

PSYCHOLOGY FOR LIVING

MARCH-APRIL 1996

**GETHSEMANE—
THE MOST
INCREDIBLE
STRUGGLE
OF ALL TIME**

**WHY NOT BE
FULL OF JOY!**

**HOW DO YOU
SEE YOURSELF?**



**DIVORCE
AND HOW
TO AVOID IT**

A PERSONAL WORD

by Clyde M. Narramore

A LIVING FAITH

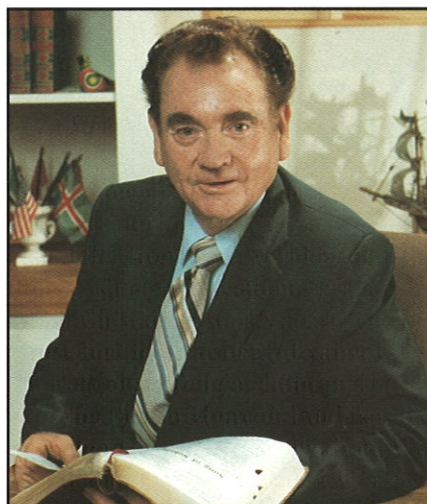
A DEVOTED CHRISTIAN YOUNG MAN studying at a great American university became acquainted with one of his fellow students—a man from India. One day the foreign student asked his new friend, “What is the distinction of the Christian religion? How does it differ from other religions or beliefs?”

Thoughtfully, the Christian answered, “Christianity stands apart. The reason is found in its leader. All other religious leaders have been human. They live, they die, they are buried. But Jesus died, and then He arose from the dead. We have the names of the people who saw and talked with Him after he arose and before He ascended into Heaven. Other leaders are mere men without a divine nature. They are not God, nor are they sent from God. But because Christ was and is God, He had the power to lay down His life and to rise again from the dead. Christ is living today!”

“How interesting!” said the man from India. “I’ve never thought about that.” Then, pausing for a moment he continued, “It’s true! The leader of my religion is dead.”

The Christian man had given the right answer. Christianity does stand utterly apart from all other religions. It cannot be compared because **Christianity is more than a religion. It is a Person.** It is Jesus crucified and risen. It is the divine Christ dwelling in the believer. Christianity is not merely a collection of catchy maxims and good moral standards, as fine as they may be. It is not man trying to do something to appease an irate God. Rather, it is God in His love doing all things for man—doing them through the finished work of His Son, Jesus Christ, upon the cross of Calvary.

Why do men invent their own man-made religions? Why do they stake their future on a dead leader? Because deep in every human heart there is a longing to worship God. A person must believe in something—in *someone*. **We’re born to believe!** Man was created for fellowship with God. But when man refuses God’s plan of salvation, which is the *only* possi-



ble way, he then invents a cult of his own or he falls into the snare of some counterfeit religion—one that requires him to do good works in order to earn his way to Heaven. In this way he tries to appease his conscience. The Bible says that if people don’t believe the truth, they will believe a lie. Indeed, **everyone has to believe in something, and when a person refuses to accept God’s way, Satan will cause him to believe a lie.**

After one has accepted Christ as his personal Savior, it is easy for him to see how utterly false other religious systems really are. All of them teach that man must work his way to Heaven. Why? Because if man has no Savior to pay the penalty of his sins, he concludes that the only way to attain Heaven is by his own good works. So he tries to earn his salvation.

Other religions, cults, and isms are loaded with self-works and good moral aims. But this is not God’s way. In His Word, He tells us, “...not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5). Because of the divine work of the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion, man is given a new nature, a new life, and a new power. Naturally he has nothing that he can work for since God has already furnished it all. Man only needs to accept and appreciate it.

All religions other than Christianity spurn the finished work of Christ on the cross. How such a thing must grieve the heart of God! Think of God in the form of Jesus Christ giving Himself for humanity, then poor struggling man turning his face from God, trying to work his own way to Heaven. The world is full of substitutes, counterfeits and imitations. But they just don’t work!

The most insidious substitutes ever offered a gullible public are Satan’s counterfeit passes to Heaven. And he has many of them. They are usually camouflaged under the guise of religion. It is precisely because they are do-it-yourself religions that make them completely unacceptable to God. Such religions are distorted expressions of man’s search for God, all the while deliberately rejecting the divine truth of Almighty God.

In the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, he wrote, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (chapter 2, verses 8 and 9).

We can take no credit for our salvation. Nothing we could ever do would be enough to atone for our sins. But the finished work of Christ is more than enough—much, much more.

God accepts the substitutionary death of His Son. We know this because God raised Him from the dead. That was the seal of God’s approval on this miraculous transaction.

“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He arose again the third day according to the Scriptures...and if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty” (I Corinthians 15:3, 4, and 14).

But **Christ did indeed rise from the dead.** And “because He lives, we too shall live” (John 11:25)!

Clyde M. Narramore

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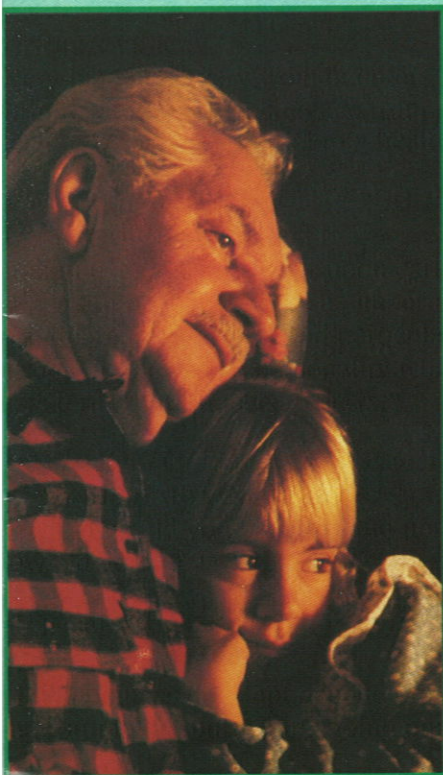


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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

WITHOUT LIFE, there is no light. Only a living being can experience light. Life must exist for a person to be aware of light.

John speaks of this correlation as he introduces the God/man, Jesus Christ. In the first chapter of John's Gospel, verse four, he writes, "In Him (Jesus) was life; and the life was the light of men." Interestingly, life came first. Only through His life was light brought to mankind.

There was never a darker time in the history of the world than the day Christ died on that cruel cross at Calvary. Matthew, in describing the events surrounding the crucifixion, tells us, "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour" (Matthew 27:45). How uncanny! This darkness blanketed the land for three hours from 12 noon to 3:00

TO THINK ABOUT

by Ruth E. Narramore

p.m. The mid-day night was not due to a winter sun that did not rise above the Arctic Circle. This event took place in the Holy Land.

During this infamous period of time, earth was experiencing the frowns of Heaven. An extraordinary light had helped to proclaim our Lord's birth; now an unprecedented darkness was giving notice of His death.

Why was it so dark in the middle of the day? It was because the Light of the world (John 8:12), was being extinguished. When His life was snuffed out, the light went out too. With the death of Jesus came a darkness so black, it could almost be felt.

But praise God, the power



of the eternal Christ conquered the forces of darkness. Death could not hold Him, so He rose again! And on that early Sunday morning, His resurrected life was accompanied

by a light so bright that the Roman soldiers who had been commissioned to guard the tomb, shook and "became as dead men" (Matthew 28:4). Now that death had been defeated, life was set free, and the light of His magnificent glory was released to illumine the world. So while our Lord's crucifixion had indeed brought death and darkness, His resurrection ushered in life and light to the world.

So it is in our own lives. Before we are given new life by being born into God's fam-

ily, we are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). A dead person does not see light, but when he experiences new life through the risen Christ, his heart is flooded with the glorious light of God's presence.

