

PSYCHOLOGY FOR
Living

JANUARY / FEBRUARY
2000

- **Understanding Preadolescents**

- **Forgiveness**

- **The Emotional Life of JESUS**

Too Valuable to Lose

by Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

Did you know that during every four-year term of service approximately 30,000 missionaries worldwide leave the mission field? And 71 percent of these (over 21,000) are preventable! That is the conclusion reached by the Reducing Missionary Attrition Project, carried out under the auspices of the World Evangelical Fellowship Missions Commission. According to Dr. William Taylor, Director of the Fellowship's Missions Commission and editor of *Too Valuable to Lose*, the four most frequent preventable reasons for missionaries leaving the field are personal, marriage/family, social, and work-related problems.



Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

Think of the incredible personal frustration and confusion this represents. Potential missionaries spend years in school and in raising their support. Then churches and friends contribute scores of thousands of dollars to send them overseas, only to have five or six thousand of these missionaries leave the field for preventable reasons annually! This does not have to happen. If mission agencies and Christian colleges and churches adequately prepare candidates, and if missionaries receive adequate personal and emotional support while overseas and during their furloughs, this unnecessary loss can be greatly reduced.

This is why the Narramore Christian Foundation invests so much of its time and energy ministering to missionaries and their families. As we begin the new millennium, our staff is recommitting ourselves to providing the best possible support and care that we can for Christian missionaries around the world. We will do this through

- ✓ **Crisis Counseling** — Sending Christian psychologists and counselors overseas to counsel missionaries in times of crisis
- ✓ **Consultation** — Meeting with mission leaders and participating in meetings and seminars focusing on meeting the emotional, spiritual, and family needs of missionaries
- ✓ **Training** — Sending Christian psychologists overseas to work with missionary educators and parents regarding the needs of missionary children
- ✓ **Re-entry Seminars** — Offering two annual re-entry programs for missionary children returning to the U.S. from overseas to begin college
- ✓ **Ongoing counseling** — Providing support for missionaries in need of ongoing counseling to resolve deeper personal and family issues.

This year, as our partner in these ministries, I encourage you to regularly read the updates we will be having in each issue of *LIVING* and to pray regularly for our staff and associates. We want to provide all of the spiritual and emotional help that we possibly can to the fine men and women who are sacrificing to share God's love for the world around the globe.

Thank you for sharing with us in this venture.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 **Handling Conflicting Desires in Marriage**
by Henry Cloud and John Townsend
- 6 **Learning From the Emotional . . . Life of Jesus**
by Bruce Narramore
- 8 **Understanding Your Preadolescents**
by Vern Lewis
- 11 **Forgiveness: the High Cost of Getting Even**
by Dick Innes
- 12 **MK Kids Reentry**
- 14 **MacGirvin for President, Why A Single Mom Should Run The Country**
by Jackie MacGirvin
- 16 **Understanding Bipolar Disorder**
by Todd W. Hall
- 18 **Reflections**
by Clyde M. Narramore
- 19 **To Think About**
by Ruth E. Narramore
- 20 **Ask Dr. Narramore**
by Bruce Narramore
- 21 **Health Watch**
by Eva Hallam Solberg
- 22 **NCF In Action**
- 23 **Growing Strong in the Broken Places**
by Dick Innes

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Handling conflicting

DESIRES in marriage

by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend

Every marriage has some conflicts and many boil down to conflicting desires. Consider these inevitable, but normal, conflicts:

- One wants to go out, the other wants to stay home.
- One wants to spend money on the house, the other wants to save for the future
- One likes an active vacation, the other a quiet one
- One likes a church that focuses on worship, the other likes liturgy
- One wants more children, the other wants to be finished with childrearing

Differing desires is one of the things that makes marriage relationships interesting. In fact, your differences are part of what brought you together. But conflicts over differing desires can also break marriages apart. One of the keys to a happy married life is developing a pattern of give-and-take over competing or conflicting desires. Here are eight steps that will help you move beyond conflicting desires toward greater mutuality and intimacy in your marriage.

1. Don't moralize your desires

Joe and Susan had a difference in how they liked to spend "free time." Joe enjoyed leisurely hanging around the house, playing games with the kids, or watching sports on TV. Sometimes on Saturday afternoon, he would take a nap.

Susan was a doer. She liked to tackle projects around the house during her free time. But after organizing the house and "working on projects" for awhile, she would get annoyed if Joe was napping or, in her view, "wasting time" watching TV.

Soon an argument ensued. Susan felt Joe was being "lazy," and Joe accused Susan of being "compulsive." Susan moralized her position, arguing that work was "good" and TV was "bad." Joe should be doing something constructive or good, like working around the house. Joe felt just as strongly about his choice. He worked hard all week and deserved a rest! On Saturday, for him, rest was "good" and work was "bad."

Each made a case that their view was the correct one —





even the moral one. Needless to say, they got nowhere. Joe and Susan are destined for years of conflict and mutual blame *unless* they learn a very basic point:

Many areas of marital life are neither right nor wrong, good nor bad. They are simply a matter of personal preference. Some people are morning people and some are night people, and contrary to some people's opinions, morning people are not morally superior! Some people relax by working and others by doing nothing. Neither is "better" in a moral sense. They are just different. Accepting this point takes the accusing and blaming out of your dialogue and allows you to spend time finding a solution instead of trying to prove your point and get your way! Let's face it, you will never improve your marriage by proving that your desires are better than your spouse's!

2. Empathize and understand your mate's desires

Stay away from statements that make it sound as though what your spouse wants is unimportant or less value than yours. His or her desires are just as real to him or her as yours are to you. Give validation to your spouse's desires as real and good — even though they differ from yours. You might even try to put yourself in your mate's shoes and feel what he or she is feeling!

3. Move to meet your spouse's desires before you meet your own

Paul gives some great advice here: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own

interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3-4). If you are trying to make sure that your mate gets what he or she wants first, your arguments will be over who gets to *give* that day, not who *gets* their own way! Let your spouse pick the car this time. Or the restaurant, or the vacation. There will always be a next time. And notice that Paul doesn't say that we should ignore our own desires. We are *also* to look out for the needs of others. In healthy marriages, partners attend to their own needs *and* their spouse's.



Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

St. Paul,
Philippians 2:4

4. If there is a problem, keep an account of yours, mine, and ours

I was working with a couple who were always arguing about time and money and how they spent it. I finally told them there were two kinds of relationships in the world — those which operated by love, and

those governed by rules or law. Love relationships don't require rules for they are guided by the Golden Rule of doing unto others as we would want done unto us. But unloving relationships have to have rules. Since this couple were not loving each other, I made some rules.

I told them to keep score of how much time and money they had to spend, and make two columns. Then figure out whose "turn" it was to have their way with that night or that dollar. Then alternate. One could choose the restaurant or the entertainment one night, and the other the next. One could spend the first 100 dollars, and then the other the next. And so on.

At first they were insulted. "We aren't children. We don't need some stupid rules like that," they protested. But I seriously disagreed.

"Oh, yes you are," I said. "You are acting just like children. Each of you is wanting your own way. So I am going to chaper-



one and make sure that it is all fair. Bring your report to me next week."

They finally agreed and were embarrassed by the level of immaturity they were showing. But the system worked. They got into the habit of remembering there were two people sharing resources and finite things like time and money. There was only so much to go around and they had to learn to share.

5. Don't define a "me" as a "we"

Another pitfall comes when the spouse who thinks more in terms of "togetherness" defines what he or she wants as being "for the relationship," when in reality it is his or her own preference. A wife might choose to spend all of the available time doing together things, for example, and then claim that it is a team choice or choice for the marriage. She reasons, "Spending time together is good for the marriage so that time doesn't come out of my account." In reality, however, it is an "I" choice. She should be thinking, "I am choosing to spend my allotted time with you, and that must come out of my account."

People like that feel cheated when their spouse wants to do something for themselves that does not include them. They feel they are always giving to the relationship and the other person is always being selfish. In reality this is not true. They are not really "giving" to the relationship. They are choosing to make personal decisions that include the other person because they do not particularly like doing things alone. It might actually be better for the relationship if both partners had some time alone.

So make sure that when you want your spouse to do a "we" thing, he or she really wants it as well. If not, and he or she goes along, remember it is for *you* and not for the both of you. Count it in your own column!

6. Make sure "we" is agreed upon

When things are really for the two of you, make sure that both are signing off on it together. I talked to a couple recently who had lived in a house for three years before she finally admitted she resented and hated it. Her husband was shocked. He thought they had both wanted the house and loved it, even though it was large and took money away from the family to do other things.

In reality, she had just gone along. It had been something for him, but he had thought it was a true "we" thing. He was appalled that she felt that way. When you are both going to have to make a sacrifice for something, make sure you are on the same page in wanting it and agreeing to it.

