

Think

CURRENT ISSUES FROM A DISTINCTLY CHRISTIAN VIEW

GROW THROUGH WHAT
YOU GO THROUGH

GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL
TRAIL TO RECOVERY

JUST PRAY!

SURVIVOR

God is there even in the darkest times

DECEMBER 2019



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“FOR I, THE LORD YOUR GOD,
WILL HOLD YOUR RIGHT HAND,
SAYING TO YOU, ‘FEAR NOT,
I WILL HELP YOU.’”

Isaiah 41:13

Think: FROM THE EDITORS

Brad Harrub, Dan Cottrell, Billy Davis, Keith Parker, Steve Hale,
Jack Wilkie, Edwin Jones, and Will Harrub

IN OUR DARKEST TIMES

In May 1991, my oldest brother had an allergic reaction to some medication he was given in a local hospital. My mom called and alerted me that he had a fever of 106 and had been transferred to the intensive care unit. I don't even remember leaving my part-time job. I just remember having to get there as fast as I could.

My parents had divorced a few years earlier and my dad was out of the country. Since my mom did not handle medical emergencies well (that's an understatement!), and my other brother was living in Cookeville, I found myself making decisions that no one should ever have to make. I can still vividly recall walking into that intensive care room and watching his body shake from seizures. He was unresponsive, his fever refused to go down, and at some point they were forced to put him on a ventilator. It was the nightmare you never want to experience.

After several hours of failed attempts, I finally was able to reach my dad and we discussed Calvin's situation. We reviewed everything I had been told by the doctors. I shared what medications they were trying and that his prognosis was very grim. My dad told me to get a copy of his medical records and get him to Vanderbilt Hospital (a much better medical facility) as fast as I could. He informed me he would be on the next flight home.

We were able to get my brother transferred to Vanderbilt University Medical Center. But sadly, he only survived about 7 hours after making that journey across town. I will never forget as long as I live meeting my dad at the jetbridge in the airport to tell him his son had died. (This was many years before 9/11). Airport staff provided us a private conference room so we could all sit down and weep together. It was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do.

That experience was one that I never want to go through again. But that experience helped mold me into the man I am today. Friends, family,

and church members surrounded us with love. Calls, prayers, and visits lifted us up. We lived day-by-day for many months as we grieved and slowly adjusted to this new "normal." To this day I don't know where I would be without God and friends.

In this issue of *Think* we want to share some encouraging stories of individuals who have been dealt tough blows in life, but they overcame. Some of the stories you read are about physical blows that individuals received, like falling off a mountain on a hunting trip or receiving news you have cancer. Others are emotional and psychological blows like learning your child has been critically injured or discovering your once fairy tale marriage has been shattered. Isaiah 41:13 says, "For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'"

Life can sometimes be difficult. In fact, many of you presently reading these words may be going through an extremely tough time. Just because you have been washed in the blood of Jesus does not mean that suddenly your world here on earth will be rosy (in fact, the Bible indicates the opposite—that we will be persecuted).

But knowing you have a heavenly Father who loves you, knowing the assurance of Heaven, and having a Christian family who love and support you is priceless! This is an issue to remind each and every one of us that God is there—even in our darkest times.

We hope you find these real-life stories encouraging as you see how they were wrapped up in the healing power of love. As this year draws to a close, we encourage you to give God thanks for all your blessings. We encourage you to resolve to be more faithful and more active in the coming year. And as always, we hope you will *Think* on these things! ▲



BRAD HARRUB



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KEITH PARKER



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EDWIN JONES



WILL HARRUB

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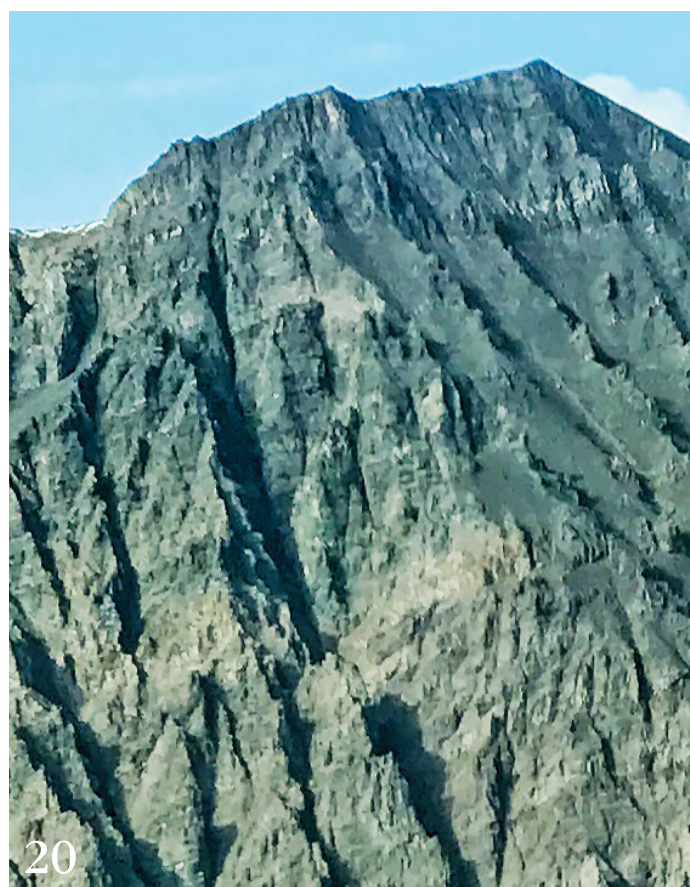
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CHRISTMAS CATALOG 13



Juanita

During a time of political correctness you are a breath of fresh air. I am so tired of people (including Christians) compromising just for the sake of getting along. I appreciate that you are willing to tackle the tough issues and speak boldly where the Bible speaks. May God continue to bless your work.

A fellow Christian

Please accept this donation to your work in spreading the Gospel of Christ. My only request is that you use your best judgment to make sure that these funds are used in a way that will maximize the spreading of the Gospel of Christ and Bible teachings. It could include completing a new piece of content that will bring souls to Christ. Or it could include something similar. Thank you and may you continue to do God's work in Truth.

Dwight

You will never know the impact your ministry has on so many people. I have used your materials on dozens of occasions to reach out to those who are searching. Please continue teaching and preaching the Truth. Your work is not in vain!

Linda W.

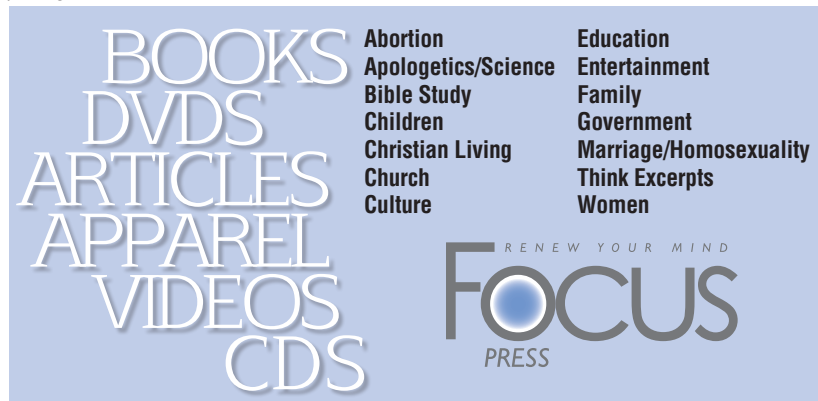
Just want to let you know your articles are timely and strengthen me. May good health and clarity continue in your writing.