As Christians, we are products of God's divine life and light. The Apostle Paul urges us to give thanks "unto the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light...and has delivered us from the power of darkness...." (Colossians 1:12, 13a). In Ephesians 5:8 we are admonished, "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light."

Because Christ lives, we have been rescued from the darkness of spiritual death. With His vibrant, resurrected life within us, we now joyously walk in the light of His glorious presence! □

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

NCF IMPACTED MY LIFE

Praise God for you and your dedication to helping others. Many Christians say a Christian should not go for help with their problems. They often say we should just trust the Bible and everything will turn out O.K. But I feel that NCF has impacted my life and helped me very much. And I still could use some help. Thank you for being there.

*Myra McDonald
East Port, Georgia*

HELPFUL AND MOTIVATING

I appreciate you and your staff for all you do. Your literature is so helpful and motivating—including the *LIV-*

ING magazine, your books, your wonderful "Letters of Blessing," and your booklets. Thank you so much.

*Mr. and Mrs. R.E. Farnham
Naperville, Illinois*

A PASSION TO UNDERSTAND PEOPLE

The credit for any insights I have acquired, I owe entirely to the Narramore Foundation. What I learned in the seminar courses and the accompanying tapes has given me a real passion to better understand people.

*Robert Spears
Prince George, British Columbia*

ANONYMOUS CALLERS

For a couple of years now, I have been doing what Ruth

Narramore wrote about in her editorial column, "To Think About," in the last July/August issue of your *LIVING* magazine. If the phone caller does not answer after my second "Hello," I start reciting the very same Bible verses Ruth uses. One caller did not hang up till I had said three verses!

I tell my friends to do the same.

*Vonla Burman
San Jose, California*
Editor's note: Good for you!

MY GRANDDAUGHTER WOULD BENEFIT

Just a little note to tell you how much we enjoy your magazine! We read it from cover to cover, and often pass it on to somebody else. I'd

like my granddaughter to receive your magazine. She is a 16-year-old high school student, and I'm sure she would benefit by reading this fine publication.

*Louise Verhaar
Prospect Park, New Jersey*

THE IMPORTANCE OF UPHOLDING

As we read your *LIVING* magazine, your "Letters of Blessing," and hear you on the radio, we are alerted to the importance of upholding you daily in our prayers. We ask the Lord for increased strength for you and your staff as you give of yourselves in dealing with so many problems.

*Irwin and Jessie Cook
New Milford, Pennsylvania*

DIVORCE



AND HOW TO AVOID IT

Every man and every woman enters marriage with his and her own baggage from the past. Dealing with it is essential to a healthy marriage.

by Julia Viskas

TOO MANY COUPLES stand at the marriage altar pledging their love to each other with dreams of happiness and raising a family together, only to find that a few years down the road they are standing before a judge arguing about who will obtain custody of their children.

How Common is Divorce?

Divorce is becoming increasingly common. Studies show that as high as 50 percent of all marriages end in divorce, with the figures even higher for remarriages. Some studies have estimated breakdowns of marriage to be even as high as 67 percent, considering couples that separate but don't

ever legally divorce. Of those who remain married, only a portion report true happiness and satisfaction in their marriage. Sadly, the statistics also include many Christians.

Why Does This Happen in Our Society?

Relationships are difficult. The Bible is a book on reconciliation, first with God, then with other people. There is a great deal of instruction on relationships and how to treat one another. Because of our Adamic natures, this is not something that seems to come naturally; people must be taught.

God tells us that failure to love is a sin. Jesus summed up the whole law by saying "love God...and love your neighbor." When it comes to marriage, differences and disagreements are normal. When problems become too intense and are never resolved, they erode the love which began as the foundation of the union.

It's an illusion to think that a person would have no problems if only he or she were married to someone else. There may be a different set of problems, but there would still be disagreements that would need to be resolved. As Dr. Clyde Narramore often says, "People take their problems with them from one marriage to another."

One of the major breakdowns in marriage is the lack of a lifetime commitment. Divorce has become so common and so acceptable that many marry with the thought that if things don't go well, there's always an "out." Serious problems may require a long time to work through. But ultimately, it's worth the time and effort.

What are Some of the Effects of Divorce?

Divorce literally tears apart lives and families. No one is a winner. No wonder God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16)! There is little on the face of this earth that is more painful. And the saddest, most innocent victims of divorce are the children. In the California Children of Divorce Project, several long-term studies were published which followed the offspring of divorced parents for five to fifteen years after their parents' divorce. The studies revealed that five years after a divorce, 37 percent of the children were having significant problems and reported that they were intensely unhappy with their lives. They struggled with increased difficulties in school, and often suffered from depression. Many tended to blame themselves and carried a heavy load of guilt believing that somehow, they were responsible for their parents' breakup. Virtually all children five years post divorce held the fantasy that their parents would somehow still reconcile. Imagine the pain of hanging onto a dream like that, then being let down and disappointed! When these children reach adulthood, they are often burdened with problems of low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and marital difficulties of their own.

What Can Help These Children?

Children who best weather the divorce of their parents are those who are able to maintain regular contact with both parents. A constant and positive relationship with a grandparent is also helpful. Unfortunately, studies reveal that five years after their parents' divorce, 55 percent of the children see their noncustodial parent only two times a month. Generally the economic level of the home has also substantially diminished which necessitates that Mom hold down a job to make ends meet. This means that *she* is not around much either.

Children also come through better if the parents are able to maintain an amicable relationship with each other. Parents who run each other down and continue to argue put the children in a position where they feel forced to choose sides—accepting one parent and rejecting the other. Of course, the best thing for children is for their parents to stay together while seeking Christian psychological counseling to resolve

their difficulties. Divorce is seldom a good alternative.

How Can Divorce Be Prevented?

Putting it simply, *don't give up!* Marriage partners need to keep working at their relationship! A healthy, happy mature marriage is basically composed of two healthy, mature people. It's important that we educate America's youth on how to prepare themselves to *be* a good partner for marriage, as well as how to *choose* the right one to marry. When one is emotionally healthy himself, he (or she) is more likely to marry an emotionally healthy mate.*

A satisfactory marriage involves two people who are open and candid enough to look at their own lives with the willingness to grow and change for the sake of their relationship. A good marriage has a strong commitment by both partners to meet the needs of the other. This requires that each partner be willing to examine and identify his or her own needs. It also means developing the ability to lovingly communicate these needs to one another. In addition, it involves the willingness of each spouse to accept what the other is able to give. Many couples find this difficult. They are unrealistic in their expectations.

There are many who need help in these areas, both individually and as a couple. If your marriage is rocky and you don't see any hope for improvement, it probably means that you need professional counseling. Why limp through life with an ailing marriage when help is available? God wants you to have a happy, fulfilling marriage. He wants you to seek help.

Does Marriage Counseling Really Help?

For some people, the idea of marriage counseling is threatening. More than once I have heard people say,

One of the major breakdowns in marriage is the lack of a lifetime commitment.

"We're afraid to have counseling because then, for sure we'll get a divorce." In reality, just the opposite is true. The object of marriage counseling is to mend and save marriages—not to destroy them.

Marriage counseling provides an objective third party to observe the marital relationship. Through interviews and testing, a counselor can identify problems the couple may not see. Most marriage partners are aware that in a conflict, no matter what the trigger point may have been, they often end up arguing about the same old things. Frustration builds and sometimes ugly words are exchanged. Neither partner really listens or responds to the other's concerns; each is too interested in getting his or her own point across. A marriage counselor can identify and point out these patterns. The couple can then be helped to communicate more clearly. This allows the couple to work through and resolve their problems, rather than getting hung up on them.

Suggestions for Resolving Conflicts in Marriage.