7. Reevaluate your "preferences"

Sometimes the things we believe are our strong desires are not our true innermost desires anyway. As I talked with Susan

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"Let's try getting up every night at 2:00 AM to feed the cat. If we enjoy doing that, then we can talk about having a baby."

about always working around the house, it turned out that she felt driven to do that. She didn't know how to relax and she felt very anxious if she wasn't doing something. As we worked on her anxiety, she learned how to relax and lost her need to try to push everyone around her into the same drivenness that she felt. She no longer condemned her husband for relaxing. In fact, she discovered that one reason she had been so upset with Joe was that she envied his ability to take life a little easier. She learned that she could enjoy her husband and children much better. This was actually much more important to her innermost desires than her previous desire to keep the house spotless (Psalm 37:4).

8. Expand and grow

If you give yourself a chance to try out some of your spouse's desires, watch out. You might find out that you actually like romantic comedies, or Chinese food, or a vacation in the mountains! Instead of fighting for your own way, periodically join the preference of your spouse as a learning and stretching experience. You might not like it now because you have never really let yourself try. Try to see the activity through your spouse's eyes and you might learn to enjoy something that you would not have thought possible. Your marriage relationship and the number of things you enjoy can grow and expand if you let them. People like opera for a reason. Try to find out what it is. The old adage, "Don't knock it until you've tried it" might apply to you. And make sure you try it more than once!

Happy, healthy marriages don't happen by chance. They happen by choice, commitment, mutual sensitivity, and give and take. If you and your mate make a commitment to these eight principles, you will be well on the way to solving differences over desires and to a happy, growing, and fulfilling marriage relationship.

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Learning from the Emotional Life of Jesus

by Bruce Narramore

“Feelings aren’t important. Emotions get in the way.”
“Don’t trust your feelings.”
“Don’t feel sad. Just trust God.”

Have you ever heard advice like this? I suspect you have because many Christians have a serious misunderstanding about the Christian life. They think Christians should live stoic-like existences, especially as far as strong emotions are concerned.

But did you know the Bible describes more than 20 different emotions that Jesus felt? And they weren’t all happy feelings either! Among others, Jesus felt affection, anguish, anger, compassion, distress, grief, gladness, indignation, joy, love, peace, sadness, sympathy, troubled and weary. If Christ is our model of perfect spiritual and emotional maturity, perhaps we can learn by taking a look at a few of Jesus’ emotions!

Compassion

If we asked Jesus’ disciples for the one word that best described His feelings for the multitudes of people He encountered throughout His public ministry, they would reply, “compassion.” It is the emotion most

frequently attributed to Jesus. Matthew 9:36, for example, tells us, “When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” Jesus fed the four thousand because they hadn’t eaten for three days and He had “compassion on these people” (Matthew 15:32). He also healed the two blind men beside the roadside out of compassion (Matthew 20:34). As a compassionate person, Jesus was profoundly moved by the sufferings and troubles of those He encountered.

Love

If compassion characterizes Jesus’ feelings toward the multitudes, love epitomizes His relationships with those closest to Him. John, the hot tempered, impulsive follower who eventually became known as the Apostle of Love, tells us that as Lazarus lay dying, his sisters, Martha and Mary sent this word to Jesus: “Lord, the one you love is sick.” Then John records, “Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus” (John 11:3-5).

Joy

On two occasions Jesus described himself as joyful. Both are recorded by John.

The first instance follows Jesus predicting His betrayal. Jesus said, “If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete” (John 15:9-11).

Jesus connects His joy (which He wants His disciples to share) with remaining in the Father’s love and obeying His commandments. Jesus’ joy, in other words, comes from a loving relationship—specifically, His relationship with His Father—regardless of His temporary circumstances.

Grief and Sorrow

Jesus was pained when He saw others suffering or missing out on all that was available for them. In one of the most poignant moments of His public life, John tells us that when Jesus saw Mary weeping over Lazarus’ death, “He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.” Then, as Mary and Martha were taking Jesus to the body of Lazarus, “Jesus wept.” He didn’t try, as we sometimes do in times of sorrow, to be outwardly “strong” and hide or deny His feelings. His strength showed through

His tears. He had the strength to care enough to weep.

Jesus also wept over Jerusalem as though His heart was breaking. And when He healed the man with a shriveled hand on the Sabbath and the Pharisees disapproved, He was “deeply distressed (grieved) at their stubborn hearts” (John 3:5). Jesus didn’t try to be less than human by shielding Himself from grief and pain. He allowed Himself to suffer these normal human emotions.

Anger

Just as Jesus’ compassionate nature at times led Him to grieve and sorrow, it also led Him to be angry. Perhaps the best known expression of His anger was when He drove the money-changers out of the temple in Jerusalem at the Passover. John describes it this way: “So He made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves He said, ‘Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!’” (John 2:15-16).

Think, too, of Jesus’ interactions with the religious leaders of His day. They were periodically punctuated by assertive conflicts and sometimes angry confrontations. Jesus was angered by the callous legalism that led the Pharisees to be more committed to fulfilling the letter of the law than to lovingly doing good by healing or helping others on the Sabbath.

Like Christ, mature Christians will experience angry feelings, but those feelings will be stimulated by a love and concern for others and for righteousness rather than by the frustration of our own desires.

Peacefulness

Along with love and compassion, one other emotion of Jesus seemed to have a unifying effect upon His entire personality. That is the emotion of peace. As Jesus prepared to leave His disciples in death He told them, “But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to His own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:32-33).

Even as Jesus was contemplating His own death and admitting that this world is full of trouble, He urged His disciples to develop the same kind of peace He had. Jesus’ peace was not a pseudo-peace built on a foundation of denial; He was facing the most incredible suffering one could possibly imagine. And His peace wasn’t based on His external circumstances. It was an internal peace rooted in the knowledge that even when His closest earthly friends scattered, His heavenly Father was with Him.

Insights from the Emotions of Jesus

Notice six things about the emotional life of Jesus. *First, Jesus experienced the whole range of human emotions.* Likewise, if we are Christlike in our personalities, we will experience a wide range of feelings. People who are characterized by a limited range of feelings are suffering from the effects of sin and are failing to participate in the full humanity for which they were created.

Second, Jesus experienced emotions which many people, including many Christians, erroneously consider negative, wrong, weak, or sinful—including anger. These emotions, however, were not at all sinful. In fact, they reflected Jesus’ sinless character. Because He cared, He allowed himself to grieve, sorrow, and to be angry. Only uncaring people don’t grieve or become angry over evil. Mature persons aren’t limited to loving, peaceful and happy feelings. They also experience righteous anger, grief and sorrow. That is part of the way God creat-



Mature persons aren’t limited to loving, peaceful and happy feelings. They also experience righteous anger, grief and sorrow. That is the way God created us to be.”

ed us to be.

Third, Jesus’ emotional life was flexible and varied rather than fixed and rigid. Jesus felt differently in different situations and with different people. He felt compassion for the multitudes and love for those closest to Him. When He became angry He did not harbor His anger or let resentment build. He expressed it as a function of His holiness and concern for others and for the truth. Then He let it go and moved on. Similarly, although

He experienced sorrow, His sorrow did not lead to lingering depression or unfounded sadness. In much the same way, the emotional lives of mature persons will be flexible. They will experience differing affects in different settings and with different people. They will also not become fixated on one particular emotion and be unable to move beyond it.

Fourth, Jesus was aware of (and stayed in touch with) His own emotions. As the author of Hebrews put it, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). Emotionally healthy people are sensitive people. They are not characterized by denial, repression, or other psychological maneuvers that push strong emotions from awareness. Their sensitivity allows them to use their feelings in positive, constructive ways.

Fifth, Jesus’ emotions were reality-based. He sorrowed when He had reason to sorrow. Similarly, He was angry when injustices occurred. Like Jesus, the emotions of mature Christians will be appropriate to our life experiences and life settings.

Sixth, Jesus’ emotions were not sinful. Although in our fallen condition, all of the emotions Jesus experienced can be distorted and become sinful, none of those emotions, in their perfect state, are inherently evil. In fact, they are desirable and good. As finite and fallen persons, however, we need to discriminate between healthy and unhealthy (or godly versus carnal) experiences and expression of emotions. For example, instead of being angry at injustices we can be angry at selfish motives, and we can harbor anger in bitter, resentful ways. Instead of being sad or grieving over significant losses or the misfortunes of

others, we can become perpetually unhappy and depressed in a self-centered manner. And instead of experiencing joy because we are fulfilling our God-given directions, we can focus our joy on momentary pleasures or activities which actually become idols or substitutes for living our lives before God.