Pam

Regarding your article about "Are You Standing Around Holding Coats," I cannot tell you how many Christian friendships I have lost this past year because I will not bend the Bible to satisfy the flesh. Because I stand for what is right and I will not fall or bow to "well is it really wrong?" It hurts more than you can imagine to have sisters replace me with someone who will pat them on the back and say "it's ok." I am not **holding** any coats. I love you and your family.

The McAdams Family

We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May God continue to be with your good work. ▲



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FROM THE ROAD

All year this year in my "From the Road" remarks I have tried to focus on Jesus and the ways various congregations are drawing people back to Him and the cross. I fear that if a congregation gets too far away from Jesus (and the cross), then they will forget their first love and begin to simply exist as a religious social club. To the Christian Jesus is everything! It is my prayer that in the coming year your congregation will look for specific opportunities to be the hands and feet of Jesus out in the community. Gather families together—children and adults—and give them opportunities to serve and care for those around your church building. Help the lost see Jesus through the actions of active Christians. Encourage your deacons to plan activities in local parks, town squares, or civic areas. Help your young people carry out service projects in the community. Get OUT of the building and show Jesus to those around you . . . and don't forget to tell them about the cross! BH ▲

Think

Volume 14, Issue 12 • December 2019

© Focus Press, Inc. 2019

published monthly by Focus Press, Inc.

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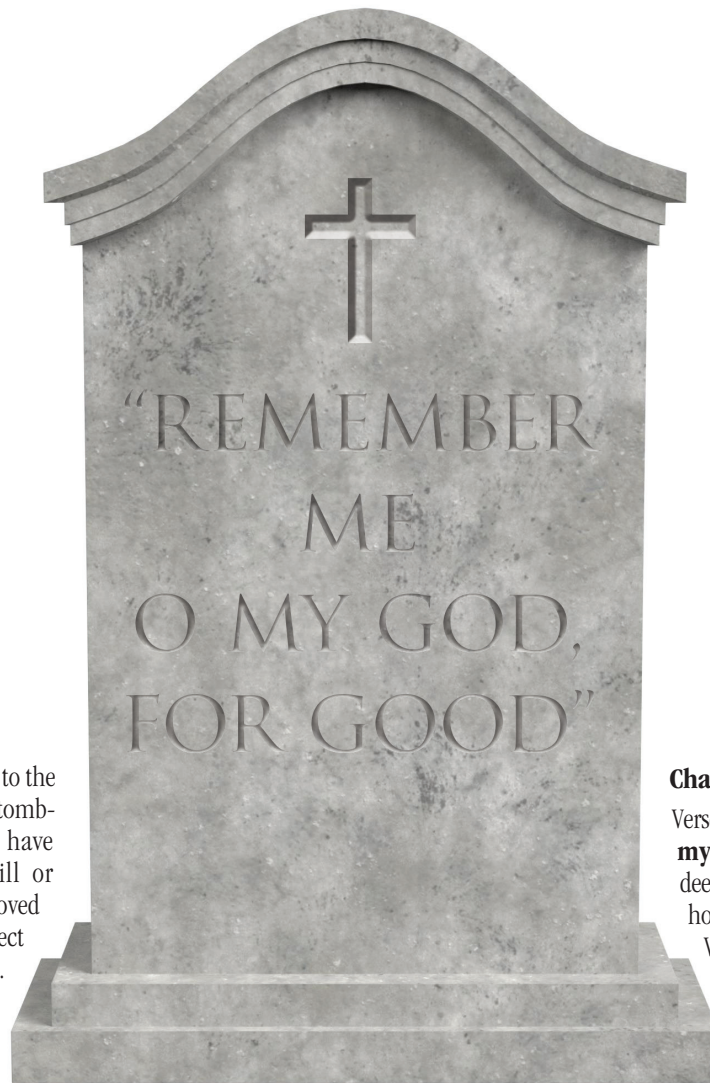
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Think: SOUL FOOD

By Billy R. Davis, Ph.D. USAF Ret.



Have you given much thought to the inscription that will go on your tombstone/grave marker? Whether you have prepared instructions in your will or plan to leave the decision to your loved ones, your epitaph will probably reflect some meaningful aspect of your life. After all, this life is really a dress rehearsal for eternity. Where am I going with this line of thinking? I am so glad you asked!

My respect and admiration for Nehemiah has grown exponentially—especially when I saw the emphasis that he placed on prayer in his service and devotion to God. Here's what I mean:

Chapter 1

Verse 4 – I was **fasting and praying** before the God of heaven

Verse 5 – **I beseech You**, O Lord God of heaven

Verse 11 – O Lord, **I beseech You**

Chapter 2

Verse 4 – **So I prayed** to the God of heaven

Chapter 4

Verse 4-5 – **Hear, O our God** how we are despised . . . do not forgive their iniquity

Verse 9 – But we prayed to our God and because of them . . .

Chapter 5

Verse 19 – **Remember me O my God**, for good, according to all I have done for this people

Chapter 6

Verse 9 – **But now O God, strengthen my hands**

Verse 14 – **Remember O my God**, Tobiah and Sanballat according to these works of theirs . . .

Chapter 13

Verse 14 – **Remember me for this, O my God**, and do not blot out my loyal deeds which I have performed for the house of my God and its services

Verse 22 – **For this also remember me, O my God**, and have compassion on me according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness

Verse 29 – **Remember them, O**

my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites

Verse 31 – **Remember me, O my God, for good**

While there are other citations and inferences mentioned in the text that demonstrate his powerful, prayerful connection with God—I **think you get the picture!** And to top it off, Nehemiah was blessed by God to complete this monumental archeological feat in **52 days** (Nehemiah 6:15)! He certainly walked with God and put his total trust and confidence in Him to see this project through to completion.

I bring this short but poignant missive to a close by asking you, what epitaph would you have placed on Nehemiah's grave marker? For me, the selection is crystal clear: **Remember me O my God, for good.** Nehemiah's ministry and focus brought comfort and support to others. His name carries the meaning "Comfort of Jehovah" or "Jehovah has comforted." And that is exactly what he did!

As we reflect upon the year that God has blessed us to experience and the prospect of living a more consecrated life for Him in 2020, let us resolve to give greater diligence to strengthen our walk, focus, commitment, and prayer-life with our Heavenly Father. And let us apply and inculcate the invaluable example that Nehemiah has set before us so that we too can say as we walk this Christian journey, **Remember me O my God, for good. ▲**

Bon appétit!

Heteronormativity: Re-Writing What is “Normal”

One method of changing a culture to accept a sinful way of life is to redefine what is “normal.” Most people were raised to believe in decades past that heterosexual relationships were the accepted standard of most societies. To disrupt heterosexuality as the normal sexual orientation, many in the LGBTQ+ movement have attempted to destroy “heteronormativity.” *Heteronormative* is defined as “of, relating to, or based on the attitude that heterosexuality is the only normal and natural expression of sexuality.”¹

This can be done in many ways, but it seems that children are the primary target of those who want to normalize homosexuality, transgenerism, and a whole host of other ungodly lifestyles. One article under review in this treatise originates from an education journal. It avers,

Failing to address this crucial area of equalities tends to ensure that everyone, regardless of their sexuality or gender identity, is restricted to the small range of gendered and sexual behaviors that serve to affirm normative (hetero)sexuality. In this sense, disrupting this heterosexual matrix is a wider social justice project that broadens possibilities for all children.²

It is easier to indoctrinate young minds than to change those who have already arrived at the conclusion that homosexuality is sinful. To that end, school curriculums have been developed and books have been written that are targeting children.