If you are experiencing difficulties in your marriage, approach your conflicts with the foremost concern being the value of your relationship. Consider how you can improve it rather than forcing your own agenda. Your relationship is precious—treat it that way. Learn to consider your partner's feelings as valid and important, even if you see things differently. Feelings are *real*. They can be very fragile and must be handled with care.

The single most important step is to submit yourself to Christ. Read His Word. Pray daily. God can do miracles!

Learn to listen—really listen—to one another. If you are both angry and shouting, there is very little chance of having a productive conversation. Learn to recognize when you are no longer conversing but returning to the same old arguments that keep on bugging you. When you reach that point, call some time out so that you both can cool off and think things over.

Later—after both of you have simmered down—return to the conversation and take turns speaking. Don't interrupt one another. When the other person finishes, repeat back what you think you heard him or her say. Then ask, "Is that what you are saying?" When your spouse is satisfied that he or she has been heard, you as the other partner should then take your turn to share from *your* point of view. Make sure conversations end with a search for solutions that are win/win. This usually requires compromise.

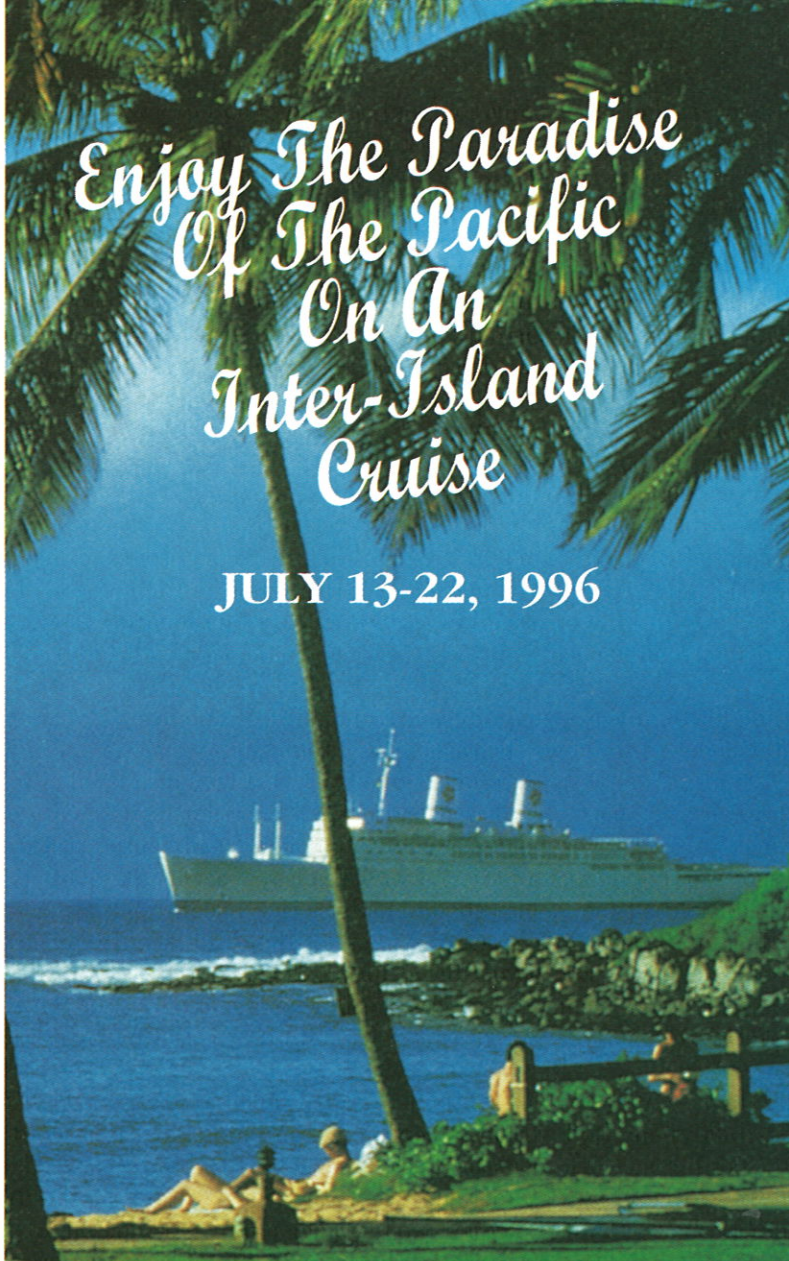
Above all, if you don't seem to be making progress, it is time to seek help. Every man and every woman who enters marriage does so with his and her own baggage from the past — baggage which he or she doesn't even know is there! Dealing with it is essential to a healthy marriage. The sooner the better! □

Julia Viskas M. Viskas, M.A., is a Marriage, Family, and Child Counselor in Glendale, California.

*An excellent booklet along this line titled, *A Marriage Checklist*, is available without charge from the Narramore Christian Foundation.

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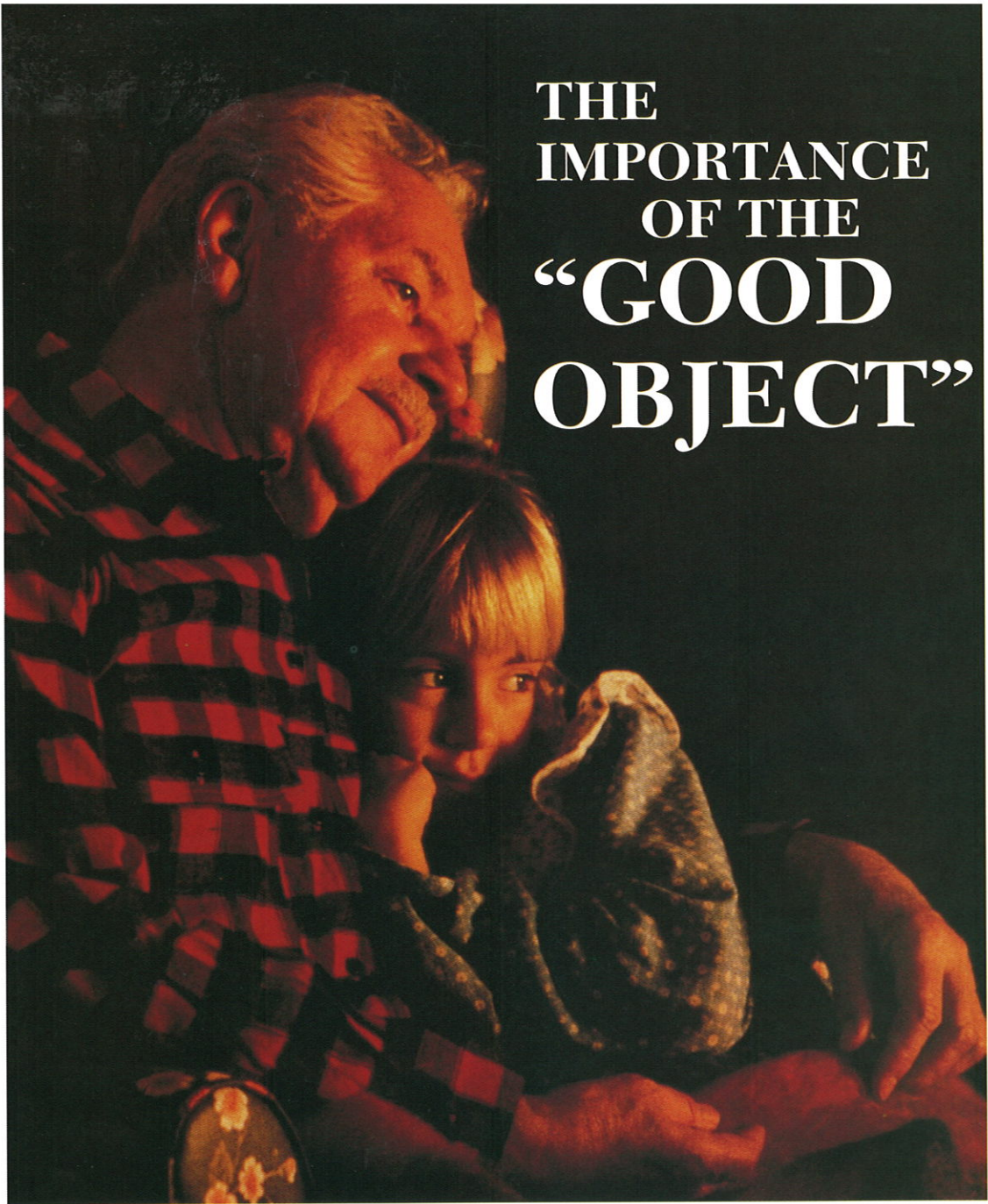


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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE “GOOD OBJECT”

Human personality is built upon early relationships with people who are viewed as important. Grandparents, siblings, and particularly parents become in the young personality what psychologists term, “internalized objects.”

by Arthur W. Hartzell

I CAN'T STAND IT when you're nice to me. It makes me uncomfortable; it *hurts* me.”