To grow into Christ’s likeness we need to be developing the same rich emotional life that Jesus demonstrated throughout His life.

Understanding Your Preadolescents

by Vern Lewis

The preadolescent is like a maple tree in March. Like the tree's sugary sap flowing without visible outward effects, the ten- to twelve-year-old preadolescent's hormonal system is signaling the body to begin final preparations for maturity. During this time, the body is readying itself for the distinctive differences between maleness and femaleness, and the mind is getting ready to distinguish between childish and adult thinking.

The intellectual abilities of ten- to twelve-year-olds are rapidly expanding. They begin to engage in abstract thinking. They will soon be able to grasp the symbolic problems they will encounter in high school algebra and geometry. And the same capacities that prepare your children for these tasks will soon cause them to start questioning your authority and to be less than satisfied with pat answers and parental prohibitions.

Nearly everything that happens during the preadolescent period of life can be understood more clearly when it is seen as part of the process of becoming physically and mentally different or distinct. In order to start cutting the cords of childhood dependency, your sons and daughters need to become aware that they have minds of their own that are distinct from yours and bodies that are different from the opposite sex.

No More "Smiths' Girl"!

The development of your preadolescents' intellectual abilities presents them with the first hurdle on their journey to adulthood. Adolescents start to ask themselves, *Am I a person with a mind of my own, or am I simply an extension of my*

family? During the first decade of their lives, much of your children's identity has been tied to you. To outsiders — and partly to themselves — they have been "the Smiths' girl," "the Joneses' boy," or "one of the family." Even Jesus was known as "the carpenter's son." But in order to become adult, children need to exchange this family identity for their own individual identity; preadolescence is the time children begin to make that shift.

Preadolescents increasingly want to make their own decisions on how to use their time, wear their clothes, and spend their money. They may start asking for the same privileges as older family members. Status in the family becomes vitally important, and many eleven- and twelve-year-olds enjoy lording it over younger siblings to demonstrate their newfound power.

Toward the end of preadolescence, your twelve- or thirteen-year-olds' need to start thinking for themselves. This will probably bring a climactic end to the relative calm of childhood and usher in the tensions of their teenage years. They may start arguing or disagreeing with you at every turn to prove they can think for themselves. Like twelve-year-old Audrey who said to a store clerk before buying a skirt, "In case my mother likes it, can I bring it back?" your daughter may feel that she needs to differ with her mother to prove she can think for herself. They may also start questioning their parents' Christian faith.

As frustrating and frightening as this growing independence may be for you, it is an essential step for preadolescents. Until your sons and daughters can disagree with you, they cannot feel adult or independent. And until they make their own personal spiritual commitment, it won't be deep and enduring. You will



need to help your preadolescents find acceptable ways of expressing their own opinions. You may need to help them think through their beliefs and see that they have some good friends who are solid in their faith. But some disagreeing with you is an entirely normal and necessary step on their pathway to maturity.

Something's Happening to My Body!

By eleven or twelve, most girls experience a growth spurt in the long bones of their skeletal frame and shoot up above the heads of boys their age. A glance at your children's sixth-grade school picture will probably reveal several tall, even gangly, girls and some very short boys. It usually takes a year or two for boys to catch up again. These rapid physical changes present the second developmental hurdle encountered by preadolescents. At the same time that they are asking, *Can I think for myself?* they must also start asking questions such as, *What's happening to my body? What does it mean to be a man or woman instead of a child? How does my body compare to my friends' and peers'?* and, *How should I feel about my masculinity or femininity?*

Many twelve-year-old girls, for example, become extremely concerned about their breast development. Some are obsessed with wearing a bra (whether they need one or not) and others totally avoid the subject. Whatever the concern, however, just before the onset of puberty most girls start turning from their same-sex groupings and occasionally sloppy, childish ways to become more interested in their feminine appearance. Their emerging sexuality also explains an almost universal phenomenon of early adolescent girls. . . boy-craziness.





Boys Will Be Men

A couple of years later than in girls, the typical boy's pituitary gland sends a message to increase the production of testosterone. This hormone is largely responsible for the growth and development of male sex characteristics. Preadolescent boys are becoming sexually aware but aren't yet ready to relate to the opposite sex. They still largely run around with other boys their age and they don't experience other major outward physical changes at this time. Although they will eventually have their own growth spurt, they will have to wait awhile. They are beginning to think differently about themselves but this won't become readily apparent to others until early adolescence.

Touchy! Touchy!

If you have become used to a relatively dependable and noncomplaining daughter of eight or nine, you may be shocked by the strong emotions and negativity that erupt around the age of eleven or twelve. Almost overnight your daughter can become hypersensitive about her height, weight, hair, clothes, or status in the family. She may decide she hates her body. And girls of this age can cry at the drop of a hat and accuse parents of yelling or being unreasonable when they are only being firm. All these changes can be summed up in one word: hypersensitivity.

Check a family photo from this period. You will probably find an awkward-looking girl feeling uncomfortable over having her picture taken. In university classes that I teach on human development, many girls say they disliked being female at this time of life. Few, if any, boys express a similar dissatisfaction with being male.



Preadolescent girls are also notorious for complaining that their parents (especially mothers) don't understand them.

They also tend to reject her attempts to offer consolation."

Preadolescent girls are also notorious for complaining that their parents (especially mothers) don't understand them. They also tend to reject her attempts to offer consolation. These reactions seem to signal the ten- to twelve-year-old girl's preparation to separate from her mother and find a feminine identity of her own. Since they are starting to lose their previous closeness with their mothers, they feel sad about it.

The sensitivity of preadolescent girls and their inability to control their emotions often has a kind of childish flavor. Under pressure of the physical and emotional changes of approaching puberty, many ten- to twelve-year-olds revert back to more childish actions such as crying, yelling, or giving up in frustration. But hang on; this, too, will pass! The physical, emotional, and intellectual changes of pre- and early adoles-

cence are simply too much to handle calmly. In order to cope, your daughters revert to the only way they know of handling stress — crying or getting angry and blaming someone else. They need a few years to accept the loss of their childhood, learn new ways of adapting, and get their feelings back under control.

Last Chance to Be a Child

Some twelve and thirteen-year-old boys also retreat into a temporary regressive stage a bit like hypersensitive girls. They may make mother their confidant or become more dependent on her the way they were as small boys. These regressive phases are usually followed within a year or so by renewed efforts to separate from mom and stand on their own two feet. Once this happens, boys begin breaking their dependency on their mother and start associating almost exclusively with male friends. They ardently reject anything feminine in order to break away from their mothers and identify more fully with males. Girl talk and play is considered "stupid," and "masculine" things such as sports are in.

Some parents worry that these boys will never develop an interest in the opposite sex — but relax. They will discover girls — sometimes quicker than you think! But before they can feel manly and have a mature relationship with a woman, they need to give up being mama's boy. By temporarily rejecting anything hinting of femininity, they are getting ready to take the next step toward developing their masculine identities.

Other boys this age loosen their family dependency by staying home rather than going on a family outing. Some temporarily prefer a friend's family to their own. Others utilize a period of hostility to help them reject their dependency on their mothers. Even previously dependable sons may frustrate you with aggressive inactivity to prove their autonomous power. They may "forget" to do their chores or repeatedly arrive late for parent-related activities like dinner. Although irritating, these too are normal symptoms of the twelve- to thirteen-year-old boy's need to distinguish himself from his parents and start outgrowing his childhood dependency. Anger and negativism make leaving easier! It is difficult to leave someone you need and love; it is easier to leave someone you resent and have little need for.

Easing the Transition

Preadolescence is the last stage of childhood and a time of transition into adolescence. By the time they finish their preadolescent years, your sons and daughters will need to have a positive attitude toward their changing bodies and an awareness of their ability to think for themselves—apart from you. And they will need to know that God created them with their unique minds and bodies. You can help them through these difficult years by being sensitive to their struggles and helping them feel as good as possible about their bodies and their minds!

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Some years ago during a visit to Yellowstone Park, one writer observed that the only animal with whom the grizzly bear would share his food was a skunk. It wasn't that the grizzly wanted to share his food, but rather that he chose to. With one swing of his powerful paw he could have crushed the skunk. So why did he allow the skunk to eat with him?

Because he knew the high cost of getting even. Clever bear!

Undoubtedly, he had learned the hard way. Strange that we humans often aren't as smart. We carry grudges for years, often repressing them from conscious memory, and end up hurting ourselves more than the ones we would like to get even with. We fail to see how damaging an unforgiving spirit can be.

Physicians and psychotherapists attest to the damage done by unforgiveness. Some medical doctors estimate that the majority of illnesses they treat are related to emotional problems like resentment. And psychologists see the roots of bitterness reflected in depression, anxiety, and destroyed relationships.

