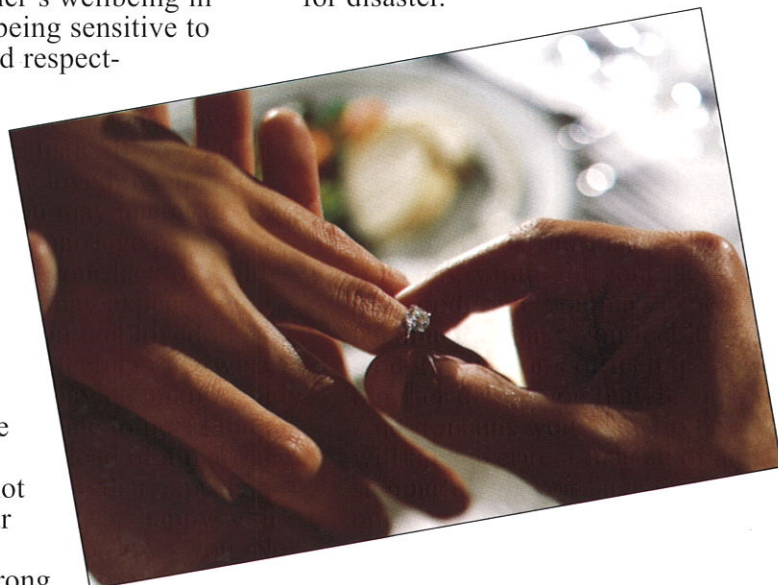
Contracts without commitment are useless. Marriages without commitment are equally useless. Commitment means consistently having our partner's wellbeing in mind. It means being sensitive to his/her needs and respectful of his/her opinions and desires. It means hanging in there in difficult times. It means wanting him/her to become all that God intends for him/her to be. And it means we will take every step necessary not only to make our marriages work, but to build a strong

and wonderful relationship.

### **R = Responsibility**

Few people enter marriage with a clear picture of the responsibilities they are facing. In the blush of love we see wonderful opportunities and exciting experiences ahead. It seems like good things will surely come our way. But we see the hard work and the approaching responsibilities less clearly. Children are a wonderful blessing but few newly marrieds can imagine the huge responsibility they have to provide for their newborn child's spiritual and emotional nurture and development.

At least one partner needs to take responsibility for providing the family's finances, and both partners need to take responsibility for the way they manage their money. Conflicts and misunderstandings also come to every marriage. If these conflicts are going to be resolved, each partner needs to take responsibility for his/her part in the problem. We need to move beyond blaming to understanding and accepting our contribution in the conflict. At every turn responsibilities will confront us. Some are big and some are little. Some are difficult and some are easy and even fun. But we cannot overlook any of them without serious negative consequences. If we run from responsibility we are headed for disaster.



## **E = Effective Communication**

Peter Drucker, renowned management specialist, says that 60 percent of management problems result from faulty communication.

According to criminologists up to 90 percent of all criminals have problems with interpersonal communication. And according to a leading marriage counselor, at least half of all marriage breakdowns are caused by faulty communications.

Effective communication is more than talking. And it is more than listening to our spouse's words. Meaningful marital communication involves being aware of our inner thoughts, desires, and feelings—and being able to express them clearly to our mate. It involves drawing out our mates and understanding their thoughts, desires, and emotions as fully as we do our own. People who deny or suppress their inner emotions and true desires have difficulty discovering intimacy because they do not bring all of themselves into the relationship. They may bring words but not feelings. They may bring thoughts but not their hearts. It is shared emotions and values that deepen personal attachments and relationships. Great marriage partners are tuned in to their spouse's thoughts and feelings. Only then can they truly understand each other deeply and build rich, caring, emotional and spiritual bonds.

## **T = Time Management**

A child whose parents never spend sufficient time with him or her will feel unwanted and unloved. It's the same in a marriage. Time—in quantity as well as quality—is needed if a relationship is going to flourish. It's not enough to live in the same house for fourteen or sixteen hours a day. We need to give each other our complete emotional and physical presence. We can't do this while we are watching TV, on the internet, or being preoccupied with what we have to do tomorrow. Only our full presence will "keep each other's love cup" topped up. Some days this isn't easy. If we are

emotionally or physically drained we may need to wait and talk another time. Or we may need to take a nap or rest awhile before we listen. But when we do talk seriously, we need to be completely present.

## **S = Spiritual Commitment**

It is still true, the family that prays together is more likely to stay together. Marriage was designed and instituted by God and we can't improve on His plan. Placing Christ and our commitment to Him at the center of our individual lives and

our marriage puts our relationship in an entirely different perspective. We see each other as a gift from God. We realize the significance and worth of our children. We have a model for mutual respect and love. We have an example of humility and self-sacrifice. And we have a rich purpose in life and reason for living. All of this deepens the marriage bond and enriches our lives and marriages.

With God's help, and each partner doing his/her part, great marriages are not only a possibility, they can be a reality!.