People in the LGBTQ+ movement want to portray heterosexuality as being nothing more than another “choice” that one might make regarding their sexuality. They want to teach our children that heterosexuality is no more “normal” than any other sexual orientation or gender choice. The implications of such a trend are troubling.

One writer observes, “Heteronormativity is a belief that requires constant reconstruction.”³ While the motives of the one writing the article are questionable, this is a true statement. Godly, intact homes instill within their children God’s view of marriage and the home. Since children are born *tabula rasa*,⁴ parents have the charge to raise them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). Part of that responsibility is maintaining a godly home environment. Succinctly, this is what many in the LGBTQ+ movement seek to undermine.

One key goal of those wanting to normalize all sexual orientations and behavior is exploring “possibilities for disrupting dominant discourses of sexuality and gender expression.”⁵ Even though the article explores efforts being put forth in England to accomplish these goals, we see the same efforts being exerted in the United States.

The article under review goes on to mention the highly publicized case of a transgendered “man” who was about to have “his” second baby. After citing this, the authors underscore the media’s role in challenging sexuality and gender in society. They aver, “The popular media ensures that children are grappling with sex and gender, as well as sexuality, whether we address these issues in school or not.”

Did you catch that? What is portrayed in media plays a role in advancing the LGBT+ agenda. It is not coincidental to find news programs, entertainment programs, and even cartoons that challenge “heteronormativity.” These challenges are not always overtly sexual in nature. They merely try to present “alternative lifestyle choices” as being normal and acceptable, while portraying opponents as homophobic, transphobic, or backwards in their reasoning about such lifestyles.

Along these same lines, the LGBT+ movement wants to destroy the idea of heterosexual relationships as being the only normal relationship model. One group in England states that they want to “‘completely smash heteronormativity’ by implementing ‘an LGBT+ Inclusive curriculum’ in nursery, primary and secondary schools, colleges, universities, organizations and communities.”⁶

This trend is moving from national media sources to places closer to home. In 2018, our county library (Clarksville, Tenn.) had a group that secured a room for “Rainbow Reading with Equality Clarksville.”⁷ One advertisement for the program said, “Let’s fill the shelves with LGBT+ Acceptance and Love.” Clarksville was not the only target in this effort, because similar programs have been conducted in various parts of our nation. The battle for the morality of our children is raging!

An article written by a systems librarian in the Nashville public library took some issue with those opposing “Rainbow Reading with Equality Clarksville,” In his opening remarks, he said,



“Drag queens reading to kids is the latest issue to draw national attention to the matter of who can use public library meeting rooms. Many note the celebratory joy and message of tolerance such programming brings to the library. Others are moved to armed protest. Snopes even had to check if Satan is, in fact, real . . . We have never specifically advised a drag queen story time, but I now realize what a great counter punch that would be . . . This was the context when drag queen story time came to Clarksville and Cookeville. Kerfuffle’s ensued . . . Drag queen story times continue.”⁸

Many in our culture are naive enough to believe this is relatively harmless, but it is part of a bigger agenda to indoctrinate young minds into believing that any type of gender or sexual orientation is acceptable.

There is an overt pressure being exerted upon conservative Christians to conform to these perverse lifestyles that is reminiscent of something found in Genesis 19. In this chapter, two angels come to Sodom for the purpose of warning Lot and his family about the impending doom. As the two angels enter Lot’s home, the men of the city “surrounded the house” so that they might have immoral sexual relations with them.

The refusal of Lot to comply with their requests (Genesis 19:7-8) engenders anger and violence among those surrounding his home. Genesis 19:9-10 says, “And they said, ‘Stand back.’ And they said again, ‘This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door.’” But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door.” While the pressure to conform is not physical in nature (at least not yet), it is being applied to God’s people. Christian resistance to such lifestyle choices prompts anger, persecution, vitriol, and protest from those promoting the LGBTQ+ lifestyle.

The efforts to crush heteronormativity are growing, and the battle begins with our children! Just like Lot we should feel “vexed” by what is happening to our world. 2 Peter 2:6-9 says, “And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered

just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation (conduct—ESV) of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” ▲

Footnotes

¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/heteronormative>

² DePalma, Renée and Atkinson, Elizabeth (2010). The nature of institutional heteronormativity in primary schools and practice-based responses. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26: 1669-1676. https://www.academia.edu/1029657/The_nature_of_institutional_heteronormativity_in_primary_schools_and_practice-based_responses.

³ Brown, Belinda (2019). “Smashing heteronormativity 101: Disrupting Children’s Sexual Intuitions Education for the New Sexual Revolution.” <https://www.mercatornet.com/conjugality/view/smashing-heteronormativity-101-disrupting-childrens-sexual-intuitions/22877>.

⁴ *Tabula rasa* is defined as “an absence of preconceived ideas or predetermined goals; a clean slate.”

⁵ *Ibid*, pg. 1669.

⁶ Parker, James (2019). “Have LGGBDTTTQQAAAPP Rights Had Their Day?” Mercatornet. <https://www.mercatornet.com/conjugality/view/have-lggbdtttiqqa-app-rights-had-their-day/23037>.

⁷ While this was not specifically supported by the public library, per their public usage rules, they did provide the space for such a “reading” to happen. <https://tennesseestar.com/2018/08/10/clarksville-montgomery-county-public-library-site-of-drag-queen-reading-event-saturday-afternoon/>. By the way, LGGBDTTTQQAAAPP stands for “Lesbian, Gay, Genderqueer, Bisexual, Demisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Twospirit, Intersex, Queer, Questioning, Asexual, Allies, Pansexual, Polyamorous.”

⁸ Jones, Bryan (2109). “What Happens When Drag Queen Story Time Happens in Tennessee?” *Tennessee Library Association*, 69:1 https://www.tnla.org/page/69_1_Jones



Grow through what you go through

By Christopher and Evie Graber

Enjoying our early thirties to their fullest, we lived every day with enthusiasm and thankfulness. Our parents were faithful and highly involved in our lives. Those closest to us were also raising Christian families and doing well. We both had occupations we loved: Christopher, a full-time evangelist, working towards his Master's degree, also helping a family business; Evie, an in-home childcare provider, while serving as church secretary. Our family was blessed with a home in a peaceful neighborhood, where we were raising and homeschooling our healthy, energetic boys. What a wonderful life . . .