I read one report of an astonished patient who was told by his doctor: "If you don't cut out your resentments, I may have to cut out a part of your intestinal tract."

Fortunately, the man took the doctor's advice. He had been nursing a bitter grudge against a former business partner. He went to see this man, resolved their differences, and forgave him. When he returned to the doctor, his physical condition had cleared up!

That advice isn't new, of course. The greatest physician who ever lived, Jesus Christ, pointed out 2,000 years ago the importance of forgiveness. When He encouraged us to "forgive seventy-seven times," He was thinking of our emotional and physical well-being as much as our

spiritual. In his book, *None of These Diseases*, Dr. S.I. McMillen reported that a forgiving spirit could save us from "ulcerative colitis, toxic goiters, high blood pressure, and scores of other diseases" including asthma, arthritis, ulcers, neurodermatitis, and heart ailments — all possible effects of resentment.

Some time ago an article inspired by

goes without saying that many close relationships, especially in marriage, are destroyed not so much by what has been done but by what hasn't been done — forgiving one another.

Whenever I fail to forgive another, a wall of resentment builds up between us and eventually we become estranged. But once I forgive, feelings of love can

be restored if that is appropriate. I say "if that is appropriate" because there are times, such as in cases of abuse or a lack of repentance, when forgiveness should *not* lead to restoration of the relationship.

Forgiveness can be very difficult

if we have been hurt deeply and even more difficult when someone doesn't even feel he has wronged us.

According to one author, Susan Jacoby, "real forgiveness cannot take place without an acknowledgment of wrongdoing on the part of the person who is chiefly responsible for causing pain."³

If this is so, some of us are going to carry grudges for a long, long time. True, when a person acknowledges his wrongdoing, that certainly makes forgiveness easier. But when he doesn't, which is often the case, forgiveness becomes a choice. We can choose to forgive or not to forgive. We need to realize, however, that forgiveness is essential, not so much for the wrong that has happened to us, but because of our resentment toward the one who has wronged us. Lack of forgiveness is caused by this resentment — a mixture of hurt and anger. Therefore, to forgive genuinely, one needs to face and deal with his hurt and anger.

To resolve our hurt and anger, we need to be totally honest and admit exactly how we feel. Then we need to get these feelings off our chest — not by lashing out and hurting the other person, but by "speaking the truth in love,"⁴ or by

Continued on page 19 ➔

Forgiveness:

the High Cost of Getting Even

by Dick Innes

Pope John Paul's forgiveness of his would-be assassin, Mehmet Ali Agca, appeared in *Time* magazine. In it, journalist Lance Morrow wrote: "The psychological case for forgiveness is overwhelmingly persuasive. Not to forgive is to be imprisoned by the past, by old grievances that do not permit life to proceed with new business.

"Not to forgive is to yield oneself to another's control. If one does not forgive, then one is controlled by the other's initiatives and is locked into a sequence of act and response, of outrage and revenge, tit for tat, escalating always. The present is endlessly overwhelmed and devoured by the past."¹

But to forgive is to be free from the past.

Jesus Christ pointed out another disturbing truth about an unforgiving spirit when He said, "If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."²

I believe what Christ meant was that an unforgiving spirit on my part is a sure sign that I haven't truly shown remorse to God for all my failures nor have I experienced fully His forgiveness. Furthermore, an unforgiving attitude is destructive to personal relationships. It

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Recreation

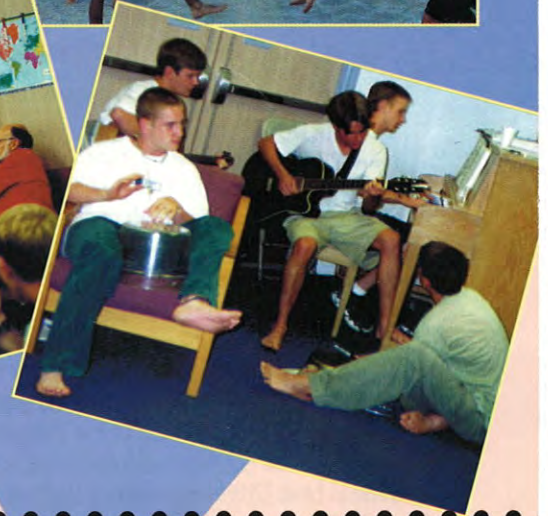
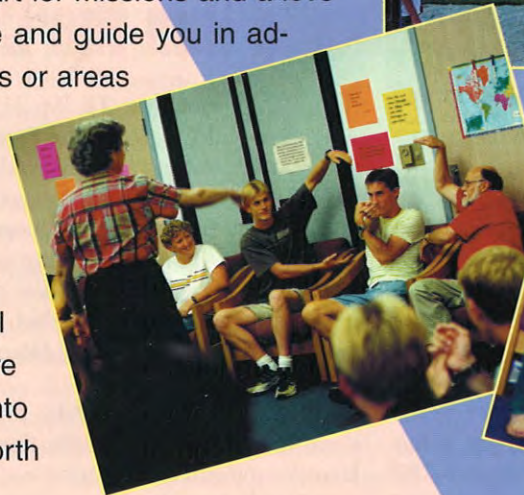
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Welcome to ...
The MK Connection

MACGIRVIN

FOR PRESIDENT

Why a Single Mom Should Run the Country

by Jackie MacGirvin

Running the country is like running a family, only bigger. That's why a single Christian mom—like me—is perfect presidential material.

I already do the job of two people by myself. A vice president becomes redundant. Besides, *vice* means “flawed, imperfect, or defective.” Why do we need that dead weight?

The second reason I'm tossing my hat into the ring is because of my great campaign slogan. Voters love a catchy slogan, and next to Pat Paulsen's—“If nominated, I will not run; if elected, I will not serve”—mine is best: “My car won't run, and my life's no fun.” This will prove that my finger is on the pulse of every red-blooded, struggling single mom.

It's accurate, succinct, and, best of all, it rhymes. If every single mom votes, I will be swept into office in a landslide victory.

I know my detractors will try to dig up dirt, so I'll confess now to my past political naiveté. I flunked my junior high history final when I argued at length (and quite eloquently) that the Boston Tea Party and the Teapot Dome scandals were both sly public relations stunts by the Lipton Tea Co. Now it's out; let the mudslinging begin.

Next Stop: The White House

I will truly be the “People's President.” My frugal, coupon-clipping, checkbook-balancing lifestyle resembles the typical American's much more than that of the cocktail-party-attending, tuxedo-wearing, \$150 haircut-sporting President. With my girlfriend Lori giving me home perms in the basement, \$150 takes care of my hair and my son's—for the entire year.

As the People's President, I'll make the White House more livable by calling it the White Home. I'll unpack my meager but prized possessions—worship CDs, scratched T-Fal cookware (you know the kind of thing I mean).

I'll hang a few Olan Mills prints on the walls and stash my SnackWells and diet soda right next to that red emergency phone on the presidential desk in

the Oval Office. Then I'll live like the average American would like to see the President live: reasonably, responsibly, simply, and within budget.

I'll auction off those high-maintenance White House antiques and apply the money to reduce the national debt. Then I'll pick up a few practical pieces of furniture at yard sales: recliner chairs, beanbags, a rowing machine (which I'll use once), a few potted plants, and a dozen futons for overnight guests who drop by.

I'll save taxpayer money by turning the heat down at night and by exchanging those black stretch limos for something more my speed—probably a 1988 Honda Accord with comfy but cracked leather interior—or a hail-damaged Toyota Camry. Chinnet would become the official paper plate of the White Home, with all official functions catered by the Colonel (extra crispy, just like you eat). And, by installing a home alarm system, I am reassigning those expensive Secret Service agents to a project of true national concern, like creating a fat-free ice cream that makes your taste buds weep for joy.

I won't forget the Single Moms of America (SMOA) who voted me into this hallowed office. I will filibuster, if necessary, until it becomes a felony to pass a stranded woman and her stalled vehicle. Responding to my impassioned plea, Congress will require every driver in America to carry jumper cables and a coat hanger. Special tax credit certificates will be issued to anyone who stops to help a SMOA change a flat tire; two certificates if it's raining, and three if it's snowing.

To make health care accessible for all women, I'll make sure that you'll be able to take your kids to an amusement park, leave them at the roller coaster, and duck into the first-aid station for a



free yearly gynecological exam. SMOAs would have the choice of taking the earned-income credit or signing up for a giant chain-letter with their names perpetually on top of the list.

You'll get a day off with pay on your birthday and your kids' birthdays. Paying your own way on a date will be illegal.

If someone asks you, "When are you expecting?" and you aren't, then you can send them to jail for 30 days. And I pledge to be the first President to repeal a law of physics: The calories won't count if you didn't enjoy eating it.