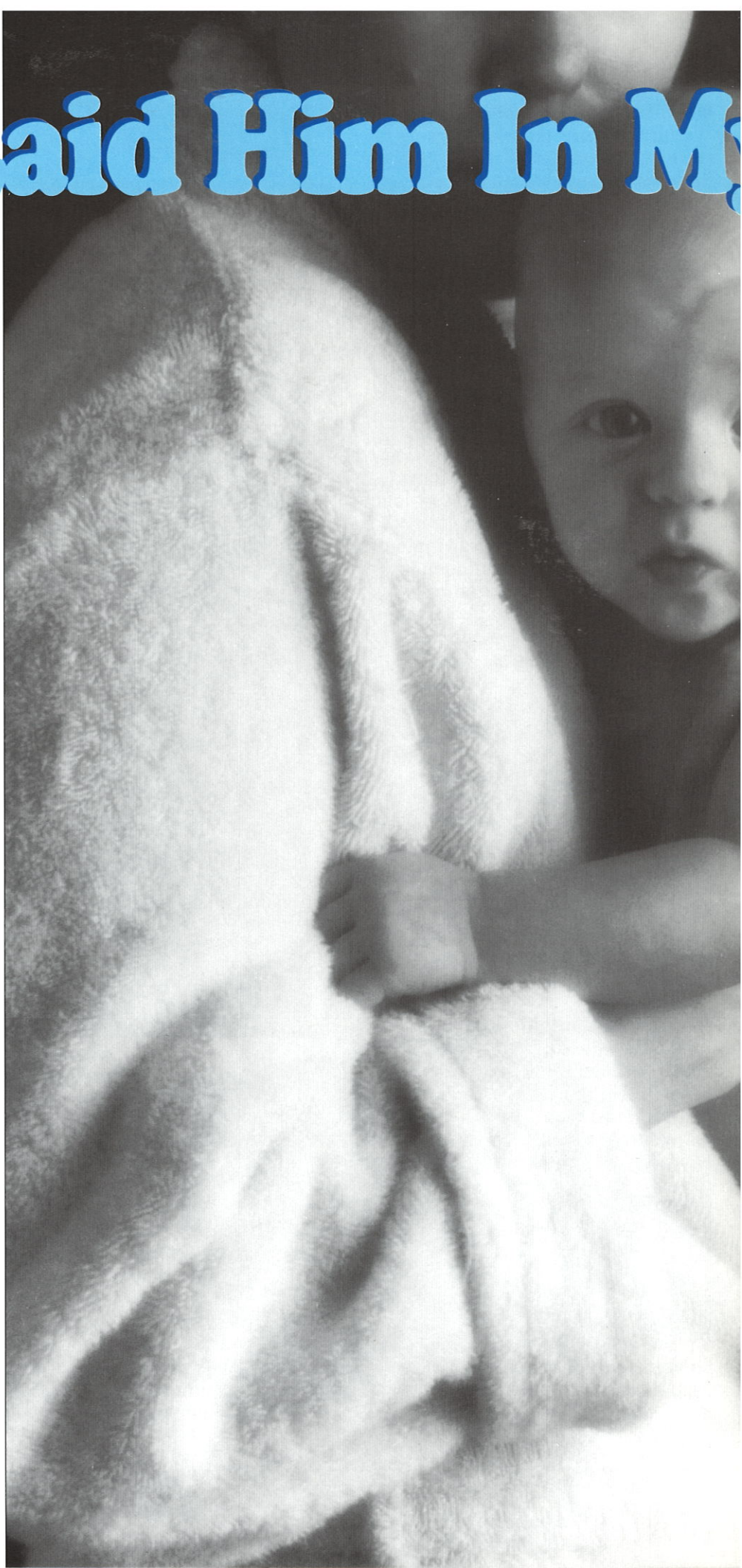


# She Laid Him In My

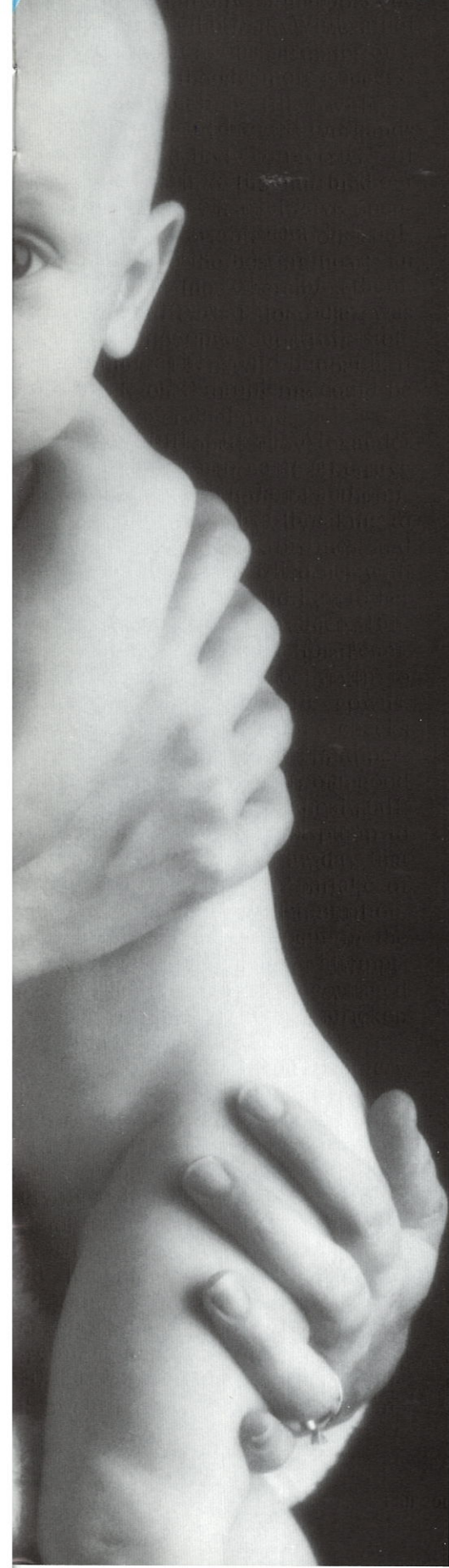
by Dr. James H. Luther

The expected call finally came. My daughter, Jenni, had been taken to the birthing center; and my long-awaited first grandson would soon take center stage. Jennifer placed little Jacob Alexander in my arms the next day, a beautiful, "perfect" baby boy. There are few events in life more enjoyable than the birth of a new baby. Feeling him on my chest brought an intense joy to my heart unlike any that I have experienced. While we were playing with Jacob that sunny Saturday morning, two days after Independence Day, the birth midwife arrived and was brought into the excitement of our family celebration. After her careful examination of Jacob, she grew somewhat serious and encouraged us to return to the doctor's office on Monday morning. She had detected a slight blue tint in his gums. Relatively unconcerned, since my daughter had just returned from the doctor's office a few hours earlier, we spent the rest of the weekend reveling in the joy of our happy welcome and new acquaintance with this beautiful newborn child.

During the Monday exam, little Jacob began to cry, and turned a deeper shade of blue. Alarmed, the doctor ordered his admittance into Tallahassee Memorial Hospital. A dose of prostaglandin, a medicine based on a hormone found inside the mother's womb that signals to the baby it is yet unborn, re-opened a duct called the patent ductus arteriosus. This activated Jacob's temporary circulation system once more; a system that had started to shut down in favor of his permanent heart-lung circulation. This



# y Arms



medicine reversed the trend toward oxygen starvation, and he improved. It was a strong clue that there was a problem in the connection between his heart and the pulmonary arteries, a condition found in as many as one out of a hundred babies. While all of these complications are serious, some can be treated more successfully than others.

Upon being medivaced to Shands Hospital at the University of Florida, doctors there confirmed our worst fears. Jacob must have open-heart surgery to connect his pulmonary arteries, and remove an obstruction in one of them. Additionally, part of his heart was not well developed; an irreversible condition that he would live with, if only these other problems could be repaired.

To see little Jacob Alexander placed in the neo-natal intensive care unit, attached to large and ominous monitors was heartbreaking to my daughter. Every instinct and desire she possessed filled her with a longing to simply hold him to her breast, and rock him to sleep. But, those times were over for Jenni. Now her days would be given to structured visits in sterile gowns, soft touches to his head and cheeks by freshly scrubbed hands, and persistent efforts to wrest some good news from a cautious medical staff. She began to use a breast pump to save her milk pending the day that Jacob could once again partake of that God designed, perfect nutrition. Her nights would be spent in the Ronald McDonald House, attempting to encourage and be encouraged by the mothers of other stricken children.

The results from Jacob's surgery were mixed. The technical part of the surgery had gone well. He had survived this major invasion of his six-pound body. The bad news involved his difficulty in accepting these changes to his brave little heart. For now, he had to remain on the fearsome ECHMO machine, a miniature portable heart lung machine. Ominously, the statistics were not encouraging. Less than 40% of such infants can successfully wean themselves from this tem-

porary life-giving miracle machine.

To our family, this medical marvel presented a dreadful vision. Already surrounded by monitors and sensitive instruments, our fragile baby now had two relatively large tubes running out of his diminutive chest. These trailed off to a fascinating instrument about the size of a large copy machine. One tube filled with dark blood depleted by the voracious cells of the body is mysteriously channeled into the machine and enriched with life-giving oxygen. This visibly brighter blood is directed back into the beating heart through the other tube, thereby sustaining Jacob's life. As I stood there beside the temperature controlled bed, I counted 14 needles, tubes, and probes attached to this tiny boy. It was almost overwhelming.

Our family developed a love-hate relationship with the ECHMO machine. It was responsible for keeping our precious baby alive; but we desperately wanted to see it gone from him. Unless he could be weaned from it, he would surely die. After nearly 10 days, Jacob won his first major victory. He was breathing on his own, and our hopes lifted! But, his condition was still very grave.

I serve as Senior Chaplain at Washington Correctional Institution, a maximum security prison north of Panama City, Florida, which houses 1,250 offenders. During this challenge to my family's faith, many of the staff members and the inmates to whom I minister were fervently beseeching God for this small, innocent life. I was deeply touched as hardened felons prayed and wept for a child they had never seen. They also gave heartwarming cards; many of these were hand made, or signed by several men due to their extreme poverty. They were convinced that God would heal Jacob's weakening body, and restore him back to us. My children and I were also convinced that our prayers would be answered, and Jacob would be healed by a loving Lord.

On the morning of August 9th, Jenni called me in tears to tell me to return at once to Gainesville. Jacob's system was in serious ►

trouble, and we needed to gather to him for special prayer and mutual support. While driving the now familiar two-and-a-half-hour trip; I

him without the mandatory sterile gowns; and I understood that they were no longer deemed necessary. The shock of this simple realization

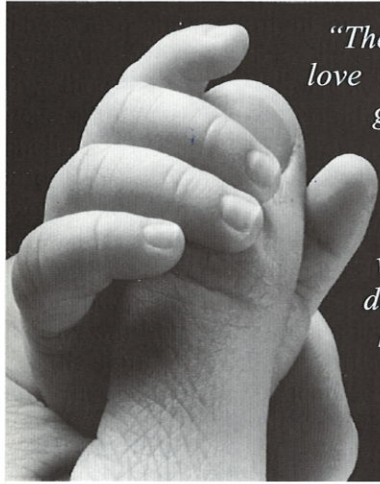
some final tears when it seemed as if she had no more within her. It was, without doubt, the saddest scene I have ever witnessed in over 40 years of ministry.