Then one chilly Minnesota spring, we welcomed the arrival of our fifth son! While recovering at home, Evie felt fulfilled in spirit, but something was not right. She experienced painful, pulsing headaches with trouble focusing her vision. After no amount of medication or sleep proved helpful, we decided to see the doctor to ensure nothing serious was happening. This would mark the beginning of a trial that would change our lives forever. After an MRI "just to be safe," we sat together, surrounded by family, waiting for results. A visibly shaken doctor walked into the room: "We found something." It was a mass the size of a large orange in Evie's left frontal lobe. Evie needed surgery immediately! With aching hearts, we handed our newborn over to her parents and were rushed by ambulance for an emergency craniotomy. After the surgery, several scans, and five long days in the hospital, we returned home to wait for the biopsy results. We prayed the biopsy would reveal a benign tumor, but after a week of waiting, we got the news Evie had a rare, aggressive, incurable brain cancer. We knew God heard our prayers so we humbly accepted His reply. The following years have involved many stressful times for us, with several radiologist and neuro-oncologist appointments, cranial radiation and chemotherapy treatments, frequent brain scans, countless blood draws and tests, medications with nausea and fatigue, and the eventual closing of Evie's business. We learned only about fifty percent of people with her cancer live beyond three years. This ugly, cancerous tumor always grows back.

Appropriate Grief

Never before had we dealt with such heavy hearts. Every Christian parent/couple hopes for many years to "grow old" together, watch their children grow and devote their lives to God, have families of their own, and cherish all those moments along the way! For the first time, we had to accept that our marriage and our young family could not have the same expectations we once had. Evie shared the deep sorrow she felt while grieving things she never had to ponder as possibilities: not being able to be the wife by her husband's side, not having the strength to care for our home, not being there to help guide our children, and someone becoming her "replacement." No one wants to think about their life "ending early" or their "dreams" being unreachable. Christopher was simultaneously striving to balance his grief with being a source of strength for Evie. He was used to being a problem solver with helpful words and actions, but nothing he could do or say could lift these burdens. Grief and sorrow are not weaknesses. There is a time for weeping and mourning (Ecclesiastes 3:4). Jesus, Himself, wept with the weeping (John 11:33-35). Part of us continues to grieve a number of "lost expectations," but we were not crushed beyond repair nor driven to despair (1 Thessalonians 4:13; Romans 8:18).

A Proper Perspective

As Christians, we understand keeping a proper God-glorifying perspective is essential (Philemon 1:20; Isaiah 43:7). Rather than obsessing about negatives, we witnessed the power of prayer and God's providential hand. Things could have been so much worse. Given the size and location of her tumor, doctors were shocked Evie had not experienced seizures. Imagine what could have happened if she seized while carrying our newborn son, or if all of this started while she was pregnant just weeks before! Tumors are often inoperable, but hers was in the perfect location for ease of access and removal. Also, with its isolation to one side of the frontal lobe, she had no noticeable cognitive impairment. Words cannot express the thanksgiving and relief we experienced when Evie came through the craniotomy with her same joyful personality, ready to take down the chocolate shake her father had waiting for her! Evie was able to max out the treatments with only cosmetic side effects, while many are unable to remain healthy enough to complete treatment. We know radiation often leads to long-term cognitive decline, but thus far Evie remains completely herself. Though we found it proper to grieve certain things, we determined not to waste time and energy questioning, "Why us?" Conversely, we questioned: "How can we grow in this?" "How can we serve God in this?" We know NOTHING gets past God; He allows trials, and can work good through them (Romans 8:28). After all, who loves and cares for us more than He? We may never know for sure why the Lord allowed this, but we have not ceased seeing good come from it. We both experienced attitude adjustments, finding a new sense of humility. Evie came to understand her love of this world was outweighing her desire for Heaven, and she had not fully considered the fragility of life (1 John 2:15; Psalm 90:12).

What Helps

Proper Training — Much is revealed through a trial; either you crumble or prove your character, growing in faith (Romans 5:3-4; James 1:2-4). Being prepared is key to responding appropriately. We knew the correct response long before the trial surfaced. God's Word instilled within us, through diligent Christian parents, mentors, Bible teachers, and preachers, has never proven so invaluable.

Proper Encouragement — It can be difficult to discuss such personal events, but we have learned God designed His church for spiritual accountability and support, and definitely for times when troubles occur (Romans 12:10-15). Not only did our immediate biological and spiritual family embrace and support us, but hundreds of Christians from 8 different countries! Innumerable prayers have been offered and more than 130 families sent notes and cards of encouragement. Three families organized fund-raisers, we were mailed several gifts, money, gift cards, activities for our children, two families even replaced our cars we had just grown out of, and a few are still giving and supporting our family to this day! Heavy waves of thankfulness come upon our hearts over and over as His people lift us up in so many ways! God continually proves Himself faithful, full of mercy, caring for our every need as He promised (2 Peter 1:3; Matthew 6:33).

Proper Words — Though many well-intending people tried to encourage us saying, "I'm sure God will heal you, just have faith!" or "You'll beat this, hang in there!" we understand none of us can speak as certainties the thoughts or plans of God (1 Corinthians 2:11). The implication, whether intentional or not, is that if the doctors are correct about Evie's prognosis, there is a failure in our strength, our faith, or God's care. The words we need are the ones that comfort us in our situation, not words promising an eventual physical deliverance. Thankfully, we have had many Christians reminding us to pray for increased understanding, encouraging us to do our part, and trust the rest to God. Whether or not our appeals to Him end up matching the outcome, we continue to trust that God's will is best.

We cannot know how much time God will give Evie, or any of us, but we can know it will be enough time to accomplish what He wants for us here on earth. Trying life events like these are normal; our mission does not change (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Ephesians 5:16; Matthew 28:19-20). Even with the heaviest of burdens, we must pray to find perfect peace in God's perfect timing. We cannot let concerns about what may happen in the future stunt our spiritual growth, or steal the joy in glorifying God TODAY (Philemon 4:4-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Psalm 96; Jude 24-25; Matthew 6:34; Philippians 4:11-13). ▲



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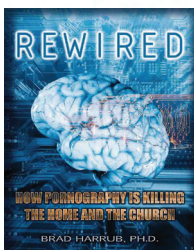


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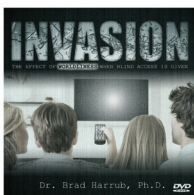
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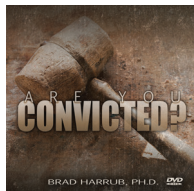
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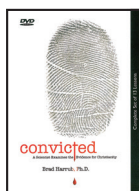
Invasion: The Effect of Worldliness When Blind Access Is Given - \$5

There is this sense in America that you can be a true Christian and have a deep burning for the world. Scripture says the exact opposite. Join Dr. Brad Harrub as he examines this epidemic of worldliness that has invaded many Christian homes.



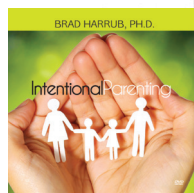
Are You Convicted? - \$5

Many are convinced God is real. But are you convicted enough to actually do something about it? Are you really willing to pick up your hammer and do what God commands, or are you still offering up excuses? This eye-opening lesson is one you will not soon forget. Join Dr. Brad Harrub as he challenges modern Christians to pick up their hammer and be convicted for Him!



Convicted Series - \$75 | Sale Price - \$65

This foundational series by Brad Harrub, Ph.D. includes 13 lessons with up-to-date information. This is a comprehensive video series on Christian evidences that provides the evidence for “why we believe what we believe.” It makes a great companion to Dr. Harrub’s book. Not only does this resource cover the foundational principles like the existence of God, inspiration of the Bible, the deity of Christ, the dinosaur dilemma, and creation vs. evolution, but this series also covers topics that have received very little attention in the past.