Getting Tough on Ex-Husbands

For men who miss child-support payments, these are their punishments in ascending order:

1. The offender will be forced to wear a "kick me" sign.

2. His remote control will be confiscated, ESPN will be disconnected, and his house will be blacklisted from pizza delivery businesses.

3. Harkening back to the ancient contests between the Christians and the lions, the new half-time show at sporting events will feature The Underwear-Clad Deadbeat Dads vs. a horde of agitated porcupines.

4. The final assault: A group of Promise Keepers carrying rams' horns will walk around the offender's house. If the inhabitant hasn't coughed up the money by day seven, the horns will sound, the PKs will shout to the Lord, and the walls will come a-tumblin' down. After a few instances of sensational media coverage, dads will be paying on time, possibly even early.

Teaching Congress New Tricks

I want a kinder, gentler Congress and will enforce the "All I Need to Know About Congress, I Learned in Kindergarten" rules.

For example: "The Honorable Congressman from New Jersey, you can't say hurtful things. You have two choices: You can apologize to the congressman from Ohio, or you can time-out yourself until you regain an acceptable attitude. The choice is yours."

Congress will operate from a job chart, just like grade-schoolers do. A daily problem will be read from the "To Do" list followed by brainstorming in small groups.

The members who solve the problem ("Yes, we know what to do about Nicaraguan influence on the Japanese pantyhose embargo!") will each get a gold star. The congressman with the most stars at the end of the month will get a McDonald's gift certificate,

and the residents of his state will pay no sales tax for the following 30 days.

To get spending under control, Congress will be required to purchase fighter planes only from manufacturers who honor double coupons. The month before Mothers Day, Congress will address and stuff envelopes with certificates for a free lube and oil change so single moms can get something other than cards adorned with gold macaroni on their special day.

As a variation of the old WPA program, I plan to see to it that all unemployed carpenters, plumbers and others in the fix-it trade will be assigned their own city block. When a request for help comes in from a SMOA, the handyman will spring into action: "A fuse is out on Oak Street? I'm on my way!" Imagine his satisfaction, and the homeowner's delight, when the job is done and he says, "No charge ma'am. It's on the government."

I'm also proposing an embarrassingly obvious solution to the latch-key crisis: Round up all unemployed rodeo clowns to tutor and entertain children until mom or dad arrives.

Speaking of employment, I believe that by implementing additional job training programs, the federal government and corporate America will be able to function twice as efficiently. For instance, while at your home gathering demographic data, census takers will also do a complimentary color analysis and makeover, and for a small fee, shoot a family portrait.

AT&T operators will be given counselor training in mental health, enabling phone patrons to unburden themselves of their emotional baggage from the comfort of their homes, all for the minimal cost of 50 cents for the first 10 minutes and 25 cents each additional minute. In the interest of free enterprise, patrons will, of course, be solicited by a Sprint operator-counselor for 45 cents and 15 cents, plus a free switching fee.

I will overhaul the penal system, beginning with an innovative rehabilitation program. Each parolee will be assigned to a dynamic, evangelical church and will be plugged into a discipleship group where he or she will be taught relational skills, job skills, church lingo and the lyrics to "I Love You With the Love of the Lord."

Penalties for violators—those who fail to show up on time every Wednesday night—will, of course, be strict. First-time violators

will automatically be moved to the end of the line at the next three potluck dinners: second-time offenders will be forced to memorize large portions of Leviticus and Deuteronomy from the King James Version. And, in a modification of the "Three Strikes You're Out" program, third-time offenders will be assigned to church-nursery duty for six months—without a break.

My two fiscal goals are to balance the bud-



For men who miss child-support payments, his remote control will be confiscated, ESPN will be disconnected, and his house will be blacklisted from pizza delivery businesses.

get and reduce the national debt. "Balance the Nation's Biggest Checkbook" is the name of a contest I've created for banks and their employees. The bank that is the first to balance the federal budget will become the *real* First National Bank: all citizens will be required to transfer their accounts to that bank.

To reduce the national debt, semiannual National Bake Sales will be held, and reminiscent of the rubber drives of the '40s, all Levi 501 Jeans will be donated to Goodwill, then shipped overseas and sold to college students for \$100 a pair. All undesirable wedding, birthday, and Christmas gifts will be donated and shipped to China, where they will be sold at auction.

In order to move our nation into a position where God can bless it financially, I will invoke my executive privilege to arbitrarily select churches that will receive a tithe from the government's total income. As a beneficial side effect, the prayer lives of pastors throughout the land will improve dramatically just before I announce the names of the winning congregations.

All this should keep me busy for the first six months. Then I'll reevaluate and set goals for my second six months in office.

Remember: Register to vote. And on Election Day, don't forget your candidate, The People's President is spelled M-a-c- g-i-r-v-i-n. That's me!

Free-lance writer and humorist Jackie Macgirvin is a member of Metro Christian Fellowship in Kansas City, Missouri. Shortly after she wrote this article, she pulled out of her presidential campaign and got married!



UNDERSTANDING

BIPOLAR DISORDER

by Todd W. Hall, Ph.D

From the time Tracy was in early adolescence, she had “hyper” spells for several days at a time. She would read several books at once, cook large quantities of food even though she normally did not like to cook, and go on buying sprees. At first, Tracy’s family thought this was normal adolescent behavior. But after awhile they began to notice that Tracy had low spells after her hyper periods. She would stay in her room for several days and refuse to talk to anyone. Her cycles became more intense and frequent until Tracy was finally hospitalized for a suicide attempt during one of her depressed periods.

John started having an extremely high level of energy, began sleeping less than three hours nightly, and started talking excitedly about some big plans and ideas with nearly everyone he met. One night he started running at 1:00 A.M. and ran until he was so exhausted that he fell down and injured himself. Then he stayed up

the rest of the night writing 100 pages of fiction that he was convinced would be published. The next morning he did not feel tired.

Tracy and John were both suffering from bipolar disorder — one of the most perplexing psychiatric adjustment conditions and one that can cause incredible frustration for friends and family members.

Formerly known as manic depression, bipolar disorder gets its name from the unpredictable mood swings ranging from the pole of extreme highs (mania) to the pole of deep lows (depression).

Imagine the emotional high you feel after a very positive event — like receiving an award at work, falling in love, or reaching the top of a mountain you’ve climbed. Multiply the intensity of that feeling three or four times, speed it up to “fast forward,” then imagine feeling that way around the clock for days, weeks, or even months until you collapse from exhaustion. This is a little of what mania feels like.

If you are wondering, *What’s the problem with having so much energy?* here’s the problem: First, you are probably doing a lot of exaggerated, unwise things during your manic state. Second, your high has to end. And when it does you usually crash into deep depression.

People in a “manic episode” are excessively elated, irritable, moody, and energetic. They have little need for sleep (2-3 hours per night is not uncommon), have rapid and pressured speech, racing thoughts, and jump abruptly to unrelated topics without transitions. They are also distractible and impulsive. Some drive recklessly. Others go on wild spending sprees, or have an exaggerated

sense of their importance and abilities. In severe manic episodes, people with bipolar disorder may become psychotic; that is, their thought processes and ability to judge reality are radically impaired. They may begin by being slightly overconfident about their abilities, and end up convinced that they can predict the future or take over the country. Christians in a manic phase may stop their regular responsibilities and read the Bible or talk to one person after another about God for hours and hours on end.

Depressive episodes of bipolar illness are characterized by the opposite of the manic pole of the emotional continuum. People in a depressive episode feel sad and depressed. They have decreased energy levels, an increase or decrease in sleep, loss of interest in enjoyable activities, feelings of worthlessness, difficulty concentrating, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Christians in a depressed state typically feel incredibly guilty and self-condemning and may be convinced that God couldn't love them or that they have lost their salvation.

People with bipolar disorder typically alternate between the extreme moods of mania and depression. Occasionally, however, both the mania and depression are experienced at the same time. This is referred to as a "mixed episode." Such an episode is characterized by irritability, anxiety, feelings of worthlessness, and sometimes suicidal thoughts, accompanied by high energy and activity levels, decreased sleep, and impulsive behavior. Mixed episodes can be extremely dangerous if the person is suicidal because the manic symptoms may give a person enough energy to carry out a suicide plan.

Both manic and depressive episodes place incredible stress on friends and family members. People in a manic state can be unreasonable, emotional, and impulsive. Family members fear they will do something hurtful or disastrous. Family members of a person in a depressed state can become extremely frustrated when, time after time, their efforts to support and encourage are rebuffed.