I was almost numb with quiet pain. The warm summer night breeze felt cool where my own tears had painted my face with silent sorrow. There was nothing that one could say in such a grief-stricken circumstance, and we remained there with no words; held together by the common bond of bereavement. I had to turn away for a moment, and noticed some people passing on a sidewalk nearby smiling at us; misunderstanding the significance of our little group and the woman who seemed to be holding a small "bundle of joy" in her arms. Things are not always what they seem!

I wish I could expound on some wonderful meaning that emerged from Jacob's gallant struggle to live; but I cannot. I simply do not know why such tragedies happen in our lives. Since Jacob's death I have become a proud grandfather. I show Jacob's picture to anyone who even looks like they might be interested. I have to guard myself against becoming the bothersome grandparent who is always talking about their wonderful grandson. But, I refuse to allow his brief life to be lost from memory in the inexorable march of passing time.

The last words spoken to Jacob were sad words of love and heartbreaking farewell from his grieving grandfather. But the first voice or voices he heard in heaven were doubtless words of joyful welcome. Now he knows that there is more to "life" than needles, tubes, drugs, and machines. The words of David captured in Scripture upon the death of his infant son are now engraved on my own heart: "I cannot bring the child back to me, but I will go to him." Heaven is not so distant anymore, and I look forward to a glorious reunion with him someday. ☞

Dr. James H. Luther is Senior Chaplain, Washington Correctional Institution, Chipley, Florida.



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was stopped for speeding. When the officer asked me where I was going in such a rush, I tried to explain our private tragedy, and my need to be with my daughter. Even though I promised to slow down, he seemed unimpressed by my sadness, even taking considerable extra time to write a second warning ticket for a broken rear taillight lens.

A hot dose of anger now mingled with my dread. The longer I drove, the more angry I became, especially with God. He was not answering our prayers! I wrestled with this disappointment and frustration throughout the rest of the drive across Interstate 10, and South along Interstate 75. Somewhere just north of Gainesville, the prayers of the inmates and many friends were answered in part by a calm inner peace in my heart. Yet, while the anger was spent, and my acceptance of God's will had begun, the anger had been replaced by a heaviness of heart. I worried about how I could be strong for my daughter who was now stumbling blindly with tearstained eyes toward a terrible loss filled with heartache.

Scrubbed and suited, I entered the ICU for infants, and was directed to a large corner area screened off for privacy. I stepped behind the screen to see Jacob and his many machines. My daughter was with

caused me to falter. I tried to quickly recover so that Jenni would not notice my weakness.

I gave my daughter a long and strong Father's hug. Then, my first-born daughter gently placed my first-born grandson in my arms once again, but for the last time. I held him for a while, and whispered that I loved him. And that Jesus loved him, while I kissed his face. I rubbed the back of his neck, and told him that soon he would be with his heavenly Father. As I continued to speak words of love and comfort to him, the nurses and doctors slowly and very gently began to disconnect his life support system. For a long moment it seemed as if time stood still; and then with a small shudder, his troubled heart stopped, while mine continued to ache. I would have gladly given up my life to save his.

The compassionate doctor in charge allowed us to take him to a quiet little park outside on the hospital grounds. I stood next to my son, Jim, and looked down on the form of my daughter sitting on the grass with her legs curled up under her. We were under a large spreading live oak, and the night sky beyond was filled with sparkling stars. She held her lifeless infant son in her arms, her finger tracing circles around his cheeks; releasing his spirit unto God and shedding



# JUST BEING THERE

By Clifford E. Denay, Jr.

The voice on the other end of the line was frantic: "Come quickly. He's on the floor next to the drinking fountain. He's been there all morning. I think he's on drugs or something."

I hurried down the hallway. He sat with his legs pulled up to his chest. His hair was greasy and matted. His clothes were unkempt, disheveled. How long had he been here? My heart was pounding. I sat down on the floor next to him.

"Hey," I offered. Silence.

"What do you want?" I wondered out loud.

"I want everyone, including you, to leave me alone. I want to die."

"I thought we might talk first." I hoped my voice didn't sound pleading.

"What for?" It was a hopeful question. A good sign. I felt my heart ease up a bit.

"I'm not sure. Just talk." If he really wanted to die he wouldn't be sitting on the floor in the hallway of a community college campus building. At least that was my prayer.

"I don't know." This response was tentative. I sensed a small opening and went for it.

"May I just sit here with you and wait while you think it over?" I wanted him to know I wouldn't walk away. I intended to stay. He seemed to get the message.

"How long?" His voice sounded stronger, less angry.

"How long what?"

"How long will you sit here with me?"



"As long as you want me to." I meant every word.

"Okay."

"Okay, what?" I needed more information from him.

"Okay, we can talk."

"When?" Did he mean today, tomorrow?

"Now."

"Right now?" The pounding in my chest was almost gone.

"Right now."

"Thank you," I said. My appreciation was genuine.

"Sure." He stayed silent another minute, then slowly began to talk. Being there is the most important part of friendship. It is also the most important part of crisis

intervention work. God made us to be social beings. We are meant to live in community. When we isolate ourselves or others, we encourage problems. Isolation hurts. Friendships heal.

In Jesus' final hours, He asked His disciples to stay and pray with Him. Instead, they fell asleep and Jesus ended up suffering alone. Like Jesus, people in pain don't want to suffer alone. They need people. Jesus knows this. Perhaps that's why He made His promise, "Behold, I am with you always until the end of the ages." We are never alone. Never. And we should never leave others alone. Often the biggest gift that we can give is a sensitive, listening ear. ☞

Clifford E. Denay, Jr. holds a Master of Arts degree in counseling and a specialist in education degree from Central Michigan University. He is an adjunct professor of psychology and a licensed professional counselor at North Central Michigan College. He and Jane, his wife of 25 years, have two grown children, Nathaniel and Emily.

# Understanding

by Dr. Clyde and Ruth Narramore

The change of seasons: how wonderful! The long warm hours of summer give way to the cool, brisk days of autumn. The trees begin to show off their colorful garments of gold and red. Happy, round pumpkins demand your attention with their bright, yellow faces.

Then comes THANKSGIVING! We embrace it because it is so warm and friendly, with families gathering together, and without the hype of crass commercialism. For Christians, Thanksgiving takes on even deeper meanings. We are grateful for the freedom to worship the Lord as we please. We are grateful for the spiritual heritage our nation's Founding Fathers passed on to us. And we are grateful for the many blessings of living in America.

The spirit of thankfulness is important because it affects us our entire lives. It promotes proper bodily functioning; it enhances our spiritual life, it has a positive effect on our emotional wellbeing. And it blesses those around us.

The Bible speaks so often about being thankful. In a broad, sweeping statement it says, "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (*1 Thess. 5:18*).

But for some, Thanksgiving is not a time of thanksgiving. Even though there are many things for which they could be grateful, they lack an attitude of gratitude. Consequently, they miss out on many of life's richest blessings.

Let's look at several reasons people may have difficulty being thankful.

## Early Impressions

From the time we are born our childhood experiences are continually shaping our attitudes. Some children,



for example, grow up in homes where there is little to be thankful for. One or both parents have a drinking problem, the parents divorce, a sibling gets all of the attention, there is constant bickering, or there is physical or emotional abuse. Early in life children in these homes begin to see their world as unsupportive and lacking in love and nurture. They learn to expect the negative. When positive things come, they overlook or mistrust them because their experience says "good times will not last."

In other homes there is much to be thankful for, but the parents don't show much gratitude so the children

don't pick it up. It is difficult to learn to be grateful when the most important people in our lives don't set a positive example.

## Associates

There's an old proverb that says you can tell a lot about a person by the company he keeps. And that's true. We tend to take on the habits and thinking of our associates. This was brought home to us recently when we were with a small group talking about the blessings we were enjoying.