This is what Diane, a client, said to me one day during our counseling session.

That particular statement made me

suddenly understand that it was necessary for Diane to see herself as “bad.” Furthermore, it hurt her and made her anxious if she were given the message that she might be acceptable to another person.

In working with Diane I often wondered why she seemed to hold so strongly to a picture of herself as bad and unworthy. Although she was a Christian, professing to know the Lord and was following His teachings, she remained deeply depressed and unhappy.

As far as her relationship to God was concerned, she considered her sinfulness to be a far bigger issue than her value in God's sight.

Many Christians speak of their unworthiness in relation to God's great sacrifice

of His Son. It is true that man was not deserving of that sacrifice, but God's willingness to send His Son (and Christ's willingness to die for the sins of men), actually attests to man's value in the eyes of God. It is presumptuous of us to belittle and devalue ourselves when we are so greatly cherished by God.

Human personality is built upon early relationships with people we view as important. Grandparents, siblings, and particularly parents become in the young personality what psychologists term, “internalized objects.” The personality becomes secure or insecure, happy or unhappy, depending on how the child viewed his early objects and the way they related to him. The more I work with people, the more I find this to be true.

Early object relationships and the reflection they gave us of our inner selves have provided the basis of our personality, and we insist on holding to those reflections for that reason.

Diane's need to see herself as unacceptable and unworthy was, in fact, a protection of her personality structure which was primarily built upon an internalized "bad object." She had always experienced her mother as critical, sarcastic, argumentative, and unaccepting. Now a certain degree of distortion comes into Diane's ability to relate to others, and she is inclined to look for criticism and unacceptance from them toward her.

Because there is sin in the world and man has fallen short of the perfection God would have for him, unkind human relationships exist, poor parenting exists, and distortion in perceptions exist at every level. Many persons—both Christians and non-Christians—struggle with a problem similar to Diane's. Because these people have experienced bad internal objects as the foundation of their personality, they have great difficulty in seeing themselves in any light other than undesirable and unworthy.

In thinking theologically and psychologically, it is amazing to realize that God has provided man with the ultimate "Good Object." This object, of course, is Jesus Christ, with all of the caring, acceptance, consistency, and provision for our safe keeping that He represents. His "internalization" provides a foundation upon which we can build a new spiritual personality. His acceptance of us and the realization of what His sacrifice means, provides us with new internal reflections of our own great value to God. Thus, we are given the foundation for an improved psychological makeup.

Like Diane, many persons need guidance, acceptance, and good "parenting" from a trained counselor before they are able to relinquish a perception of themselves as unworthy. As a Christian counselor provides a good human relationship with acceptance, and thus reflections of the individual's worth, personality growth will take place. As Christians become aware of the "Good Object" we are given in Christ, the process of personality growth gains an added positive dimension from which we are to draw. □

Arthur W. Hartzell, Ph.D. is a graduate of Rosemead Graduate School of Psychology. He practices in Savannah, Georgia.



HOW DO YOU SEE YOURSELF?

How old would you be if you did not know how old you are?

by Venus Bardanoue

AS THE HURRIED MOTHER tried to unbuckle and extract her son from the child-safe seat in a car parked too close to mine, I said to her, "Take your time. Get your young man out. Then I will open my door."

A little blonde head peeked around the mother and a small voice proudly announced, "I'm not *young*; I'm four years old!"

I had just passed my seventy-fifth birthday and my thoughts were centered on what it meant to be three-fourths of a century old—what it meant to me as I considered my new milestone.

I had become increasingly aware of the attitude of much of our society toward old age, expressed in subtle ways that can erode the confidence of older people in themselves. For example, a woman said to me, "What does your generation do and think about?" I realized that she failed to see my individuality, but saw me as just a member of a generation.

I noticed at a recent Christian conference that a well-known speaker was billed as the "seventy-eight-year-old writer and speaker," although her age had no bearing on the content of her talk. Since the age of none of the other speakers on the agenda was listed, I wonder if this emphasis may have caused both her and the audience to see her differently than they might have, had her age not been emphasized.

As for myself, I am claiming a statement I read somewhere: *How old would you be if you did not know how old you are?* And I have decided that I will not let my own or anyone else's concept of what I ought to be at seventy-five box me in and

(Continued on page 11)



WHY NOT BE FULL OF JOY!

Real happiness does not depend on what is going on around you, but what's going on within you.

by Vernon C. Lyons

IN HIS SHORT LETTER to the church at Philippi, the Apostle Paul mentions "joy" nineteen times. How could the

Apostle be so happy? Especially when he was a prisoner!

Joy does not depend on what is going on around you, but what's going on within you. No one can make you unhappy unless you are willing to admit that other people can control you. The whole teaching of the Bible is that we, under God, are to control ourselves. Every man is to "rule his spirit" (Proverbs 16:32). Each of us is accountable to God, not only for our actions, but also for our attitudes.

By centering on the Lord as Paul did, we can be *filled* with joy. If we don't go that route, we'll be manufacturing our own misery.

A dour, gloomy, negative person is usually a tired, exhausted, and unsuccessful person. It takes a lot of energy to be sad. A joyous person is able to accomplish much. As the Bible clearly explains, "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). It is always easier to do a task when you are happy about it; it's much harder when you are gloomy and negative.

Have you ever asked, "What kind of person am I? Am I basically an enthusiastic, happy, joyful individual? Or am I all too often sad, negative, and sour?"

Here are ten questions that you can ask yourself to discover what kind of person you are. By thinking through them, and analyzing yourself, you will also discover what kind of person you would really like to be. It will give you a goal to work toward.

1. **"Do I have a worthy life goal?"** Certainty brings joy and exuberance. If I am not sure where I am going or what I am doing with my life, the confusion is bound to result in despondency.

2. **"Do I have a practical plan for reaching my goal?"** A goal is not enough. In fact, a goal can be downright discouraging if there is no down-to-earth, day-by-day plan for achieving it. A joyous person has a spiritual goal and is moving closer to it day by day. He is accomplishing a big task by working at it in small parts.

3. **"Do I follow up talk with action?"** Promises, resolutions, commitments, and noble aspirations are not enough. There must be positive, meaningful action. A person who does not act is sure to become depressed. In fact, one of the easiest ways to get out of an emotional slump is to start doing good, profitable, and worthy things that add meaning to life.

4. **"Am I able to tell the difference between big and little matters?"** Life can become bewildering if we give the best of our thought and time to small matters while the great issues go unattended. Moroseness is bound to overtake a person who never gets life's issues sorted out.

5. **"Am I able to work without constantly complaining?"** If the effort put into fretting and faultfinding were devoted to the task, happiness would come

with the success, and joy would be experienced while working toward the achievement. If I am constantly grumbling about what I have to do, I am robbing myself of the joy of working.