Intentional Parenting - \$10

Most people believe children do not come with an instruction book. However, as Dr. Brad Harrub points out in this new DVD, they most certainly do—the Bible. Parenting is one of the toughest jobs around if it is done correctly. But the rewards of good parenting can follow you into eternity. This useful DVD focuses on how to make sure your children do not become another statistic.



In the Footsteps of Darwin - \$20 | Sale Price - \$12

Brad Harrub, Ph.D. traveled to the Galapagos Islands to produce an informative DVD that uncovers the truth about the very place upon which Charles Darwin based his theory of evolution. Dr. Harrub serves as your personal guide and will help you distinguish between the facts and the myths about the origin of species.

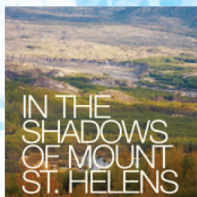


Where Did We Come From - \$12

Where did we come from? It is a basic question that most science textbooks address first. In this powerful DVD, Dr. Brad Harrub reveals the fallacy of the Big Bang theory and shares how true science fits beautifully with the creation model.

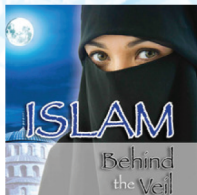
DVDs (Continued)

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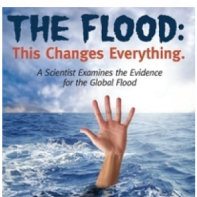
In the Shadows of Mount St. Helens - \$20 | Sale Price - \$12

For many individuals, the field of geology remains a hurdle in harmonizing a young earth with scientific data. The May 18, 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens changed all of that. Rather than basing geology around long-age “assumptions,” scientists discovered a living laboratory that provided some startling information. We invite you to enter the blast zone with Dr. Brad Harrub and his son Will as they discover the truth regarding geological processes and the age of the earth.



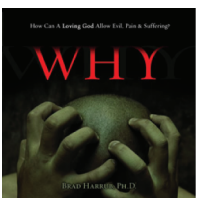
Islam: Behind the Veil - \$10 | Sale Price - \$8

Oftentimes the sight of a burqa—the traditional cloak worn by Muslim women—causes individuals to pause and stare. This vision, and the world it represents, is so foreign to most Christians, that for many, it floods us with questions and maybe even fear. What really lies behind that veil? If those eyes could speak, what exactly would they say? In this DVD, Dr. Brad Harrub shares how Islam really started, who Mohammad really was, what the pillars of Islam are, how this religion treats women, and how to approach them with the Truth.



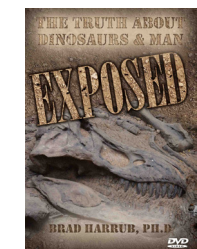
The Flood - \$25 | Sale Price - \$20

A scientist examines the Global Flood. The Noahic Flood was responsible for the death of every land-dwelling creature that was not aboard the ark. That single event changed the topography of the Earth and also was a major chapter in the history of mankind. Join Dr. Brad Harrub as he reveals the truth about God's punishment on sin. Lessons included in this Series: 1. Noah Faces a Global Catastrophe, 2. Global Flood: Fact or Fiction, 3. Ripples from the Flood: The Ice Age and Origin of Races.



Why? - \$3 | Sale Price - 50 or more \$1.50 each

How can a loving God allow evil, pain, and suffering? Dr. Brad Harrub takes us on a quick but powerful journey of how much our God really does care. He explains why God allows evil, pain, and suffering, and then he reflects on a true case of evil, pain, and suffering—the death of Jesus Christ.



Exposed: The Truth About Man and Dinosaurs - \$20 | Sale Price - \$18

These DVDs take viewers on a firsthand look at the real evidence! Join Dr. Brad Harrub and his son Reese on location at an archaeological dig site at Hillcreek Formation in Montana as they expose the truth! 2 DVDs

Additional DVD Titles

Broken: A Study of Meekness - \$5 | Sale Price - \$4

In this DVD, Dr. Brad Harrub shares what it means to be broken for God and allow His hand to rule your life.

One Nation Under Who? - \$2 Sale Price - 50 or more \$1.50 each

Dr. Brad Harrub takes an intense look at where our nation is and how we got here.

Truth Trumps Tolerance - \$20 | Sale Price - \$15

Is the school system promoting something that is reducing the lifespan of our children?

Where's Your Heart? - \$10 | Sale Price - \$8

Are you ready to cast aside the worldly roles and expectations that society has placed on your family? Are you bold enough to look at things from a totally different—totally Biblical—perspective?

The Value of Human Life - \$15 | Sale Price - \$10

As science rapidly pursues human cloning and stem cell research, what should a Christian's response be to these ethical situations?

One Foot in the Grave - \$7 | Sale Price - \$5

Just because the world has forgotten about Hell, that does not change the reality of it.

Parenthood Unplanned - \$12 | Sale Price - \$8

What do Christians need to know regarding modern birth-control practices?

Plugging the Leak - \$7 | Sale Price - \$5

Young people have been abandoning their faith in droves. We are all conscious of the problem—but the time has come to do something about it.

Real Men - \$10 | Sale Price - \$8

Society doesn't think much of fathers, and sadly that has been reflected in both the media and real life. As a result the bar has been lowered for what it means to be a good dad.

Consequences - \$2.50 Sale Price - 50 or more \$2.00 each

What are the consequences of a nation that abandons God and His precepts? We want to get this message out to Christians and non-Christians.

A Christian Worldview - \$10 | Sale Price - \$8

What does it really mean to be a Christian?

Faith for Life - \$5 | Sale Price - \$4

To win the culture war, parents need to be focused on helping their children know how to become faithful servants of God.

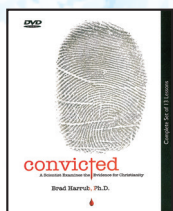
CDs

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The Lost Generation - \$20

Most people are aware that a large number of young people leave the church as they grow older, but exactly how big of a problem are we dealing with? What can we do to bring them back, and how can we stem the tide with future generations? Jack Wilkie answers these questions in the 5-lesson "The Lost Generation" audio series, discussing the truth about how many young Christians are leaving, what is drawing them away from God, and what we can do about it.



Convicted Series - \$35 | Sale Price - \$30

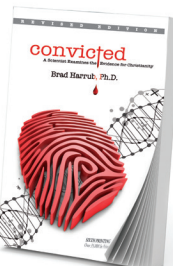
This foundational series by Brad Harrub, Ph.D. includes 13 lessons with up-to-date information. This is a comprehensive audio series on Christian evidences that provides the evidence for "why we believe what we believe." It makes a great companion to Dr. Harrub's book. Not only does this resource cover the foundational principles like the existence of God, inspiration of the Bible, the deity of Christ, the dinosaur dilemma, and creation vs. evolution, but this series also covers topics that have received very little attention in the past.



Why Believe? - \$25 | Sale Price - \$22

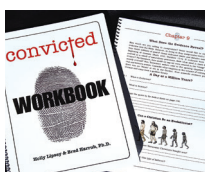
With this 8 CD collection, you'll enjoy learning how science and Scripture are actually in harmony, not contradictory as media leads society to believe. You'll listen to the truth about how God created us and the wonderful world in which we live! 1. Atheism's Attack in America 2. Proving the Existence of God 3. Exploding Evidence from Mount St. Helens and The Age of the Earth 4. The Dinosaur Dilemma 5. Evolutionary Hoaxes 6. Scientific Accuracy of the Bible 7. Reasons We Are Losing Our Children 8. Are You Convicted?