One young man spoke up and said, "I guess the thing I'm most thankful for is that I'm still alive." Then he

# g Ingratitude



continued. “I was born and raised in a gang infested place where most of my peers were angry and rebellious against authority. They weren’t grateful for anything. You had to join a gang or be shot. And if you did join one, you would probably be killed by an enemy gang. I never thought I’d live to be eighteen. But here I am now, 24, and still alive. Beside that I’ve been saved!” In spite of his terrible environment, he was deeply grateful. He had removed himself from his negative associates.

But negative associates aren’t limited to the ghetto. Some hold positions in corporations. Some sit on a college

faculty. Others appear each day on television or write for newspapers. But they are always looking for the negative. They can find something to complain about in every situation. These people don’t inspire anyone to thankfulness.

### Physical Problems

A person’s feelings of gratitude are often influenced by physical problems. We have a dear friend who has constant headaches. He has gone from one specialist to another in an effort to find relief. But to no avail.

Many school children are ridiculed or pressured and condemned because they have behavior or educational problems that are caused by neurological impairments or Attention Deficit Disorders. These problems and attitudes carry over into adulthood and impact the person’s attitudes toward themselves and their ability to be grateful.

Mature Christians like Joni Eareckson Tada can develop a wonderful grateful attitude in spite of major physical handicaps but it isn’t easy.

### Spiritual Immaturity

Undoubtedly one of our greatest reasons for being thankful is the realization that God has redeemed us. Our sins are forgiven and we know that our precious Savior will “never leave us or forsake us.”

This is great cause for gratitude. But what of the person who does not know the Lord? He does not have the comfort which God so bountifully showers upon the person who is in close communion with Christ. As one lady told us, “I never knew what it meant to be thankful until I trusted Christ as my Savior.”

### A Short Term Focus

Another culprit which steals our thankfulness is a short term view of

life. There is a natural tendency to see life from our present situation. We are likely to think of what is happening now, rather than focusing upon the long view. This can affect even a sincere Christian.

God says in His Word, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him” (I Cor. 2:9). We need to keep one eye on the present but we also need to keep our sights and hearts on what will be happening when we leave this world.

An old gospel song expresses this thought of focusing on the future:

I am a stranger here, within a foreign land,  
My home is far away, upon a golden strand.  
Ambassador to be of realms beyond the sea,  
I’m here on business for my King.

If we make the mistake of continually focusing upon present conditions, we will be fogged in with confusion, disappointment and unhappiness. Sometimes the current world doesn’t make much sense, but God’s future for the true believer is as bright as the gold that lines the streets of Heaven! Nothing can make us more thankful!

### Lack of Forgiveness

Some people suffer deep wounds early in life. Others are sinned against during the vulnerable years of adolescence. Some adults are betrayed by friends and family. And some of us become resentful when others don’t let us have our way.

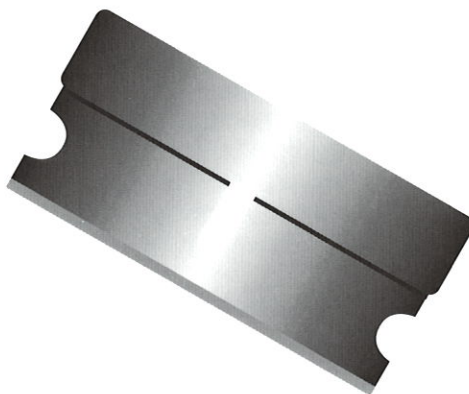
Mr. “Smith” was a rather prominent man in a local church... But a problem arose when the church congregation voted to take certain action. Smith was definitely against it, and he said so loud and clear. But he was voted down. Suddenly he stopped attending church. But his vacation from the house of God continued—one year,

**Ingratitude**, continued on page 20 ►

# Self-Injury: Understanding Teenagers Who Mutilate Themselves

by Karen Carr, Ph.D.

**T**errie is a 16-year-old student in a suburban high school in the U.S. It's been a hard year for her. She broke up with her boyfriend over the summer and she had a major fight with her best friend a few weeks ago. She feels intense pain and anger inside and nothing seems to relieve it. She assumes that no one really understands or cares.



Terrie knows some other girls who say that cutting yourself can make you feel better. That always seemed weird to her but she is desperate and decides to try it one night after arguing with her parents. She takes a razor blade and makes several cuts on the inside of her forearm. It doesn't really hurt that much and there's a comfort in feeling the warmth of her blood run down her arm.

David is a 15-year-old missionary kid who just started boarding school



this year. Although he was looking forward to doing just as his two older siblings had before him, he is now struggling with his new environment and being away from home. His school feels overly structured, excessively strict and oppressive to him. Most of the time he feels numb inside but he's never been one to talk much about the way he feels. Sometimes when he's really frustrated with his teachers or dorm parents, he punches the door in his room or bangs his head

against the wall. Somehow that gives him a sense of relief. He feels less tension and the physical pain is a comforting reminder that he is capable of feeling something — even if it hurts.

Both of these teenagers are harming themselves as a way of coping with pain. They are not alone. An estimated eight million Americans are currently self-mutilating, among them many teenagers who cut themselves. Others burn themselves with cigarettes or matches. Still others repeatedly

reopen old wounds by picking at a scab, pulling out their hair, biting their fingernails to the quick, or even breaking their own bones. Most of these actions result in minor injuries that can be covered or hidden (with the exception of the broken bones). They are usually not life threatening, but without proper care they can lead to infection or permanent scarring.

Self-injury is the intentional harm of one's own body without any conscious intention to commit suicide. This is an important distinction because self-injury may be confused with a suicidal attempt or gesture, but the underlying motivation of self-injury can be quite different from someone who is attempting suicide. Although some people who inflict injury on themselves do commit suicide, we shouldn't jump to the conclusion that self-injury means that someone is necessarily suicidal

### **Why Teenagers Injure Themselves**

Like most adjustment problems, self-injury is rarely caused by one simple thing. Instead, most people who injure themselves do so for a combination of reasons. Here are some of the most common.

*Relief from painful or upsetting feelings:* People who injure themselves often have trouble identifying, expressing, and releasing their emotions—especially their painful ones. If a teenage boy is feeling alienated, depressed, frustrated, tense, fragmented, or empty he may hurt himself to gain a little immediate relief. The physical pain produces a flooding of endorphins and provides a tangible wound that can be nurtured and healed unlike the hidden inner emotional pain. In this way, self-injury serves as a kind of coping mechanism that temporarily brings relief and lowers stress when one doesn't know how else to handle a problem.

*Physical Expression of Pain:* We all feel some inner pain or unhappiness at times that we can't quite describe or put our finger on. For unhappy teenagers, this can be especially troubling. They are upset but they don't know why. Hurting oneself turns the invisible pain into a tangible reality. As odd as this may sound, in the ►

hurting teenager's way of thinking, it seems better than an unnamed inner pain.

*Revenge:* Many teenagers go through a period of being quite angry with a parent or other person. If they cannot express that anger directly, they may seek out a hidden, alternate way. Some adolescents, for example, use drugs or drink alcohol or fail at school in order to unconsciously get back at their parents. Self-injury



*The key to helping someone who is self-mutilating is to remember that people don't do this just by chance. There is always some underlying cause or reason."*

sometimes serves this same purpose. It can be a disguised way of expressing anger or resentment.

*Self-punishment:* People who have been abused or mistreated or made to feel very badly about themselves may engage in self-mutilation because they think they deserve it. They feel so guilty or worthless that they punish themselves for their perceived badness.

*Re-enacting Previous Abuse to Gain Control:* People who have been injured or abused by another person sometimes replicate the abuse in order to gain a sense of control or to bring relief of their tension and pain. Their unconscious logic goes like this: "If I hurt myself, I am in charge of my pain. I can control it and keep it manageable. If I don't, someone else may hurt me and I will have no control at all over that."

*Self-Protection:* Other adolescents fear sexual victimization. They produce scars because they believe that will make them unattractive and scare away anyone who may approach them with a bad intent.