6. **"Am I able to solve problems rather than being overwhelmed by them?"** We all have problems. Either we let them wipe us out, or we grow by tackling them. A problem is an opportunity to seek wisdom and strength from the Lord so that we can resolve it and go on. Joyous people have problems as well as those who are miserable. The difference is what they do with their problems.

7. **"Am I able to accept responsibility?"** Do I keep my promises? Am I on time for appointments? Do I carry my part of the load? Or am I always evading, avoiding, and excusing? Do I have a tendency to blame others when I do not do what I am supposed to do? Can I admit it when I'm wrong?

8. **"Am I able, with reasonable promptness, to gather the facts and**

make a decision?" Indecision destroys joy. If I have collected a lot of matters that should have been settled a long time ago, no wonder I am in a state of gloom. Identify what needs to be decided, gather the necessary facts, make the decisions, then act upon them.

9. **"Am I able to get along with others?"** Our greatest challenges to growth come through other people. Learn to thank God for those who are harsh, unreasonable, demanding, cantankerous, sullen, and hostile. Realize that these people can be a great blessing because they can cause you to depend upon the Lord. They can help to develop your character. Their presence is ever a witness that your happiness is not dependent upon those around you. Rather, it comes from your relationship to the Lord. Accept difficult people as a challenge. Determine that you will get along with them, even though they put forth no effort to get along with you.

10. **"Am I able to maintain self-con-**

trol under stress and pressure?" Anyone can keep his cool when things are peaceful and going smoothly. But can you be calm when there is a storm? Can you rejoice when in the natural your circumstances offer no reason to rejoice? If you can, then you can be sure that your joy is in Christ, untouchable by other people or the conditions surrounding you.

If you let others control your life, then you are never sure what is going to befall you. If you let others mold your feelings, you can never be sure whether you'll be sad or glad. But if you submit your life to Christ and let Him control you, He will give you a wonderful, beautiful, joyous life regardless of where you are, what your circumstances may be, or what others are saying or doing. Your life will then be one of peace, purpose, and true joy! □

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

HOW DO YOU SEE YOURSELF?

(Continued from p. 9)

cause me to accept some stereotyped life style. I will think of myself as ageless—which I am in the Lord's eyes.

It is not that I mind being in this season of life. I like it. Being seventy-five has many advantages. I can look back on wonderful memories of happenings I did not even dream of when I was young. Many individuals have come into my life who didn't exist when I was twenty: my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. I am free of many fears and hang-ups of earlier days, have freedom from many former responsibilities, and have many other blessings of old age.

To me, the greatest blessing of being older is the deep knowledge that God has always been there throughout the years. There were some painful times, surely, but it was in those black, hopeless days that I grew closest to my Lord. I agree with Joshua who, looking back on the history of the Israelites, declared to them, "You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed" (Joshua 23:14 NIV). I, too, know with all my heart and soul that God has been faithful through it all, and that knowl-

edge gives me great peace and confidence to accept whatever the future brings.

However, I want to live fully this seventy-fifth year—and all the years the Lord, who has my "times in His hands," will give to me. The Bible speaks of Abraham as "full of years" (Genesis 25:8). I like those words. They imply experience with its wisdom and learning. I will choose to be "full of years," learning from the past while contributing to the present and future.

Most older persons will tell you that they do not feel any different inside than they did when they were young adults, and I feel that way, too. Surely, this is another proof that we are immortal beings, living in mortal bodies. The body deteriorates, but the person stays the same—and always will throughout eternity.

Children have often taught me much, and this small boy changed my life a little with his statement, "I am not *young*: I'm *four years old*!" It is not always what is fact, but how we perceive a fact that makes the big difference. That's why I have decided to say, "I'm not *old*; I'm just seventy-five!" □

Venus Bardanoue, a former speech pathologist, is a freelance writer living in Harlem, Montana.

Golden Anniversary

On Saturday, April 13, 1996, Clyde and Ruth Narramore will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary!

A homecoming is being planned at the Narramore Christian Foundation in Rosemead, California. We would be happy for friends to attend. Rooms at the Foundation will be available for out-of-town guests. Feel free to come a few days early, or stay a few days after.

If you plan to come, please let us hear from you as soon as possible! Write, or phone (818) 288-7000.

GETHSEMANE— THE MOST INCREDIBLE STRUGGLE OF ALL TIME



No one else could ever know what His imminent death involved, but in Gethsemane at that hour, Jesus knew, and He could hardly endure it.

by William Counts

IT WAS ONE O'CLOCK in the morning as Jesus and His disciples threaded their way down the slope from the city walls and crossed the Kidron Valley. From there they proceeded to a peaceful clump of olive trees. This small orchard, known as Gethsemane, was probably owned by friends, and had become a frequent retreat for Jesus during His tempestuous Jerusalem ministry. But on this night, it would become His last shelter on an inhospitable earth.

Jesus told eight of His disciples to sit down while He took Peter, James, and John with Him a little further on to pray. But this was to be utterly different from His usual times of prayer: Jesus was obviously in a state of overwhelming agony—greater than they had ever witnessed.

"I am terribly distressed, even to the point of death," He told the three disciples. "Stay here and watch with me" (Matthew 26:38).

Then Jesus fell on the ground and prayed, saying, "Oh My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (vs. 39). After a short interval, He prayed again, "If this cup cannot pass away unless I drink it, let Your will be done" (vs. 42). He prayed a third time and got up.

Luke tells us this struggle was so great that an angel came and strengthened Him, and Jesus' suffering was evidenced as "His sweat became like clots of blood falling to the ground" (Luke 22:44).

What was happening? In this hour Jesus was enduring overwhelming torment over the prospect of dying for the sins of the world. On the one hand, it was His main mission on earth, for He had said, "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). His death was destined to pay for the sins of mankind and to ransom from eternal damnation all those who believe on Him. But Jesus shrank from this horrible task. The unspeakable anguish of bearing the weight of such an enormous mountain of sin would far exceed the physical torment of the crucifixion. No one else could ever know the incredible suffering His imminent death involved, but in Gethsemane at that hour,

Jesus knew, and He could hardly endure it.

A Rare Medical Condition

Luke perceived some measure of the struggle in describing Jesus' perspiration as great "clots" of blood (according to the Greek original). It is possible that Luke, himself a physician, was noting a rare medical condition now known as haematidrosis. Under extreme emotional stress, blood vessels expand so much that they break where they come into contact with sweat glands. The suffering individual then actually "sweats blood." As Jesus prayed in agony, Luke's gospel accurately observes, He was covered with a bloody sweat.

The Garden of Gethsemane reveals, as perhaps no other recorded place in Scripture, that Jesus was a truly human man. Although He never sinned, He was *not* a robot programmed automatically and painlessly to obey God. He faced real choices of obedience or disobedience, and on this occasion, His choice of obedience came only through a frightful ordeal. In a letter to the Hebrews, the writer contemplates such incidents as this in Jesus' life, and states, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

The Garden of Gethsemane probably witnessed the most difficult test of Jesus' life. In the wilderness temptation, Luke records that the devil left off his severe testings of Jesus "until an opportune time" (Luke 4:13). Though he tempted Jesus all through His ministry, Satan's fiercest tests were probably reserved for the beginning and the end, in the wilderness and in the garden. The garden was "the opportune time"—a time when Jesus, worn down by three years of selfless giving and the heightening stresses of His final week, was more vulnerable than ever before in His life.