At this point, we do not have a clear understanding of what causes bipolar disorder. The regular cycles of the illness and the relatively quick response to proper medications, however, suggests that physiological factors play a major role. Coupled with long-standing emotional conflicts, these physiological factors make occasional bouts with the disorder almost inevitable. Although ultimately all human problems stem from the presence of sin and evil in society and in individuals' lives, there do not appear to be any particular sin problems in the lives of people suffering from bipolar disorders. Many fine Christians struggle for much of their lives with this distressing disorder.

Medical Treatment

One of the most difficult things about treating bipolar disorder is that there is no complete "cure." While bipolar disorder is difficult to deal with, it is also true that this problem can usually be effectively managed with proper professional care over the long term. Medication, psychotherapy, and lifestyle changes are crucial to minimizing and overcoming the potentially devastating effects of this disorder. Treatment must be planned for the rest of a person's life, and it nearly always involves taking medication for many years. Although this can be difficult for bipolar patients and their family members to accept, it is absolutely essential.

The current drug treatments for bipolar disorder typically include what are referred to as mood stabilizers — usually lithium carbonate, divalproex sodium (Depakote), or carbamazepine (Tegretol). Depending on a number of factors such as the specifics

of the person's symptoms, and the stage of the disorder, the physician may also prescribe antipsychotic, antidepressant, or antianxiety medication.

While medications do not work perfectly, they help a substantial percentage of people. Approximately 50 to 70 percent of people in a manic state are helped by lithium. Unfortunately, many bipolar patients don't stay on their medications. Some may miss the "high" they experienced during manic episodes and want to return to a state in which they feel on top of the world. Others are bothered by unpleasant side effects like weight gain, memory or concentration problems, and tremors. Others begin feeling better, assume they do not need to continue with medication, and quit without consulting their physician.

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is an essential complement to medical treatment for people suffering from bipolar disorder. Good psychotherapy can help patients deal with the emotional problems and stressors that trigger the onset of manic or depressive episodes. It can also resolve many of the unstable relational problems, internal struggles, and depressive moods that accompany acute phases of this disorder.

Lifestyle Changes

In addition to working closely with a psychiatrist, being compliant with medication treatments, and receiving psychotherapy, there are several lifestyle changes that can help people manage their bipolar disorder:

Abstaining from the use of all drugs or alcohol. Stimulants can trigger a depressed bipolar person to flip into a manic episode, while sedatives can trigger a depressive phase.

Getting regular sleep. Bipolar disorder is closely tied to a person's core body rhythms. While a manic episode can change a person's sleep patterns, changes in sleep can also trigger a manic episode.

Minimize caffeine intake. This can also indirectly trigger a manic episode.

Educate oneself and one's family about the disorder. Then work together to prevent stressors that trigger recurrences.

Discuss with family members a plan of action. It helps to deal with future episodes ahead of time. This is done most effectively when the bipolar person's insight and judgment are not impaired during the middle of an acute manic episode.

Join a support group. This should include both close Christian friends who can offer regular spiritual support and a support group with other individuals with bipolar disorder and their family members. Since people with bipolar disorder often feel that no one understands their mood swings and erratic behavior, support from others who have had similar experiences can be invaluable.

People suffering from bipolar disorder can go through periods of incredible suffering, as can their families. However, competent, thorough, consistent counseling, medication and practical lifestyle choices, they can lead very successful and meaningful lives. Although their disorder can take its toll at certain periods of time, Christians suffering from it can learn to cope quite effectively and lead very fulfilling lives if they receive the help and support they need.

Todd W. Hall, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at the Rosemead School of Psychology, Biola University. 



Dr. Clyde M. Narramore

Hiding Behind a Stovepipe

by Dr. Clyde M. Narramore

One of the most meaningful things to know about another Christian is how he came to meet God. The ways are infinite. But God, the Creator and Ruler of the universe, sees us from above and miraculously enters our hearts. Amazing!

One of my earliest encounters with spiritual conversion involved two day laborers in our Arizona ranching community. These men were known for their filthy, foul mouths, and their sinfulness. As a boy working on the ranch, I got to know these men. I heard them talk about almost everything. Then I was told that on Sunday night "they went forward" in an evangelistic meeting and were "saved."

Wow, I thought, *I wonder how they're going to act now—and how long the change (if any) will last.*

So I observed them in the fields. A great change had come into their lives! This was proof to me that spiritual conversion was real!

As I attended Sunday school, my teachers often emphasized the importance of memorizing Scripture. Sometimes they gave little prizes to those who learned the most verses. Since I memorized rather easily, and liked prizes, I committed many Bible verses to memory. Little did I realize that those Scriptures imbedded in my mind and heart would influence me profoundly all through life.

As a child I knew I was a sinner. No one had to draw a picture to explain

that. And on Sundays when I went to our little country church, it seemed that no matter where I sat, the preacher was looking right at me and I felt certain he had my number. Of course, I don't suppose he even knew I was there but I sure knew he was!

Finally I decided that the best place to sit was on the bench in back of the stovepipe of the church's potbellied, wood-burning stove. When the pastor would move to his left, I would scoot to my left. When he moved to his right, I would scoot to my right, always keeping the stovepipe between him and me.

The Bible says there are three kinds of stovepipes—three things that can keep people from a personal relationship with God. The first is the **lust of the flesh**, the second is the **lust of the eye**, and the third is the **pride of life** (1 John 2:16). I suppose the third one is the most common.

One day at home I had a little scare when I overheard my brother just older than I talking with my mother. He was complaining because I always sat in the same place when we went to church. Finally my mother said, "We live in

his messages. In addition, my Sunday School teacher reinforced the things the pastor said. In time I became convinced that John 14:6 was true. "*I (Jesus) am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me.*"

I knew that the only way to God was through Christ. Yet as I sat there behind the stovepipe, I wanted to do *my* thing *my* way. Then one day when I was about eleven years of age, I was riding a horse bringing some Hereford cattle into the corral, and I thought to myself, *I've been hiding behind that stovepipe long enough. When I get these cattle in the corral I think I'll get off my horse, kneel down and ask Christ to come into my heart and save me.* And I did just that! Kneeling there beside a ditchbank I told God something I will never forget: "I'll serve You as long as I live!"

You may wonder, *What kind of feeling did you get?* Well frankly, I wasn't looking for a feeling; I was looking for Jesus. No tingles down my spine? No, but I did have the assurance that if I died at that moment with my boots on, I would be in the presence of God. The Bible says when you're "saved" you can know it. "*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life*" (John 5:24).

From that day on I have never doubted my salvation. Christ lives in my heart and He is my best friend. I suppose also, in a sense, He took the place of my father who had died when I was only two.

Being born again has helped me put everything in proper perspective. I believe I avoided a roller coaster up-and-down, off-and-on unsatisfying life by being saved early, studying the Bible, associating with godly people and committing each day to Him! Indeed, it pays to stop hiding behind our stovepipes! 



The Bible says there are three kinds of stovepipes—three things that can keep people from a personal relationship with God. The first is the lust of the flesh, the second is the lust of the eye, and the third is the pride of life (1 John 2:16). I suppose the third one is the most common.

America, a free country, and when we go to church we should be able to sit where we want. So leave him alone."

My, I thought, thank God for a smart mother!

So I continued to sit behind the stovepipe. But although I could hide from the pastor's gaze, I always *heard*



Ruth E. Narramore

New Beginnings

by Ruth E. Narramore

It's midnight 1999. Bells clang loudly and shouts resound around the world as people welcome in a memorable new year bringing with it this new millennium! It's an exciting, unprecedented time as we embark upon the second thousand years since the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is indeed a *new beginning* in the annals of Planet Earth. What lies ahead we do not know, but we do know that God is in control. We are living in a period of history that the Bible calls "perilous times." It's not a pretty picture when you think of all the natural disasters this poor battered world has been struggling through — fierce storms, floods, fires, drought, earthquakes, along with wars, atrocities, violence, and crime — even attacking our children in their schools and churches. It would be very disheartening if Christ had not promised a happy ending to those who trust in Him.

But as we plunge into Y2K we will soon recognize that our *new begin-*

nings are really not very new. The reason? *We are what we have been becoming.* Everything we are is built upon what we have been. It hasn't happened all at once. It is something that has been building — precept upon precept. And a new number on the calendar isn't going to change a thing.

Does that mean that we are set in cement? That we cannot change directions?

Of course not, but it can be a difficult process. Unless, that is, certain conditions are in place:

1. *We recognize our need for change.* If we don't see a need for changing, it's not going to happen.
2. *We have the desire and determination to change.* If we don't have a strong "want-to," it's a lost cause.
3. *We depend upon God's help to work in our lives to change us.* He is eager and able to transform or remake us when we give ourselves over to Him.

The most remarkable change that can come into anyone's life is the new birth. The Apostle Paul explained it this way: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed

away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). This is the ultimate in new beginnings. It's the starting line — but not the finish.