*Relief from Numbness:* Few things are worse than feeling inwardly numb or emotionally dead. Although this is difficult for many parents to understand, many teenagers feel inwardly

numb—almost like they aren't really alive. They are kind of floating emotionally or feeling dazed rather than alive and alert. This is a terrible feeling so they look for a way to prove to themselves that they are alive. Few things prove this better than seeing ones own blood running or feeling physical pain. It is a terrible paradox, but many people hurt themselves to prove that they are alive and real.

#### **How Can I help?**

*The key to helping someone who is self-mutilating is to remember that people don't do this just by chance. There is always some underlying cause or reason. The most important thing to do is find out why people are hurting themselves, not just try to get them to stop. We need to be good listeners and draw out hurting*

people. Only then can their real problems be resolved.

Since most people who self-injure do so in order to gain some sense of control, *it doesn't help to take a controlling, dominant stance or try to force someone to change.* People need to choose to stop. However, they will have great difficulty doing this until they have faced their emotional pain and learned better ways of coping with emotional stress. Anything you can do to help someone identify his or her painful feelings, talk about them, and discover effective problem-solving strategies, will divert the focus away from self-injury and onto the real source of the problem.

*Providing a model of self-awareness and honesty and being able to talk about our own conflicts, grief, or other forms of emotional pain can encourage a teenager to do the same.* So does pouring our hearts out to the Lord and allowing Him to heal us in our own brokenness. Instead of acting as if we have it all together we need to be real and open with our children.

Once it comes out that a person is self-injuring, it will be important to *provide ongoing support and care for him or her even after it seems that the self-injuring has stopped.* Relapse pre-

vention principles are useful here. It is important to help the person anticipate when he might be tempted to hurt himself again—under what circumstances and in what way. Then this person can be helped to develop a strategy for what he or she will do in that situation. It's also important to try to reduce the shame in case they hurt themselves again, since shame makes it difficult to let anyone know that they still have a problem.

*Never hesitate to consult with a mental health professional when you become aware that someone is engaged in self-injury.* Self-injury might be due to other types of problems such as sexual abuse, depression, suicidal thoughts, eating disorders, or substance abuse that require professional assistance.

As with any kind of behavior with addictive components, recovery can be a long road with relapses and pitfalls along the way. Christian families and caregivers will want to *use all of their spiritual resources of prayer to help their children or others learn to face their inner hurts and find deep and lasting solutions.* The child may or may not be ready to participate in prayer with you and should be given the choice but in either case, we should be seriously seeking God's guidance, support and intervention. ☞

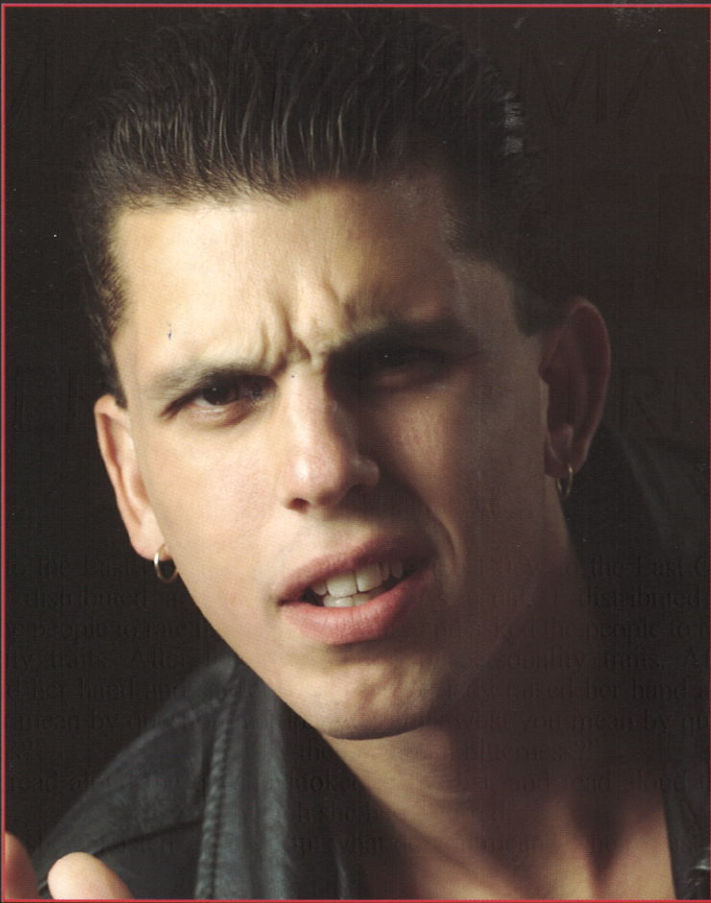
#### **References & Reading Resources:**

- 1) *The Scarred Soul: Understanding and Ending Self-Inflicted Violence* by Tracy Alderman
- 2) *A Bright Red Scream: Self-mutilation and the Language of Pain* by Marilee Strong
- 3) *Bodies Under Siege* by Armando Favazza

#### **Websites:**

- 1) [www.webring.org/cgi-bin/webring?ring=bus;list](http://www.webring.org/cgi-bin/webring?ring=bus;list)
- 2) [www.palace.net/~llama/selfinjury](http://www.palace.net/~llama/selfinjury)

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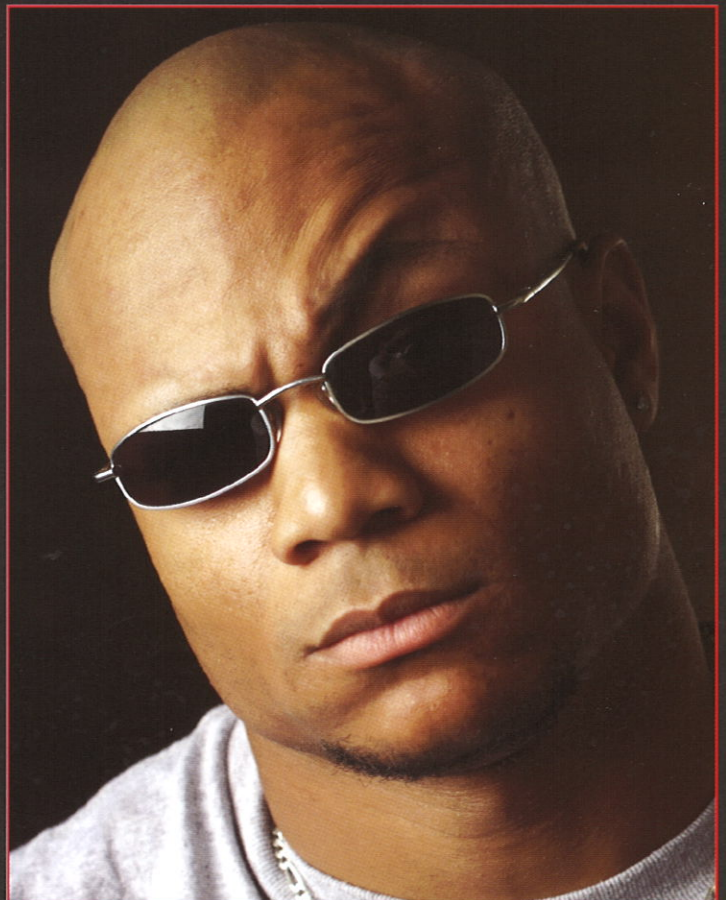
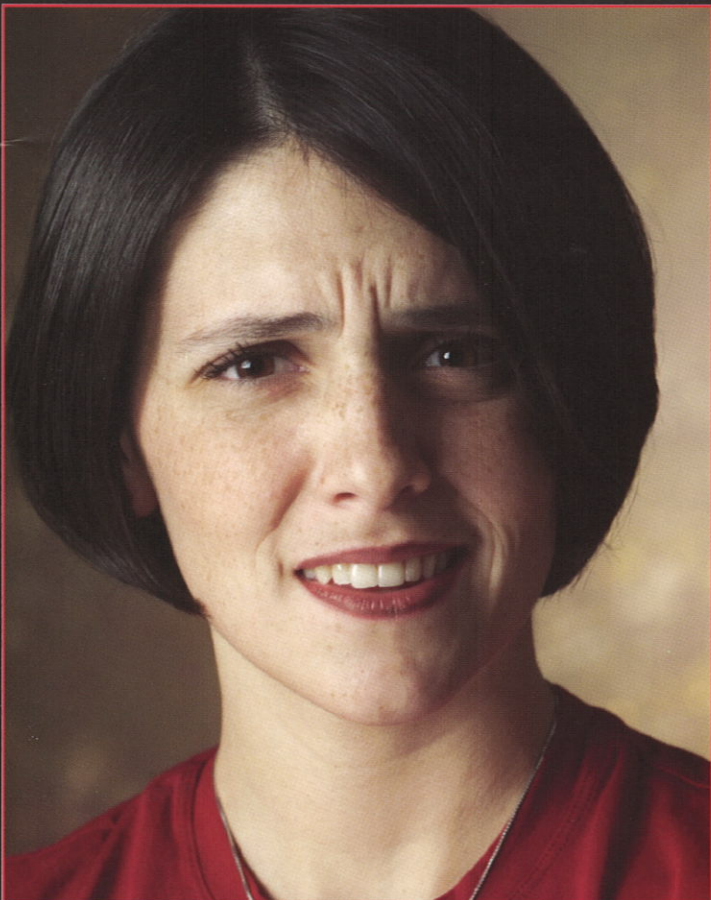
# THE MANY FACES OF BITTERNESS