While the first man, Adam, failed in the Garden of Eden, this Man, "the second Adam," triumphed in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was here that the devil's dreams crashed in a heap under the weight of those words he so dreaded: "Not My will, but Yours be done." □

William Counts pastors a church in Dallas, Texas.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

by Kevin Narramore

HELPING THOSE WHO BATTLE DISCOURAGEMENT

ONE TIME I HEARD a Christian speaker tell an audience that he never felt discouraged. Hogwash! We all feel down from time to time -- it's human. Ecclesiastes and Psalms describe the raw emotions of people who have felt deprived, powerless, victimized, anxious, and even humiliated.

Would you like to encourage someone who is feeling blue? Chances are you'll meet a person in the near future who would find your reassurance to be a special blessing. Be open to a "divine appointment!" Let me share some ways to help those who are depressed.

To begin with, consider the severity. How intensely depressed is that person? Is he or she having trouble doing the most basic things like eating, sleeping, thinking, and working? Has he talked about wanting to take his own life? How long has she been feeling down? Persons suffering from severe "clinical depression" need to have professional psychological, and sometimes, medical help. If you would like to know the name of a Christian professional in your area, call NCF ministries at 818-288-7000 and ask for a referral. We are happy to share this information so that you can reach out to help others with the name and number of a qualified, Christian counselor.

In talking with someone who is not severely depressed and whose feelings are more temporary or situational, there are some things you can

say to help. The following suggestions are based not only on cognitive psychology, but also on the Biblical premise that "as a man thinks in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). How do you change the thinking frame of a discouraged person?

First, **help that person to get his or her story out.** Talk may be cheap, but encouraging a person to verbalize his feelings is extremely valuable in helping to alleviate that person's pain and suffering. Find out about the things that went wrong? How does he or she view the problem? Does he have negative thoughts that won't go away? How do they make her feel? What effect is a bad experience (robbery, job loss, divorce, etc.) having on her now? Does he remember having similar feelings any other time in his life (helplessness, frustration, sadness, etc.)? Perhaps in childhood? Don't cross examine the depressed individual, but do encourage him to tell you more. Part of listening is also giving the right nonverbal clues. Face the person, lean in, adopt an open, interested,



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accepting attitude

Second, **normalize his or her feelings.** A depressed person often feels alienated, isolated, and ashamed for feeling the way he or she does. Make a point to react to his misery by understanding how normal his feelings are when con-

sidering what he or she has gone through. Tell him, "I can understand how anyone who has gone through XYZ would feel very overwhelmed. It's amazing that you're doing as well as you are." Or, "Given what you have been through, if you were not feeling depressed I would be more concerned."

Third, **parcel out his problems.** Most problems in life need to be divided into smaller pieces so they can be adequately looked at and resolved. Like working a jigsaw puzzle, one can rarely take sixty-five pieces and put them in place all at once. It's easier to handle one piece at a time. Counselors sometimes ask depressed patients, "Of all the things going wrong in your life, which seems to be the most troubling right now?" When problems are cut down to bite size, they waste

less emotional energy and can be dealt with more effectively.

Fourth, **look for meaning.** Life's most difficult situations can be dealt with more easily if the person who is suffering can find a purpose. At a Christian funeral, for example, survivors can find great comfort in Scripture such as Paul's words, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21), or "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Psalm 116:15).

Finding meaning in pain reassures a person that he is still connected to life's greatest anchors. C.S. Lewis' book, *Surprised By Joy*, and Sheldon VanAuken's, *A Severe Mercy*, are great examples of people who in the midst of pain and darkness, were able to find a reassuring purpose. In *The Hiding Place*, Corrie ten Boom, a victim and survivor of the holocaust, found renewed faith in God. The terrible ordeal of suffering through Hitler's terror in a Nazi death camp during World War II deepened her commitment to Christ.

Fifth, **reframe and empower.** When someone is depressed, he or she is stuck in a mental log jam with no apparent options. "I'm overwhelmed and I don't have the ability or the energy to deal with this" is the thought which plays over and over again in the depressed person's mind. In such a scenario, do NOT respond with an insensitive cliché such as, "Snap out of it!" Or, "Just give it to the Lord." Rather,

(Continued on p. 16)



STAND YOUR GROUND AGAINST THE ENEMY

**Don't run! Don't be fearful!
Don't give up!**

by Joan Clayton

SHE CAME OUT OF NOWHERE—this little game hen—and bravely took up residence in our backyard. She knew that “Bear,” my husband’s big Rottweiler, was there. But despite the dog’s menacing bark and vicious demeanor, the little hen took her chances.

Bear was notorious about chasing anything that moved.

Several times we came to the rescue by chasing the hen out of the yard in order to save her life. But each time she quickly returned. Finally we gave up trying to save her. She roosted in the evergreen at night and walked around happily

clucking and scratching during the day. Bear sent the little hen flying at first, and even pulled out several tail feathers. But in time her determination won over Bear’s aggressiveness, and he finally lost interest in giving her a bad time.

The hen was perfectly content with her new home. Bear, at times, would even let her scratch around and eat the crumbs from his dog food.

It was a funny sight! A ferocious Rottweiler and a little game hen eating out of the same bowl!

I admire this little hen’s fortitude! She did not give up! She did not cower in fear! She did not run away! She bravely stood her ground! She persisted! She pressed on! She seemed to know that victory was just around the corner...and she prevailed!

Do life’s circumstances ever make you

want to give up? Cower in fear? Escape through pills, a bottle, or whatever?

Romans 8:31 tells us that “if God be for us, who can be against us?” We are told in Psalm 55:22, “Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.” With the Lord, we can “run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall” (Psalm 18:29).

My little hen was in the midst of enemy territory, but she stood her ground!

Students today in our public schools and secular universities are in the midst of enemy territory. More than ever, our young people need to rely on the Lord.

All of us are also surrounded by the cares of this world. God’s Word describes the problem—and gives the solution: “The thief does not come

except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

With Jesus, "we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Romans 8:37). So don't run! Don't be fearful! Don't give up!

"Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31:6).

You and God are a majority!

Stand your ground against the enemy today...and every day! □

Joan Clayton is a freelance writer in Portales, New Mexico. She also has a regular column in The Amarillo Globe News in Amarillo, Texas.

Making A Difference

(Continued from p. 14)

use a "Columbo" or Socratic style of inquiry which uses questions to help the depressed person see that he can indeed find the strength to cope with his difficulties.

In this search for strength, it is often helpful to start by discussing a connecting resolve from the past. For example, ask the depressed person if he can recall any time when he was nearly overtaken by a similar type of depression or problem, but managed to cope: "How did you find strength to deal with X?" Or, "You mean to say that even in the face of X, you were able to free yourself from Y? Tell me how you did it." "You mean that by working on one problem at a time you were able to keep from falling apart? You had that insight?"

Asking the right questions leads to reframing the way a person sees himself and his ability to cope. The depressed person must move away from perceiving himself as the impotent victim, but rather as a conqueror "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

I'm reminded of one of my favorite poems of the Elizabethan era, written by a man who had lost a dear friend as well as all his life savings. For a period of time Alfred Lord Tennyson withdrew and alienated himself from other people. But finally he was able to break through his depression by finding the strength and courage to move on. It was then that he

wrote the following prose:

Come, my friends,

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world...

Though much is taken, much abides; and though

We are not now the strength which in old days

Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are—,

One equal temper of heroic hearts,

Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Do you know someone who is discouraged or depressed? As Tennyson said, "'Tis not too late to seek a newer world." Memorize and practice these helpful techniques; then look for your "divine appointment." □

YOUR INFLUENCE LIVING FOREVER

Living forever is a reality! As a Christian you are assured of this truth, that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (II Corinthians 5:8).

You can also "live forever" in another sense: through your Will, you can provide that some or all of your possessions go to a Christian organization that will use your substance to influence lives for eternity. In this way you are sharing directly in the salvation of souls and the alleviation of human suffering—even after you have gone to be with the Lord. Let us encourage you to keep your Will current and to remember the Narramore Christian Foundation.