All through our Christian lives, God is in the business of conforming us to the image of His perfect Son (Romans 12:2). But we must give Him permission. God does not violate our wills.

Surely God is our "Rock of Ages." And Jesus is "the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). What a heritage and what security is ours! Yet at the same time, our relationship with God is always fresh and exciting. We don't have to wait for a new year, new decade, or even a new century. Lamentations 3:23 tells us the Lord's mercies and compassions are "new every morning." Indeed, every day in the Lord is a day of new beginnings.

And now embarking on the new millennium, we are still stepping one day at a time, relying on the Lord who "daily loads us with benefits" (Psalm 68:19) ... and whose mercies are assuredly "*new every morning!*"



Forgiveness Continued from page 11

writing out our feelings until they are completely dissipated.

To forgive another, however, is not to ignore justice. Pope John Paul forgave his would-be assassin, but the man stayed in prison, and rightly so. And where we want others to forgive us, if we are genuine, we will want to do all in our power to make a just restitution.

When God forgives us, He does so on the basis of both His justice and His love. His justice required a just sentence and confirmed death as the penalty or price of humanity's sin. But His love paid that price when He gave His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place as the just retribution for our sins and wrongs. Therefore, God can freely

forgive us without in any way violating His divine justice.

The important thing is that we respond to God's love and forgiveness by acknowledging our sin and wrongdoing and accepting His free pardon. And then, in appreciation to God for His forgiveness of us, let us freely forgive others as we ourselves have been so freely forgiven.⁵

Forgiveness frees and heals the forgiver. Have you been freed?

1. *Time*, Jan. 9, 1984
2. Matthew 6:14-15 (NIV)
3. *McCalls*, 1983.
4. Ephesians 4:15.
5. Colossians 3:12-13.



Discipline or child Abuse?

by Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

QUESTION: *Crying gets on my son's nerves, so when his six-month-old baby cries, he spans him and tells him to be quiet. He will not allow as much as a fuss or a pout without spanking him, and many times he spans him four or five times in a row. I believe my grandson is much too young for this treatment. Do you agree?*

DISCUSSION: I couldn't agree more. When we see an adult throwing a tantrum, pouting, or crying inappropriately, we probably think, "He's acting like a baby." And he is. But babies are supposed to act like babies! Infants do not yet have the ability to communicate through words so they express their needs through crying. Spanking a baby for expressing his needs or feelings through crying is not only insensitive and hurtful, it is child abuse; and if it is reported, your grandson might well be removed from your son's home.

Instead of spanking an infant, we need to learn to decode our babies' wordless communications. We need to understand what it is they need. Are they hungry, wet, dirty, or cold? Do they have an upset stomach? Are they frightened or feeling isolated and abandoned? Once we figure out what they need, we can usually do something to eliminate or soothe their crying. The Bible tells us God comforts His children the way a mother comforts hers. Parents should be their infants' protectors and comforters, not their abusers.

Spankings — when they are necessary — should be reserved for children who are old enough to understand their meaning, and then only if other methods of discipline are not available. We should never spank out of frustration or anger, for this

is punishment, not discipline. Punishment done from anger reflects the parent's inability to control his own feelings and to lovingly, yet firmly discipline his child.

I have found that a spat on the hand or bottom can be occasionally helpful for a child from about a year of age to four or five. After that, there are usually much more effective means of discipline—like taking away privileges. But even if we occasionally spank a child, we should never spank when we are angry and never severely or repeatedly. Repeated spankings are a sure sign the parent needs help and are very likely to be abusive.

I have other questions about your son, however. Why is it that babies so easily get on his nerves? Why isn't he sensitive to the needs and feelings of his own child? And why doesn't he seem to be bothered by his mistreatment of his child?

This isn't unusual, but it is a very serious problem. Crying can get on anyone's nerves. But some parents are frankly too self-absorbed or emotionally insensitive to tune into the needs of others, even to a helpless baby. Parents like that have usually not learned to be comfortable with their own emotions, especially their more needy, childlike desires and feelings. Their anger and irritation often masks their own feelings of helplessness or neediness or hurt. Since they are not in touch with their own emotional

needs, they don't know how to be sensitive to others. In a nutshell, they don't know how to open up in their own personal/emotional lives in order to give and receive love. If this is true of your son, the problem probably extends well beyond insensitivity and abusiveness of his baby to his relationship with his wife and others. He may also have a lot of pent-up anger that has never been dealt with or resolved. If these are true, I strongly recommend that he find a fine, qualified Christian counselor who can help him deal with his own emotional needs and hurts. If he doesn't, this pattern can wreck spiritual and emotional havoc in his family.



Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.



Instead of spanking an infant, we need to learn to decode our baby's wordless communications. We need to understand what it is they need.



Compiled by
Eva Hallam Solberg

Mind-body connection

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) has long been associated with stress and certain foods. It turns out that these factors do not cause IBS but rather trigger its symptoms. The origin of the disorder lies in the interplay among the nerves, hormones, and electrical activity that link the bowel and the brain. Studies reveal that patients with IBS have extra-sensitive pain sensors in their intestines. This heightened awareness of stimuli is evidenced in the brain.

This new understanding of the pathophysiology of IBS has led to some novel treatment approaches. But for the time being, established remedies like low-dose antidepressants and older treatments can be used to manage IBS. As symptoms tend to worsen during periods of emotional distress, patients are advised to minimize stressful events when possible and learn how to improve their response to stress.



Modifying the diet can also help. Avoiding caffeine and foods known to produce IBS symptoms is wise. Adding fiber to the diet is a good idea, too. Because eating foods that are high in fat stimulates colonic contractions,

IBS sufferers may benefit from smaller, more frequent meals that are low in fat.

(Health After 50)

Anxiety disorders and genetics

Anxiety disorders seem to



have a genetic component: The tendency toward anxiety seems to run in families. Also, studies show a connection to the brain chemicals *norepinephrine* — the neurotransmitter that governs concentration and attention, and *serotonin* — which is related to feelings of anxiety, depression, and aggression.

You should consult your doctor if (1) your worry outlasts or seems out of proportion to your circumstances, (2) your anxieties interfere with your work and relationships, (3) profound fear, restlessness, fatigue, or anxiety is present most of the time over a period of at least six months, (4) you experience feelings of apprehensive expectation that cannot be soothed or controlled, or (5) if physical symptoms, disturbed sleep, and difficulty concentrating seem to be getting out of hand.

(Johns Hopkins Family Health Book)

Pain without a cause

Because each person has unique brain circuitry, no two people perceive pain the same way and doctors can't objec-

tively measure pain. They first look for an underlying cause, but despite advances in diagnostic technologies, the root cause of some chronic pain cannot be identified.

Pain is a complex syndrome, which is why many pain experts think medication works better when combined with complementary approaches such as relaxation techniques, biofeedback, psychological counseling, or self-help programs designed to address the mental and emotional aspects of chronic pain.

Be patient. Assessing pain and finding effective treatment takes time and may involve assistance from various health care professionals.

(HealthNews)

Taking anger to heart

If you have a tendency to anger easily, you may be at increased risk for a heart attack or stroke — especially if you have heart disease or significant heart disease risk factors. Other tip-offs that anger may

be undermining your health include being stubborn, impatient, or hotheaded, and habitually feeling like you want to hit someone or something. These traits have often been associated with the type A personality, an aggressive, competitive, hard-driving style of behavior. Specific type A traits now appear to be far riskier than others, and anger tops the list.

Fortunately, constructive coping skills — often coupled with low-dose aspirin therapy, a sound diet, and regular exercise — can protect the cardiovascular system from the damaging effects of anger and reduce the likelihood of a life-threatening medical emergency.

(Health After 50)

Note: The Biblical injunction in Ephesians 4:26 seems appropriate here: "In your anger do not sin; do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold" (NIV).



LIVING MEMORIALS

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Malaysia

Christian
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Ah Kie Lim, with support from the Narramore Christian Foundation, recently participated in the very first Missionary Member Care Consultation in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Sixty-five missionaries and church and mission leaders met for the consultation held in October 1999. The purpose of the meeting was to heighten the sensitivity of sending churches and organizations to the personal and family needs of missionaries on the field. Presenters included Dr. Thomas Lee, a graduate of the Rosemead School of Psychology, who ministers full-time out of Singapore.



Ah Kie Lim

selling for African missionaries. As the African church is now sending thousands of missionaries to unreached groups throughout Africa, it is vital that the sending agencies develop policies and guidelines that will provide their missionaries with the spiritual and emotional support they need in their difficult outreaches. As the coauthor of the two major books on missionary member care, Michele was in a position to be extremely helpful to these developing mission agencies. They have already invited her back to offer further training and consultation.