by Dr. Clyde M. Narramore

Some time ago I flew to the East Coast to hold a seminar. As usual, I distributed a personality inventory and asked the people to rate themselves on a number of personality traits. After the group looked it over, a lady raised her hand and said, "Will you please tell us what you mean by question number 14—the one about bitterness?"

I looked at the list, and read aloud the question to which she had referred.

"But what do you mean?" she persisted. ▶



"I suppose all of us have at least some bitterness," I explained. "There's some anger, some hostility in our lives about something that has taken place." I waited a moment, then added, "Many of us may be more bitter than we think."

"Well, I don't think I have any bitterness," the lady responded immediately.

As the day progressed we began to take a close look at our feelings about ourselves. By mid-afternoon we were discussing experiences of our childhood. Then the same lady raised her hand again and began to talk about some things that had happened during her childhood.

Finally she half screamed, "Well, maybe I am bitter, maybe I am bitter, but I never knew it." I thought to myself, This is often true. We can harbor feelings of bitterness, yet never realize it.

Bitterness is more subtle than many other forms of anger. The bitter person usually doesn't rage at others or show physical violence or yell and scream. His anger is more settled and subtle, and he may be less aware of it. Nevertheless, it leaves a bitter taste in the mouths of those around him.

### The Many Masks of Bitterness

Bitterness disguises itself in various ways. Sometimes we evidence bitterness by withdrawing. Jane, for example, does this. She could be part of a group, but she chooses not to. She thinks group activities are "stupid" and "a waste of time". Her feelings of bitterness stand between her and her participation.

Tom does essentially the same thing by refusing to cooperate with others. He has decided it isn't worth it to get along with others so he does his own

thing.

Another way we show bitterness is by making constant negative remarks about people. Just listen as a few people are discussing who is the right person for a particular job. Almost everyone agrees. But, just when the matter is about to be settled, one person jabs in a negative remark about the candi-



date. He criticizes, complains or puts the person down. If you listen carefully you realize that he isn't just raising a legitimate point. There is an edge of resentment or anger to his comment. He is unknowingly trumpeting his own bitterness.

We can also demonstrate bitterness by finding fault with other people. Those who are bitter very often point their finger at others. Because their feelings of bitterness have never been resolved, they focus on the weaknesses of people around them. They can't bear looking honestly at themselves,

so they look for someone else to blame.

Constant complaining and extreme pessimism can also reflect bitterness. People who never think anything is going to turn out well are often sour and bitter. There are countless ways in which we learn to mask our feelings of bitterness.

### How Does Bitterness Get Started?

Like all other emotions, bitterness doesn't "just happen." It is caused. It usually takes root early in life. A small child whose basic emotional needs are not met may become bitter. Because he craves such things as love and affection, and because they're not coming his way, he may become discouraged and conclude that life isn't treating him fairly. This attitude then follows him into adult life.

Parents may get so busy that they have little time for their children. A boy once told me, "My Mother and Dad have two Bible studies in our home every week, but they never have any

time for us kids. I wish the house would burn down so the people couldn't come to our house. Then Mom and Dad would have time to play with us. Now they never do."

This boy was developing bitter feelings and in time they may be directed toward God since it seems like it was He who took his parents away.

Jealousy and envy are often at the root of bitterness. Children who believe that a brother or sister was their parents' favorite may become bitter and resentful. Envy and jealousy are opposites of gratitude, and bitter people are generally ungrateful people.



Bitterness sometimes comes as a result of serious losses in the family. The loss of mother or father or another loved one may cause a host of negative emotions. I know of a little girl who lost her older brother in an accident. For years she carried bitterness in her heart. She hated God because she thought if He were a God of love, He would have kept her brother from dying. She had no one to whom she could turn. Her mother would say things like, "Don't talk about your brother; it's too painful. Think about something happy." Little did the girl realize she was learning to look at life through glasses of bitterness as her feelings festered and became deeply planted in her subconscious. Her parents didn't know how to console her and put their family's suffering in a biblical context.

Sometimes bitterness develops out of the overprotective attitude of one or both parents. An overprotective or domineering mother may rob a child of his own contribution in life. She may, for example, keep tying his shoes well beyond the time when he could do it himself. Constantly telling a youngster what to do and not do robs him of initiative and self-worth. Although the child doesn't realize it, his love for his mother becomes mixed with extreme bitterness, which continues for years.

Bitterness also occurs when God is blamed for the vicissitudes of life that result in suffering. I know a bright, sensitive little girl who was five years old when her baby brother was born with serious mental and physical handicaps. Before long they found he couldn't talk or react normally. The little girl went through periods of feeling bewildered that her brother couldn't play with her. Later she heard other children say terrible things about her "crazy" brother. Although she lived in hope that he would be normal, that was not to be. She visited him in the institution where he was placed, but her sadness, dejection, and deep bitterness were never resolved.

Some people who have no personal relationship with God can develop feelings of bitterness. God created man to have fellowship with Him. But when people do not know the Lord

they lose their greatest resource for dealing positively with life's tragedies and difficulties. They feel they're "going it alone." Devastating experiences and conditions in life are many. If they could be written on sheets of paper, I presume they would reach from the Atlantic to the Pacific. When tragedies like the loss of a young child, severe illness, or loss of a job come, they have no one to whom they can turn. They don't understand that we are living in a sinful, fallen world and they don't know how to understand and cope with suffering. Consequently, their lives may become cold, hard and unloving.

Little wonder then that the roots of bitterness take hold, then grow to severe proportions as the years take their toll.

### **Bitterness Can Be Resolved**

Anything that has known causes can generally be resolved. This is true of bitterness.

*The place to start is to admit to having the problem.* Denial is like putting a Band-Aid on a festering sore. It covers the problem but doesn't solve it. Admitting that the problem exists opens the door for healthy discussion and insights. Once it's out in the open it can be effectively dealt with.

*God usually uses people to help other people.* When my car is having trouble, I don't try to fix it; I take it to the nearest garage. So it is with personal problems. We usually need another person—a good friend or a professional counselor to help us resolve deep-seated feelings of bitterness.

But you might ask, "What about the Lord? Can't He help us without using other people?"

Yes, indeed. He certainly can. But He often uses people to help us bear our burdens and give us understanding and encouragement. The Bible tells us to confess our faults to each other and pray for each other so that we will be healed (James 5:16).


*Tracing the causes.* At the core of bitterness we usually find feelings of hurt and/or anger and an inability or refusal to forgive. We rarely overcome bitterness until we get to the

causes of these hurts. It is difficult to see and appreciate positive experiences as long as we have a bitter taste in our mouth. But once we get rid of the bitterness we can enjoy other tastes.