BOOKS



Convicted - \$22 | REVISED EDITION

There is no question of greater importance than whether or not God exists. If there is a Supreme Being, then life has purpose and some form of meaning. If not, then our very presence on this earth is simply the result of a cosmologic explosion, and we are the beneficiaries of climbing our way to the top of the evolutionary tree of life. The way in which we answer the question about the existence of God greatly determines how we conduct ourselves while on this Earth. After years of careful and deliberate study and research, there is one thing I know for certain. Not only am I convinced, I'm convicted.



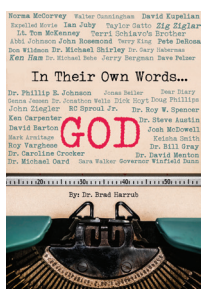
Convicted Workbook - \$28 | Sale Price - \$26

The Convicted Workbook follows chapter-by-chapter with the Convicted book. It can be used for home-school, teen Sunday school classes, or adult classes.



Failure - \$14 | Sale Price - \$12 Failure Audio Book - \$10 (As Download - \$8)

What is the truth about curriculum, sex, violence, and the Common Core? What are children learning about today's hotly debated topics like religion, evolution, and how does government involvement affect public education? Are schools safe, physically and spiritually? What role does education play in the development of a child's relationship with God? Is the public education model a viable idea? *Failure* answers these questions with an in-depth look at what Christian parents need to know before making an informed decision.

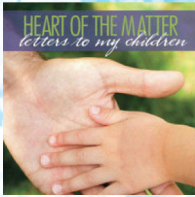


In Their Own Words - \$14 NEW!

What do Zig Ziglar, Michael Behe, R. C. Sproul, Jr., Norma McCorrey, and Don Wildeman all have in common? They all possess a belief in God and you can read about it here in their own words. This special collection of interviews allows you to hear directly from these individuals and so many more.

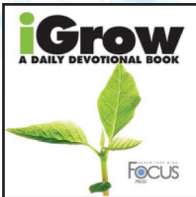
BOOKS (Continued)

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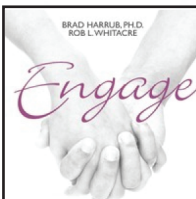
Heart of the Matter - \$14 | Sale Price - \$10

Join Dr. Brad Harrub as he peels back the curtain to his own home and shares with readers the advice he is trying to instill in his own children regarding life, the church, and family.



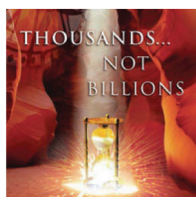
iGrow Devotional - \$14 | Sale Price - \$13

iGrow is meant to not only fit into your busy life, but also grow your faith. Each day, we are challenging you to pick up your Bible and relax, read, reflect, record, and request. Our prayer is that this daily study will help you to transform your mind, and unleash the shackles the world has placed on you.



Engage: Rethinking How We Walk Down the Aisle - \$15 | Sale Price - \$13

In this book, authors Rob Whitacre and Brad Harrub encourage parents and single Christians to take a critical look at the modern dating system and consider a more Biblical approach to marriage.



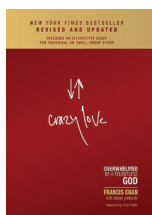
Thousands ... Not Billions - \$14 | Sale Price - \$12

This non-technical book is the layman's guide to the radioisotopes and the Age of the Earth (RATE) project. *Note: This material was not produced or published by the Christians at Focus Press and may not be representative of the New Testament church. We appreciated much of the material contained and are recommending it to you with this caveat. It has been written to equip the layperson to defend scientific six-day creation and refute dating techniques.*



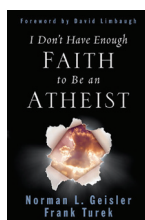
Dinosaurs for Kids - \$15 | Sale Price - \$12

This book shares the unique world of dinosaurs and their true history like never before as you meet the most unusual creatures to ever walk the earth, stalk the seas, or soar across the sky! Discover how dinosaur bonebeds are made—and other kinds of fossils beyond just bones! Learn the truth behind museum exhibits and flawed evolutionary timelines! Kids will uncover the facts about dinosaur history from the creation to recent discoveries.



Crazy Love Overwhelmed by a Relentless God By Francis Chan - \$17

God is love. Crazy, relentless, all-powerful love. Have you ever wondered if we're missing it? It's crazy, if you think about it. The God of the universe—the Creator of nitrogen and pine needles, galaxies and E-minor—loves us with a radical, unconditional, self-sacrificing love. And what is our typical response? We go to church, sing songs, and try not to cuss. Whether you've verbalized it yet or not, we all know something's wrong. *(Not Produced by Focus Press)*



I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist By Norman Geisler - \$18

To some, the concept of having faith in a higher power or a set of religious beliefs is nonsensical. Indeed, many view religion in general, and Christianity in particular, as unfounded and unreasonable. Norman Geisler and Frank Turek argue, however, that Christianity is not only more reasonable than all other belief systems, but is indeed more rational than unbelief itself. With conviction and clear thinking, Geisler and Turek guide readers through some of the traditional, tested arguments for the existence of a creator God. *(Not Produced by Focus Press)*

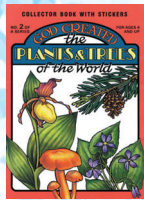
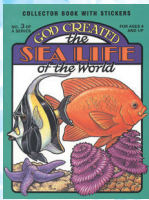
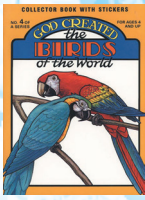


Our Created Moon - \$16 (Ages 11-13)

For eons the moon has intrigued humanity. From its creation through the current issues of space exploration, the moon has been both a light in the night and a protective shield of earth placed perfectly by God, regulating our seasons and keeping our atmosphere purified. Billions of dollars have been spent to reach its surface and discover its secrets; open these pages and discover those secrets for yourself. *(Not Produced by Focus Press)*

BOOKS *(Continued)*

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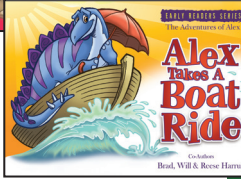
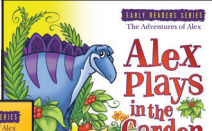
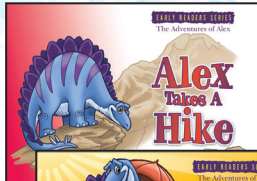


God Created the Birds of the World - \$6 (Ages 4-10)

God Created the Sea Life of the World - \$6 (Ages 4-10)

God Created the Plants & Trees of the World - \$6 (Ages 4-7)

The books in this series are designed to heighten children's awareness of the truth of God's creation. Combination coloring and sticker books, they also contain information that will help children understand the chronology of creation, and the reasons we are to care for what He has entrusted us with. The center of each book contains 32 full-color stickers that match the drawings. Children can place the sticker with the drawing, giving young artists a color guide. *(Not Produced by Focus Press)*

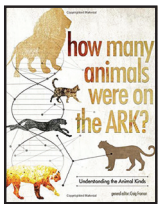


Alex Takes A Hike - \$8 Alex Takes A Boat Ride - \$8

Alex Plays In The Garden - \$8

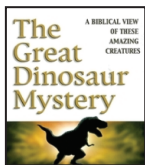
Adventures With Alex Coloring Book - \$5

Fully illustrated in full color. The Bible records, and scientific evidence makes the case, that dinosaurs and mankind coexisted. Join Alex the Stegosaurus and his friend Riley, a Triceratops, as they encounter life as it really was in the beginning. Our new Early Reader Series will not only help your child learn to read but also present an accurate portrait of well-known Bible accounts.