Brazil

Dr. Kelly O'Donnell, also an NCF associate, participated in the very first Pastoral Care/Training Consultation for missionaries in Iguassu Falls, Brazil. Kelly addressed the 80 participants on models of member care for missionaries. During the meeting the delegates decided to form a Brazilian Pastoral Care Task Force. Kelly is also involved in the planning for a similar pastoral care consultation in Latin America, most likely to be held in Costa Rica in March 2000.

Bosnia

Picture a former Communist country torn by war, in economic ruin, with thousands of homeless children whose parents were killed during the conflict. Then imagine that country with practically no child-care services being forced to create orphanages to house these thousands of lost children. To top it all off, put a former warehouse foreman or other adult with absolutely no training or special sensitivity to the emotional, spiritual, or physical needs of children in charge of these orphanages.

This is exactly what NCF associate, Christian psychologist Mary



Dr. Mary Hower, second from right.

Hower, found during her recent ministry to the staff and children of orphanages in Bosnia.

Dr. Hower was invited to offer in-service training for the staff of two state-sponsored orphanages that primarily house children who lost their parents in the Bosnian war.

Dr. Hower and a missionary colleague actually lived in one of the orphanages in order to experience first-hand the lives of the children. Mary reported, "It is children rearing children. In some sections of the orphanage there is only one adult for 36 children! Most of the time you do not see an adult at all, so the children care for each other. But when the children start fighting or creating a commotion, the adults appear out of nowhere with stern looks."

Mary went on to say that when the workers saw that she was present, they immediately became softer and more sensitive to the children ranging in age from babies to nearly twenty years of age.

Mary's visit was arranged by a Christian missionary and a local politician who gave her free reign to share her faith in Christ with the workers and the children. During a meeting with a group of physicians from the Red Cross, Mary told these professionals that she shared the importance of bringing God into the emotional healing process. One of the physicians replied, "You must tell our people this, and you must tell the children." Mary thanked him and assured him that she had been doing just that!



Lively Bosnian orphans



Dick Innes

Growing Strong in the Broken Places

by Dick Innes

Do you ever feel that God can't use you because you aren't qualified? If so, you're in good company.

Many of us feel the same way. In fact, there were very few men or women in the Bible who were used of God who didn't have a personal struggle or challenge of one kind or another. Moses and Mary weren't the only ones who didn't feel qualified for the work God was calling them to do! An unknown author has pointed out:

"Moses stuttered. John Mark was rejected by Paul. Timothy had ulcers. Hosea's wife was a prostitute. Amos' only training was in the school of fig-tree pruning. Jacob lied. David had an affair. Solomon had too many wives and concubines. Jesus was too poor and wasn't schooled in the right religious institutions. Abraham and Sarah were too old. David was too young. Peter was impulsive. John had a temper. Naomi was a widow. Paul was a murderer, as was Moses. Jonah

ran from God. Gideon and Thomas both doubted. Jeremiah was depressed. Elijah was burned out. Martha worried too much. Matthew was a despised tax-gatherer. Noah had a drinking problem."

I believe it was Ernest Hemingway who first used the phrase, "Growing strong in the broken places." The idea behind these words is that where a bone is broken and heals, it becomes the strongest part of the bone. The same is true of our broken places — where we have been hurt, have fallen, or failed. When we bring these to Christ for healing, His strength is then made perfect in and through our weaknesses. This is certainly true in ministering to other people. Our friends are not helped so much by our brilliant logic or persuasive speech as they are through honest sharing of our own struggles and how God brought us through. As one evangelist put it, sharing our faith in Christ is just a case of one beggar showing another beggar where to find bread!

Three times the Apostle Paul prayed that God would deliver him from some kind of affliction, but God chose not to deliver him. In his letter to the church at Corinth — a church that was filled with personal problems — Paul explained why God didn't deliver him: "But he (God) said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" (2 Corinthians 12:9, NIV).

God, of course, doesn't want us to stay stuck in our sins and problems. While He *uses* us as we are, God also loves us too much to *leave* us that way. But never think that you have too little talent or too many hurts or problems for God to use you. The key issue is to be available.

Everyone that God has ever used has had their weaknesses, sins, and failings. But they were available, and they have been remembered for what God did through their lives.

May we be, too!

NCFL LETTERS

Big hurrah

A great big hurrah for the new format, graphics, and content in the latest *Living* magazine. I am sending it to my daughter and son-in-law.

JM

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Never seen God, but ...

I've never seen God, but I know

how I feel. It is people like you who make Him so real. You will always have my encouragement.

Gloria Austin
Barbados, West Indies

Praises and prayers

Praise the Lord for your continued outreach and growth of ministry, new leadership and help on the mission field. I pray for you and completely

read each *LIVING* magazine. It gets better all the time.

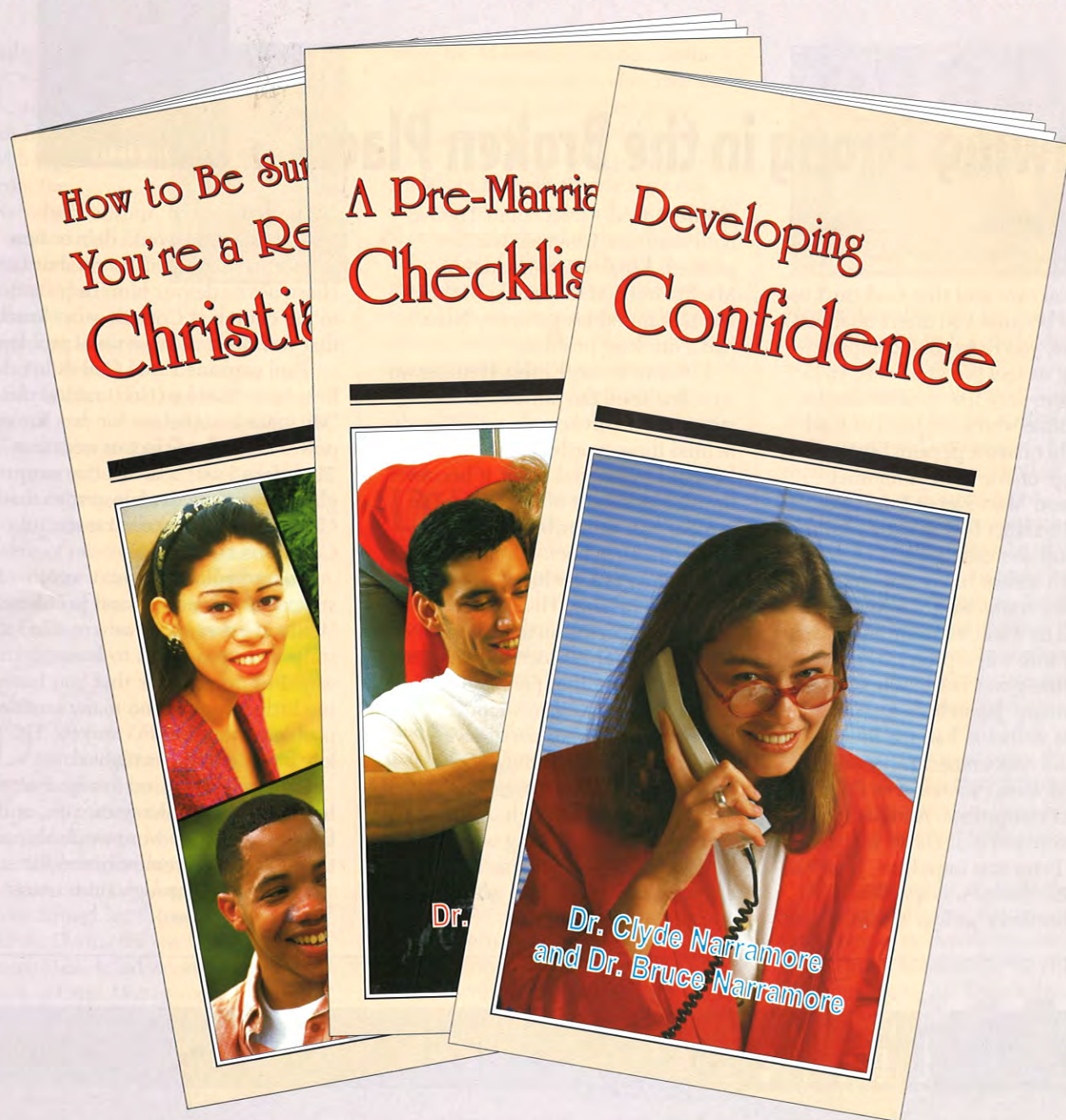
Elsie Young
Tempe, Arizona

Resources help

I can't count the many times that your resources have helped me. Your new booklet on *Confidence* has been of great insight. Thank you.

Patrick Duvall
Norco, California

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