*Forgiveness is the next step in overcoming bitterness.* Most people find it difficult to forgive because they have been hurt and they don't want the perpetrator to go unpunished for his wrongdoing. This is understandable. But as Christians we can discover a great, eternal truth: we don't have to concern ourselves with vengeance and punishment. God who is just and who rules the universe declares with authority, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord" (Romans 12:19b). God has reserved justice to Himself. He will handle the causes of our hurt in His own time and in His own way.

Our ability to forgive does not usually come suddenly. It involves a process of considering and resolving our negative feelings, becoming emotionally and spiritually stronger, then turning over to God the responsibility of making things just and right in His own way. As we pray and study God's Word, and learn to feel better about ourselves, the process of forgiving is encouraged. We have a different perspective on our life and we no longer see ourselves as helpless victims.

Regardless of the hurts you have experienced which have made you bitter God can energize and give you a bright future. He wants you to become a whole and healthy person. His work in your life is not dependent upon what has or has not happened to you. He has just as much power to nourish and help you after your heartaches as he had before your tragic experiences. So your future is just as great as the eternal promises of God! He really can give you "beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning" (Isaiah 61:3).

Bitterness—yes, it has many faces. It wears many masks. And it covers a lot of pain. But there is something we can do about it. And as we do so, not only will we be happier, but God will be able to use us in ways we never thought possible! 

# An Appointment With God

by **Lareau Lindquist**

Daniel Webster once stated that the most awesome thought he ever had was the realization that he would one day stand before God to give an account of his life. Indeed this truth is taught in the Bible ...

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad (*II Corinthians 5:10*).

So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God (*Romans 14:12*).

## **Yes! You Have an Appointment With God**

It is an appointment that you cannot break nor postpone. In God's timing, you and I will individually stand before Him. Let's begin to live with an increased awareness of that day. We are surrounded by people who have no realization of life beyond death. Glen Drake said, the world has forgotten, in its concern with the left and the right, that there is an above and a below. We are passing through the earthly scene only briefly. Stuart Hamblen wrote these lyrics ... This troubled world is not my final home.

But does today matter? It matters greatly. This day is preparation for that day. Whether you are young or old, today is building toward tomorrow and toward the ultimate Tomorrow, which will be an eternity with Jesus in His heaven.

## **Make This Day a Positive Preparation for That Day**

Today and every day, God has something for you to do. Whether young or old, we are to be about His work. God's word to the young is this "... Remember your Creator in the days of your youth" (*Ecclesiastes 12:1*). Similarly Paul wrote to His young colleague, Timothy, "Don't let anyone look




down on you because you are young, but set an example" (1 Timothy 4:12). God has something for all of us TO BE and TO DO as long as we are alive. I am impressed that God called Moses to the greatest and most challenging ministry of his life when he was eighty years old (Exodus 3-4). We need to always have our ears open to the voice of God.

### God's Promises are for You Today and Right on Through Old Age

In *Isaiah 46* God speaks to His people ... to all of His people and says, I have upheld you since you were conceived, and have carried you since your birth. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am He, I am He who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you (verses 3-4). He has been working in us in the past and He promises to do so in the future ... right up through your old age. If you are already there, that promise is still for you. If you are far from old age, it is a promise you can carry today and every day well into old age. Look at the specific promises in the text:

I will carry you. In *Isaiah 40:11*, God tells us where and how He carries us. He says that He carries us close to His heart ... not at a distance but right up close to His heart. Believe it because it is true. You are so special to Him.

I will sustain you. Even in the heaviest and darkest times the entire nature of His being will steady you, will sustain you, and will see you through.

I will rescue you. In other words, nothing will destroy you. He is always on a "rescue operation" on your behalf and mine. You may have tough times, severities, and a lot more. But YOU, the core you, cannot be damaged or destroyed. He has promised to rescue you. When we get to heaven, you and I will see the full picture and we will rehearse to one another His repeated "rescues" on our behalf. 

Lareau Lindquist is the Founder and Acting Executive Director of Barnabas International. Used by permission.


## MENTAL HEALTH NEWS

# No Surprise: Parents and Peers Influence Adolescent Alcohol Use!




In another of many studies on the influence of parents and peers on teenage behavior, four researchers studied the drinking behavior of 556 teenagers during the summer before they entered college. Forty percent of the males and 30 percent of the females reported episodes of heavy alcohol drinking during a two-week period. Teens who reported more heavy drinking episodes were more likely to have parents with permissive attitudes about drink-

ing alcohol and close friends who drank frequently.

Teenagers who had the fewest episodes of drinking were more likely to have parents who disapproved of heavy drinking and who were aware of their sons' and daughters' activities and whereabouts. 

Wood, M.D., Read, J.P., Mitchell, R.E., & Brand, N.H. "Do parents still matter? Parent and peer influences on alcohol involvement among recent high school graduates." *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 18:19-30, 2004.

## Millions of Children Living With Substance-Abusing Parents

Statistics from the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA) indicate that over six million children in the U.S. lived with at least one parent who abused or was dependent on alcohol or an illicit drug during 2001. Four percent of mothers and eight percent of fathers living with a child or children were estimated to abuse or be dependent on alcohol or an illicit drug. 

"Children Living with Substance-Abusing or Substance-Dependent Parents: The NHSDA Report." Office of Applied Studies-Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.



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

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**Ingratitude**, continued from page 11

five years, ten years. He was never able to forgive the people who voted “the wrong way.” Worse still, nearly everyone in that small community knew it—children and all.

The world is filled with people who have never learned to forgive and unforgiveness robs them of a grateful heart. They rarely appreciate anyone or anything.

## How to Grow in Gratitude

If you have identified one or more of the reasons why you may not have a more thankful heart, you can change. It usually won't take place overnight, but with some time, effort and understanding you can transform ingratitude into an attitude of gratitude. Here are several basic steps that each of us can take:


1. Change begins with insight. Problems like ingratitude will continue to hold us in their grip until we recognize and admit we have a problem.

2. Identify the causes. If you have painful experiences in your past, take all the time you need to face them honestly and to work through your resentments, hurt and pain.

3. Talk it over and pray with a trusted friend. The Bible encourages us to “confess our faults and pray for each other.” Friends can encourage us, provide understanding and honest feedback, and offer a model of thankfulness. A wise man once said that we should take our burdens to our mate, the Lord, and a trusted friend. God uses close friends to help heal our wounds.

4. Make a list of things you can be grateful for. It may be small at first, but it will grow. Thank God for life. Thank him for saving you from your sin. Thank him for one friend or beloved family member. Thank him for your job, your health, your education, or your children. Even though you have some things you are not grateful for, we are sure that there are many things that you are. Write them down and thank the Lord for them each day. When you come to a difficult or even terrible experience, thank God that you survived it and that you can learn and grow through it. Things could be worse. God is going to deliver.

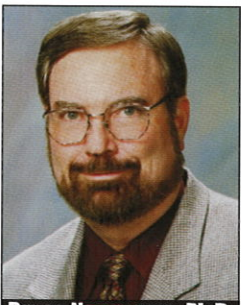
Read the Bible regularly and apply its teachings to your life. The more we gain God's perspective on our lives the more grateful we become. You can also practice thanking others. Make sure you thank one person for something everyday—your grocer, spouse, bank teller, or co-worker. Practice giving thanks.

5. Don't overlook the help you can receive from a professional counselor. If your wounds are deep, you may need the listening ear and wise counsel of a godly man or woman who can help you unravel and resolve those problems so that you can experience and appreciate the wonderful blessings that God has for you. 

# Is Narcissism a Part of All of Our Lives?

by Bruce Narramore

**Q:** *A friend of mine recently wrote a paper for her psychology course. The subject she chose was "narcissism" but she found little and conflicting information. Is this a viable diagnosis or is it just a part of all of our lives?*



**Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.**

**A:** Thanks for your question. It is an important one that I am sure many of our readers share.

Narcissism is like nearly all psychological problems. Most of us have a few of its characteristics. We occasionally get discouraged, for example, but that doesn't mean we are clinically depressed. We occasionally worry, but that doesn't mean we have an anxiety neurosis. And we

have times that we are a bit lethargic and times when we are upbeat and energetic, but that doesn't make us manic depressive.