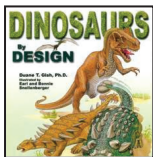
How Many Animals Were on the Ark? - \$16 (Ages 4-10)

How was it possible for Noah to bring aboard 2 million animals on the Ark, or were there perhaps less than 7,000? Helps answer one of the most difficult questions concerning the long voyage of the historical Ark! With the guidance of various authors and researchers, you will discover how Noah would have only needed a few thousand animals with him, and how he and his family could have cared for all life on the Ark over the course of the year's voyage. *(Not Produced by Focus Press)*



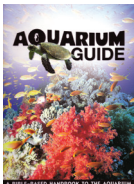
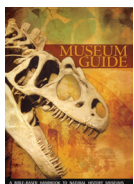
The Great Dinosaur Mystery - \$12 | Sale Price - \$10

A dinosaur book like you've never seen before! Not only is the "dinosaur mystery" solved, but you'll be taught the TRUE history of the earth and its inhabitants! Your thinking about this world will never be the same again! A wealth of information combined into one volume, this fascinating book is a perfect addition to your family library!



Dinosaurs by Design- \$16 | Sale Price - \$13

This book takes you into the exciting world of dinosaurs to find out what they were really like. Discover how fossils are formed, dug up, and assembled for museums. Travel with the dinosaurs as they board Noah's ark and then enter the strange new world after the Flood.

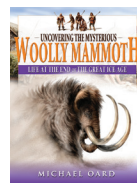


Museum Guide

Zoo Guide

Aquarium Guide

Sale Price - \$15 each



Uncovering the Mystery

of the Woolly Mammoth

Sale Price - \$14



T-Shirts - \$15 each | Sale Price - \$12

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JUST PRAY!

By Melissa Crumley

We are a praying family. We pray several times daily and we pray together often. I can't say that I have been very specific regarding my requests to God, but that all changed in mid-October. Our 21 year-old son was involved in a motorcycle accident and our quintessential world flipped on its axis and began spinning out of control. My husbands says we are in a tornado and we don't know where we'll land next. In some ways life is like that and we realize quickly that we are not in control.

I was working in the facility a few floors from where my son was lying in a trauma bay fighting for his life, well I suppose a ventilator and team of nurses and doctors were fighting to save his life. I would not become aware of this accident until nearly 3 hours later, I remember thinking, he must have just broken a leg because he managed to tell them I was his mom. I arrived to the emergency department and the nurse insisted I go to the family consult room to speak to the officer. Unfortunately, I had previously worked in an ER and I resisted as I thought “okay he didn’t make it.”

I said, “take me to him, take me to his body. She whispered, “He’s alive but critical.” I entered the room and the officer with a trembling voice began disclosing the details of the accident and I smiled and said “he’s going to be fine, are you okay sir?” all the while consoling this young Florida Highway patrolman by patting his back and ensuring him my child is going to be okay. The nurse led me to his room. He was angelic looking to me. He looked so peaceful.

I laid my hand on his chest and I prayed for the first time, “Lord, save my son if it’s your will.” Then I shirked back and thought how could any mother pray that, say that, or think that regarding their precious child. I work in healthcare. I’ve seen firsthand what brain trauma does to a person and at that moment I only wanted what God wanted for his life. I contacted my husband and he had to be driving to the hospital because he was so distraught and there I sat smiling and talking to the nurses and doctors. I’d ask about this medication or had that doctor been consulted. I was told a neurosurgeon, whom I respect and admire greatly, would be performing the craniotomy. I was immediately thankful until a different neurosurgeon walked in and very matter-of-factly informed me he had finished his case first and he was doing the surgery. I looked at him with disdain. I spoke to him like I have never spoken to any doctor and I told him we work together, I refer my patients to you, we are on the same team, and this child is your child. You will treat him like he is your child while you are caring for him do you understand? He shook my hand, smiled, and became human, not the machine going to work on my son’s brain, but we immediately had a human connection. We hugged and I prayed fervently. Again I prayed “If it’s Your will, Lord, save my son.”

My husband arrived and we notified my mother who was on vacation. She was actually the driving force behind the ensuing #prayfordaniel campaign. She went through her contact list, she tweeted the President, she reached out to every congregation/group she had worked with; and all of the sudden we had a waiting room full of people praying. Our minister arrived at Daniel’s bedside just before he went up to surgery; we joined hands and he prayed, with tears and

quivering voice, he prayed for Daniel, the surgeons, the nurses and all those working to restore Daniel. Then we waited with this room full of believers, I smiled and we shared stories of our day-to-day lives. Many of them kept saying, you’re doing so well, you are so strong. I did not feel strong but I knew I’d prayed for God’s will to be done and I’d have to wait.

We waited and waited then waited some more. The surgeon met with us and we went to his room where he was resting and we waited some more. I kept singing “teach me Lord to wait.” I prayed that verse “But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” over Daniel. I never slept that night but I had so much energy and drive. My mother arrived around midnight and she prayed over and over throughout the night. We waited some more and then doctor after doctor came in with their knowledge of his injuries and the nearly insurmountable damage to his brain. We weren’t given much hope. I faced the reality that I may have to withdraw care and life support to my child. We were given the same answer over and over again, “wait and see.” Each time someone said “with neurological trauma it’s a wait and see,” the song would come to mind, “Teach me Lord to wait, all the while we kept waiting.”

Now you see, I’m a planner, so this waiting around stuff was not in my wheelhouse. I wanted prognosis, information regarding his deficits if he survives this and we continued to wait. I began researching every medication and new medical term they threw at me whilst watching monitors and exercising his body, praying and waiting. I read Phillipians 4:6-7. I was becoming very anxious, so I took to Facebook and began asking for very specific requests regarding Daniel. I was so specific in my requests that folks were saying thanks for letting us know exactly what to pray about. One by one those prayers were answered. We began to see decreased edema, less drainage, then he would develop a new symptom and we would send out more prayer requests. In one post I listed individual requests; find the source of infection and take it from his body and God provided the only doctor who would find that source of infection. Daniel would take 2 steps forward and 1 step back, so he was making progress daily in his physical body but we were still waiting on his brain to wake up.

When they took him off all sedation, I envisioned his eyes opening immediately, when they did not and he lingered only responding to painful stimulus, I wept. Actually I sobbed and begged God to restore him, to make him halfway whole, to give me more time with him. The song that played on repeat in my mind sustained me throughout the entire time in the hospital as I never left his side for more than a few minutes and I continued to wait. I sang to him a different song. Early on while he was lying lifeless and being fully supported by machines, I sang 10,000 reasons. I sang it over and over again. Sometimes a tear would roll down his cheek and I knew he was in there. At one time our minister came to pray over Daniel and when he said amen Daniel cried. I knew he was in there trying to wake up. Daniel has always had a tender heart. The ICU doctor told me to keep telling him where he was and what happened so that when he did emerge he would not be scared. We played music and read the Bible. We worshiped and praised God in SICU room 478 until we moved to PCU room 575 and now we are in ABI (acquired brain injury) unit room 240, still praying and waiting on the Lord to renew his strength.