Coming Next Issue

- * Bequest
- * Motherless Children
- * No Perfect Father
- * Silent Dads
- * No Wicked Thing Before Our Eyes
- * When Eat Turns To Fat



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by Clyde M. Narramore

IS IT RIGHT TO "BLOW OFF STEAM"?

QUESTION:

Is it right to blow off steam? Often one hears that a person should not keep his feelings to himself, but should "blow off steam."

Is there a right way for a well-bred person who is also a Christian to blow off steam when he is frustrated?

ANSWER:

There is an appropriate response to every situation, and often there are several inappropriate responses as well. Ideally, adults ought to be mature enough to avoid *overreacting* to frustrating circumstances.

Shouting and losing one's temper is seldom desirable. The Bible tells us to "be angry and sin not" (Ephesians 4:26), but very few people do this. Although the venting of negative feelings may bring temporary relief to the one who has the problem, others are often made to suffer, and this is not right.

On the other hand, "blowing off steam" can take a positive direction. A jog, a brisk walk, or just talking over a trying situation with a friend who knows how to listen can be an enormous reliever of tension.

However, even the most acceptable methods for "letting off steam" may have their drawbacks. Years ago while I was serving as a consulting psychologist for a school district, I had an interesting experience along this line. A young teacher came to me with a problem. "I don't know what to do next," she said. "So many of the children have problems, and we learned in

college that they ought to blow off steam. I've gotten boards and nails and hammers, as well as punching balls, and when the children get upset I let them go outside and go to it. But now they're tired of this routine, and I've run out of things for them to do. What can I do next to help them blow off steam?" (I suggested that it would be a good idea to find out what was *causing* their anger.)

Talking Brings Release

A good way to blow off steam is to put our thoughts into words. Talking has real value; it is an outlet for human expression. Talking brings our thoughts into focus, and it helps us to better define what we are thinking and feeling.

Our emotional makeup is such that when our feelings are continually suppressed, we are likely to become nervous or ill in some way. Through talking we siphon off some of the poisonous feelings and pent-up emotions. After we have aired our thoughts, we see things in a more positive light. Even the world about us seems to take on a more pleasant atmosphere.

Kay, for example, was a young married woman who lived with her in-laws. She was most unhappy but she had no one with whom to talk over her problems. Finally, she decided to tell her pastor about it. At the end of a long session, she took a deep breath and said, "Pastor, you don't know how much this has helped me. Having some-

one to talk to—just getting it off my chest—gives me great relief. Now everything seems better."

Talking Is Therapy

Talking does bring relief. It is a legitimate escape valve. We feel different and this makes us better able to cope with difficulties. Talking helps us to sift our ideas and allows us to be more objective in our thinking.

Psychologists have long known that people who have serious problems seldom make good adjustments until they talk. Talking helps to clarify one's thoughts.

It is important for a person to get his feelings on the outside where they can be recognized and dealt with, rather than keeping them repressed.

Causes Of Frustration

Many people who experience depression have turned their bad feelings inward. Permanent help can only be achieved as the causes for one's problem are uncovered and removed. Sometimes a person has a low stress tolerance because of physical difficulties. He may be suffering with hypoglycemia. Or he may have a minor neurological impairment. On the other hand, he may be burdened with an emotional problem such as insecurity or a low self-image. These are but a few of the reasons why a person might feel frustrated.

Better even than learning to "handle" pent-up emotions is to live in such a manner that tension does not develop in the first place. If you have

the problem we have been discussing, you will undoubtedly find it helpful to see a pastor or a professional Christian counselor with whom you can talk through your tension-producing experiences. When you become better adjusted, you won't build up so much steam and it won't be necessary to keep "blowing off."

Important to your solution is your relationship to Christ. Since every person is a spiritual being, he has spiritual problems. And there are spiritual solutions. When a person trusts Christ as his personal Savior, he receives a new nature: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). This changes your nature; your desires will change, and your attitudes will change along with your entire outlook on life. Then as you read God's Word and grow, and as you fellowship with other believers, God will meet your needs and work out your problems so that life will not be a series of frustrations. "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You" (Isaiah 26:3).

In summary, look for the physiological, the spiritual, and the emotional causes. Then work in the direction of the **causes**. If this approach doesn't solve your problem, you should seek professional help. In time you will "blow off" good adjustment rather than steam! □

by Lee and Gloria Bendell

HEZEKIAH — A GODLY EXAMPLE

SCRIPTURE TELLS US that Hezekiah “was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years....He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father David had done” (II Kings 18:1-3).

Hezekiah was king of Judah in the lineage of David. His father, King Ahaz, “did *not* do what was right in the eyes of the Lord his God.” Ahaz “walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and even sacrificed his son in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites” (II Kings 16:2, 3).

Bible scholars inform us that Hezekiah was co-regent with his father from 729 to 715, and became the sole king of Judah when he was twenty-five years old...715 to 686 B.C. This meant that his co-regency must have begun when Hezekiah was eleven years of age, which implies much about Hezekiah’s childhood. Hezekiah observed firsthand the evils and idol worship practiced by his father, Ahaz. The boy must also have been keenly aware of the capture of Samaria (the northern kingdom under King Hoshea), as well as the exile of many Israelites to Assyria in 722 B.C. (II Kings 18:9-12).

What inspired Hezekiah to reverse the detestable, sinful practices of his father? We don’t know. Perhaps it was the influence of his mother. But all we know of her is just a reference in II Kings 18:2 giving her name, “Abijah, daughter of Zechariah” (not the prophet Zechariah who wrote the next to last book of the Old Testament about 200 years later).

Hezekiah is described the way most of us would like to be.

“Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before or after him. He held fast to the Lord and did not cease to follow Him; he kept the commands the Lord had given Moses. And the Lord was with him; he was successful in whatever

he undertook” (II Kings 18:5-7).

In II Chronicles 31:20, 21, a somewhat similar description of Hezekiah is provided after chapters listing some of Hezekiah’s accomplishments. “This is what Hezekiah did throughout Judah, doing what was good and right and faithful before the Lord his God. In everything that he undertook in the service of God’s temple and in obedience to the law and commands, he sought his God and worked wholeheartedly. And so he prospered.”

Familiar passages of similar content also come to mind. Consider the message of the old hymn, “Trust and obey, for there is no other way.” And the words of the psalmist, “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11). There are many scripture verses along this theme: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart” (Proverbs 3:5), “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (I Corinthians 10:31), “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men” (Colossians 3:23), “Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” (Joshua 1:8).

How do we become a person like Hezekiah? For one thing, we must be aware of what is going on around us. Then we must work to eliminate that which is false and evil. “He (Hezekiah) removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles” (II Kings 18:4). We must do our part to keep our places of worship holy and God-honoring. “Remove all defilement from the sanctuary” (II Chronicles 29:5), and worship sincerely, “They sang praises with gladness and bowed their heads and worshiped” according to Hezekiah’s direction (vs. 30).

We must also be encouragers: “Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites....” (II Chronicles 30:22).

“He appointed military officers ... and encouraged them with these words: ‘Be strong and courageous.... With us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles’” (II Chronicles 32:6-8). We must also set an example for others in giving of our resources to the Lord’s work. “The king contributed from his own possessions for the morning and evening burnt offerings...and appointed feasts as written in the Law of the Lord” (II Chronicles 31:3).

Above all, we must be committed to faithful prayer. Hezekiah prayed for those at the Passover who had not purified themselves, saying, “May the Lord who is good, pardon everyone who sets his heart on seeking God—the Lord, the God of his fathers—even if he is not clean according to the rules of the sanctuary. And the Lord heard Hezekiah and healed the people” (II Chronicles 30:18-20). Later when the Assyrian army threatened Jerusalem, “King Hezekiah..., cried out in prayer to heaven about this. And the Lord sent an angel, who annihilated all the fighting men and the leaders and officers in the camp of the Assyrian king (II Chronicles 32:20,21).