When it comes to narcissism, most of us have at least a touch of self-centeredness or some other characteristic of the narcissist. This is part of our sinful nature. "All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6).

While these reactions aren't ideal, they are within the normal range and differ from someone who is clinically diagnosed as narcissistic in two ways: First, we don't have as many of the symptoms as a true narcissist. Second, we don't have the traits that we share to such an extreme degree.


Take envy, for example, one of the common characteristics of narcissistic individuals. I suspect that everyone has a bit of envy. We see people with wonderful gifts, possessions, or success in life and wish we could be like them. We might even harbor a little unspoken wish that they would mess up just once, so that they would know how we feel! By contrast the narcissist is very envious. He doesn't like anyone to do better than he does or even to succeed in his field because he has to be the best in order to bolster his inadequate self-esteem.

Envy is closely related to another common characteristic of narcissistic people. They have such a strong preoccupation with being exceptionally successful, powerful, beautiful or brilliant that they can't stand it when anything happens that challenges their

grandiose image of themselves. If someone defeats the narcissist in a contest, he has to find an excuse for why he didn't win. The rules weren't fair. The judges were biased. The other person was cheating, or something of that nature. While none of us like to lose, and while we may jokingly make an excuse, we know in our hearts that we just lost. The narcissist cannot accept that fact. The same is true of the other common characteristics of narcissists:

- Most of us enjoy attention and admiration to some degree. Narcissists have a need for constant attention and admiration.
- We all want our way at times. Narcissists have a sense of entitlement. They believe they should always get their way.
- We all look out for ourselves. Narcissists tend to exploit and take advantage of others in order to achieve their own ends.
- We may all be self-centered at times, but narcissists have a serious lack empathy and love for others because they are so preoccupied with themselves.
- Many of us feel superior or proud at times. Narcissists are arrogant or have a haughty or consistently superior attitude.
- All of us like to be special. Narcissists believe they are so special and unique that they can only be understood by or should only associate with, other special or high-status people.

Professional psychologists and psychiatrists do not diagnose someone as a Narcissistic Personality Disorder unless they have at least five of the eight characteristics discussed above. When someone has that many narcissistic traits, we conclude that this isn't simply a "normal problem" or just part of their inherent sinfulness. It is a deep and longstanding pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting that cannot be overcome by simply deciding to be less self-centered and more concerned about others. They will need professional help to get to their underlying feelings of shame, inadequacy, and inferiority if they are ever going to develop the capacity to care deeply for other people.

I hope this clarifies your question. If you would like more information on narcissism you can find it on our website at [www.ncfliving.org](http://www.ncfliving.org) or order a copy of the NCF booklet *Understanding Narcissism* from our office. 

## CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

### Missionary Counseling Center Opens in Southeast Asia

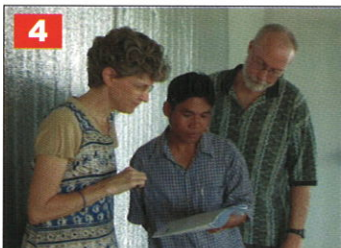
After two years of prayer and planning, the Cornerstone Counseling Center in Chiang Mai, Thailand, is now open and serving missionaries from throughout Southeast Asia. For the first time ever in this region of the world, a full service Christian psychological clinic is within the reach of thousands and thousands of missionaries sacrificially serving the Lord in difficult situations. Instead of having to return to the United States for therapy, leave the field for good, or struggle on without assistance, missionaries are now able to receive the counseling and help they need in their area.

The Center is located in a lovely office complex (Photo 1) near the Chiang Mai International Airport. This ideal location makes the Center (Photo 2) available to missionaries living and working in Chiang Mai, as well as those who will fly to Thailand for intensive counseling from surrounding countries. Missionaries and their families from Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Vietnam will be a convenient airplane flight from the Center.

The founding Clinical Director of the Center is NCF Staff Associate, Dr. Tim Friesen [Photo 3 with Thai Christian businessman, Thammasak Sumettikul (far right) and construction contractor (center)]. Dr. Friesen earned his doctoral degree in clinical psychology at Rosemead School of Psychology and has extensive experience working overseas with missionary and military families.

Also on the Center staff are Mrs. Diane Tehan and William Hoppe, M.D. (Photo 4, looking over remodeling plans with construction tradesman). A fourth staff member will join the counseling team in February. By having four Christian psychotherapists, the Counseling Center staff will be able to serve individuals and families with a wide range of needs as well as travel to outlying areas for crisis intervention.

Friends and supporters of the Narramore Christian Foundation have provided the funds to make this critically needed Christian Counseling Center available to those who are serving the Lord in this difficult and distant region of the world.



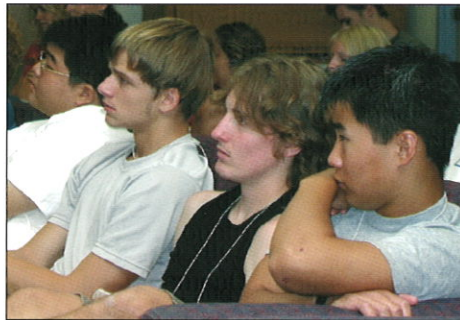
United States

## 2004 MKs complete Reentry Training


They arrived from 24 countries, leaving their families behind in Nigeria, Columbia, Guatemala, Senegal, Indonesia, Cameroon, Malaysia, Burkina Faso, Romania, the Republic of Congo, Panama, Peru and other exotic, difficult and distinctly different countries.

But these seventy-seven unique young men and women had much in common. They were all sons and daughters of missionaries and they were returning to the United States for college. Before heading off to college they flew to California to participate in an intensive two-week reentry program sponsored by the Narramore Christian Foundation. The program is designed to ease the transition back to the U.S. and help these students process the impact of growing up between two worlds.

Each day they attended challenging lectures and discussions on transitions, loss, cultural and dating patterns of U.S. young adults, managing strong emotions, and other vital topics. They also



MKs reflect on their transition to life in the United States.

took vocational and personality tests and had group and individual sessions to process their test results and discuss any adjustment issues they desired. As one student summed up his experience, "I came to grips with many of my childhood issues, and started to process my own reentry journey. I learned a lot and felt encouraged and loved. God has met me in a very real and raw way this week." 

I was just diagnosed as being bipolar this week. Last year I attempted suicide. Through God's grace I was spared and seemed to be on the right path, but my "hypomania" stages continued and my daily life was suffering. Your article has helped me understand that I am not alone and is helping my family to better understand this disorder. Thank you.

— R.C., NJ

I love your web site. I printed The Gift of Encouragement and have sent the link to lots of friends and family.

— L.F., ID

The article I read on avoidant personalities was excellent and really hit home. I have been dealing with this problem in my current relationship which has just ended as a result of my difficulty opening up. But it is comforting to know that what I was asking for in terms of understanding and gentleness without criticism was valid.

— M.M., Ireland

I really just stumbled upon your web site – I thank God I did. You have great ministry resources which will help me widen my understanding beyond the pastoral counseling courses I have taken. God bless you.

— F.M., CA

The articles I read on your Website are useful in my sermon preparation. Thanks and God bless.

— N.D., HI

Last Laugh



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**Editor's Note:** Please let us know what you think about *Psychology for Living*. We welcome your comments and strive to serve our readers better for the Kingdom of God. You can write to us, or email your comments to [ncf@ncfliving.org](mailto:ncf@ncfliving.org).



# FOUR FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOUR FINANCES

- ✓ If you are 55 or older, you can receive, depending on your age, annual returns between 5 to 11% for as long as you live, through an NCF Annuity and receive a tax deduction..
- ✓ If you haven't updated your will for 5-8 years it could be seriously out of date.
- ✓ You can avoid paying capital gains tax on your appreciated property.

✓ Narramore Christian Foundation offers a variety of plans to meet your individual needs.

To learn more about how you can help yourself and others through your investments and/or gifts, write or phone for a free consultation.

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Phone: 800-477-5893 ext. 222

**YES**, I would like a free consultation on ways of receiving guaranteed income or tax savings while supporting the world-wide ministries of the Narramore Christian Foundation.

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