When ill and his death was predicted, “Hezekiah... prayed to the Lord, ‘Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in Your eyes.’ And Hezekiah wept bitterly” (II Kings 20:2,3). Then God gave him another message from the Lord, “I have heard your prayers and seen your tears. I will heal you....I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria” (II Kings 20:4-6). This is a perfect example of the teaching found in James 5:16, “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

J. Sidlow Baxter, Bible teacher and expositor, concludes that, “the supreme lesson of Hezekiah...is, the worthwhileness of godliness.” □

**Scripture quoted is from the NIV.*



OUR WORLD TODAY

by Eva Hallam Solberg

NEW CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION FOR SENIORS

A new organization, the Christian Association of PrimeTimers (CAP), similar to AARP, has been formed to serve the needs of the growing segment of society fifty years of age and older. CAP has a Christian emphasis and seeks to provide inspiration and encouragement, life-enriching opportunities for service, and significant savings on products and services which PrimeTimers typically need. Members qualify for discounts on individual and group travel, and have special reduced prices on Bibles, Christian books, and recordings. Other services include insurance coverages and low-cost prescription drugs available to members by mail. For more information about CAP, call (800) 443-0227.

(EP News Service)

RELATIVES AND IQ

The more genes two people share, the more they tend to be alike in intelligence and behavior. Average difference in IQ scores ranged from 15 percent in identical twins, 40 percent in fraternal twins, 60 percent in siblings of same family, to 80 percent in adopted children and their adoptive parents.

(Center for Developmental and Health Genetics, Penn State Science Magazine)

FELLOWSHIP CUTS ACROSS RACIAL BARRIERS

Middle-class Christians in Fresno, California, have been insulated from the struggles of the poor. But for three years, Fresno pastors, lay people, and civic leaders have served the needy in an outreach program

The most important events in human history are the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

—Billy Graham

being replicated in other cities. It started when forty pastors began meeting to pray for God's guidance. Pastors of various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds became acquainted and "reconciled at the cross," pledging their mutual friendship, love, and cooperation. The informal group of conservative Christians which is seeking ways to keep Fresno from exploding in racial conflict chose to call itself "No-Name Fellowship" to avoid ideological labels.

(Southern California Christian Times)

ENGLISH THREATENED AS COMMON TONGUE

Today, about twelve percent of U. S. residents, 32 million people, speak a language other than English in their homes. In California, the state most heavily impacted by immigration, schools teach classes in forty-two different languages. Foreign languages are becoming a part of our electoral process. Federal law currently requires three hundred and seventy-five voting districts to print ballots in languages other than English. By the time this issue of *LIVING* is published, we will know whether or not either of the two bills H.R. 375 and/or H.R. 1005, has passed to make English the official language of the U.S. govern-

ment. This would ban citizenship ceremonies in foreign languages, eliminate bilingual ballots, and end the federal law requiring bilingual education in our public schools.

(good news, etc.)

TALLY YOUR TAX WRITE-OFFS

Before you can write off medical and dental expenses, they must total more than 7.5 percent of your adjusted gross income, and you need to subtract any amounts reimbursed by an insurer or Medicare. Eligible expenses can include the cost of home improvements to accommodate a disabled person, such as widening doorways or adding handrails to your home, or installing hand controls or other special equipment in your car.

(Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine)

CHRISTIANS STAND IN THE GAP

The Salvation Army's leader, General Paul A. Rader, sees opportunities ahead as the federal government cuts back social services and looks to private sector organizations to meet the needs of America's poorest citizens. Rader believes that if Christians, motivated by the love of God, are in touch with the dynamics of the gospel of Christ to change lives, and are

willing to inconvenience themselves and make themselves available, they can reach people in a way that government simply cannot." He also stresses that the government needs to remove blockages in order for this to work. This evangelistic organization has discovered that where government money goes, government controls usually follow.

(EP News Service)

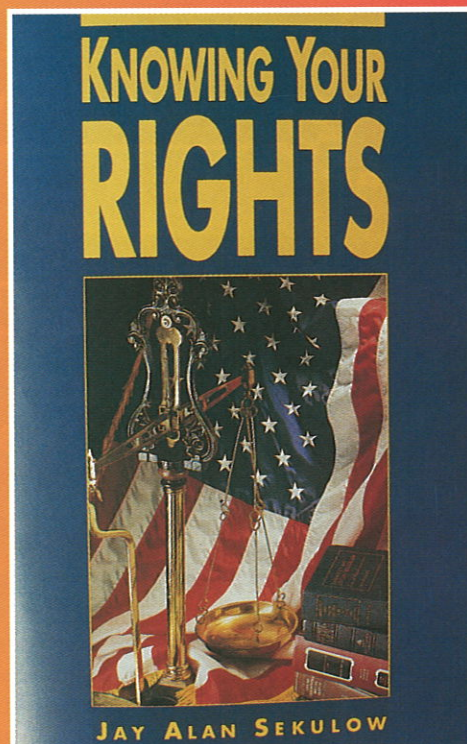
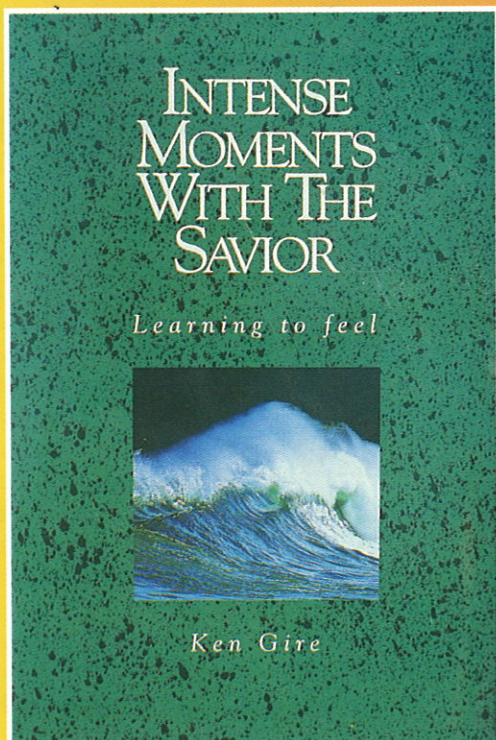
BILLY GRAHAM ON "NIXON" FILM

For many years Billy Graham was a personal friend of the Nixon family, dating back before Mr. Nixon's rise to national prominence. In response to a number of requests, Mr. Graham has released the following statement on the film, *Nixon*.

"I have not seen the film, *Nixon*, directed by Oliver Stone, nor do I plan to see it. I knew Richard and Pat Nixon well, and I want to remember them as they really were. I was with the Nixons in both the peaks and valleys of their lives. The Richard and Pat Nixon that I knew served their country with dedication and distinction for over half a century.

"I deeply regret the tendency today to distort the facts and demean the character of outstanding persons from the past, all in the name of entertainment. People want to make up their own minds about the past, instead of having others rewrite history for them. Those who deal with the historical record have a responsibility to present it with integrity, fairness, and accuracy."

(Billy Graham Evangelistic Association)



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by Ken Gire

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KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS

We must stop taking our constitutional liberties for granted and take them back.

by Jay Alan Sekulow

This book is about our freedoms—our constitutionally protected liberties as citizens of the United States. Among these liberties is the freedom of speech, which gives us the right to speak out on issues from a biblical perspective. And yet, along with many of our other freedoms, it is under attack.

But the constitution has not changed. Christians still have the right to be heard.

Jay Alan Sekulow, Chief Counsel for The American Center for Law and Justice, has written this book to help you understand what your rights are and the parameters within which you can exercise them. *KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS* will enable you to stand on them and speak out for Christ. A must for every Christian in America!

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