As he began to emerge, he discovered he was in pain. He had sustained injuries to both hands during the accident that required surgery. His first spoken words were “I’m in pain.” We quickly addressed his pain. He developed cardiomyopathy which lead to a dysfunctional heart similar to broken-heart syndrome. We turned to prayer during this development as the cardiologist tinkered with medicines to help this issue. We have been assured this will resolve with time and medications.

Our faith has strengthened us in this time of trial. We know that God is being glorified through this journey. We are praying for continued strength as we relearn a new way to live. I’m still at Daniel’s bedside praying. He develops a health issue and I pray for God to restore him. We are in a facility that specializes in traumatic brain injury. We have prayed to be here and although initially insurance denied us, we prayed over and over while others were praying too and God provided once again.

Our son is awake and fighting to regain strength. He is getting therapy daily. One of the nurses commented to my husband and I that we are extraordinary. She said, “You guys are different, there is no bickering or anger in this room, just love and positivity.” We both told her it was God. We shared all the prayers and #prayfordaniel campaign with her and she stood in awe of our family.

Through this process, Matthew 6:34 is another verse I’m clinging to. This whole wait and see process is a daily process. We have been told by the medical community to think only of today. Do not think about tomorrow or deficits or prognosis or the future. Neurological trauma recovery is a very painstakingly slow and arduous process. Multiple times wait and see meant wait and see today only. For scientific discovery and medical treatments to be so advanced, even they are giving Scripture to their patients and likely without even knowing Matthew 6:34.

We never know what each day will bring. We know our son Daniel’s future is in God’s hands and that is enough for today. We will continue to fight our battles on our knees in prayer. ▲

GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL TRAIL TO recovery

By Jake and Kristina Collins

On August 18, 2006, Jake Collins and his dad Rick Collins were hunting Dall sheep deep in the Wrangell Mountains of Alaska. Jake shot a sheep and then fell off a cliff trying to get over to it. His father was watching below and realized his son's life was in danger. It took him almost two hours to get to Jake to find out if he had survived the fall. He then had to make the gut-wrenching decision to leave him and go for help. Jake suffered a severe traumatic brain injury from his fall. You can find out details about this ordeal at "Trips Gone Bad" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uf-bU7jmDNU>. Below Jake and his wife Kristina tell the story of his recovery.

Proverbs 16:9 – "A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps."



Even though we may get to choose the direction our lives head, we are not in control of the obstacles on that path.

Coming out of a 3-week coma was the beginning of a new life. Everything I had considered valuable about myself had been taken. The once athletic, charismatic, confident and proud self I used to be was gone and in his place was a less-than-functioning man who could not walk, speak clearly or swallow liquids. I did not know it at the time but in mid-August I had fallen off a mountain while sheep hunting in the Wrangell Mountains, in Alaska. My dad saw me fall then he found me unconscious lying in a creek. He would spend most of the next 2 days trying to get help. I cannot do my father justice by trying to type a brief account of the struggle he had to go through in order to save my life, so I won't try. I am alive today because our God gave my dad the strength endurance and wisdom to do what was needed to get me out.

The ardent plans I once had for my life seem so distant and far fetched now. If I could not even walk to the bathroom how could I expect to be a provider? Memories were one of the only things I had to hold onto and at first, and they were sparse. Right away I remembered my wife Kristina (my girlfriend at the time) my close friends and my family. In the coming weeks and months, I slowly gained memories of who I used to be as well. Every time I started to feel depressed or overwhelmed, I was inundated with the love and support of all that were cheering and praying for me. While I was in a coma, my family and friends had taken over the waiting rooms of the hospital and after I woke, I was surrounded by people excited to see me and speak with me. Still, I earnestly wanted to get out of the hospital. I did everything the doctors told me would speed my exodus. I suppose I thought when I got out, I would be better. That I would not have to be ashamed of who I was any more, that things would go back to normal; as if it were being in the hospital that was causing the symptoms of my injury. They told me it would be a long recovery, but I did not really understand what that meant. I thought they were telling me I would be in the hospital for a long time so I thought "I'll show 'em." I took all my therapies seriously and tried to excel at every one. My neurologist said I could not get out until I was back to my pre-accident weight so I circled the entire menu for every meal when the nurses would ask me to pick what I wanted. I ate as constantly as I could stand to. In my free time, that was not taken up with naps, I played card games with friends which helped with my logic and dexterity. I remember right when I woke from my coma, not realizing I was in a hospital and injured, I thought I was in a prison, and I guess that feeling never went away. I remember my mother always being there with me. Others came and went as their schedules allowed but my mom was always there making sure I was not depressed or feeling hopeless. She had my friends and siblings bring items I enjoyed into my hospital room so I would feel more like myself. I remember burned CDs of old country music playing in my room that helped to unlock memories of events I had done in the past. Those new/old memories were so exciting for me, like watching a movie you know you like but you cannot remember how it plays out. I remember her getting my friend Bill to stay the night with me in the hospital and him "sneaking" me out in my wheelchair for walks. I remember my mom telling me stories of me playing basketball in high school after I talked to my coach on the phone one day. In late October I was released to return home. I am convinced I was only able to escape the hospital by the grace of God and the love of my mother, who made sure I was never met with discouragement.

Then just a short while later at my first outpatient visit with my neurologist, I told him I was frustrated with how limited I still was. He told me that it would be a long recovery. It may take up to 10 years or longer before I got back to 100%, and even that just means I am testing at or above average in each testable category. I would probably never be able to do all that I used to. My frustration was gone now I was devastated. I asked Kristina to break up with me because I was embarrassed for her to even be seen with me. She put up with it for a while and tried to encourage me but one day she had enough and in the parking lot of a movie theatre told me something I needed to hear. She said I could go on living my life and be miserable but if I did, I would be pulling her into a life of misery with me because she was NOT going to leave me. She told me that I could settle for doing what the doctors told me, or I could choose to do better. My beautiful sweet and sacrificing wife. We had only been dating for 3 months when I fell off the mountain, but I know that the Lord put her in my life because in my time(s) of weakness I would need her. I am who I am today because the Lord allowed me to recover to the extent I have and because of all the support provided to me; most notably by my wife.

The sharpest prick of painful times is often the isolation that comes with them. We tend to feel abandoned when we are enduring hardship in the ignorance of others. Yet we seem to feel attacked when we are questioned by those that do not understand. However, it is not up to us to accept the comfortable guiding tools of our Lord and reject the tough ones. Let us consider pain for a moment. I can think of only a few tools our God uses more frequently. As an object of education, pain is an effective disciplinarian. Whether emotional, physical or spiritual, pain as a consequence is a good reminder of truth and reality. 2 Peter 3:9 tells us that "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." Instead of requiring me to account for my life when I was unprepared to, God allowed me to be educated through pain. When I was 22 and full of pride, trusting only in myself, I was made helpless. I was left with no choice but to give up or to trust in the Lord. I did not always feel this way, it was not always apparent to me what was to be learned from my injury. And that is when it is easiest to give up. When the consequence or education is obvious, we may feel up to the task of enduring what lies in store for us. How can we expect to rejoice in pain when we do not recognize the benefit from it? In those times we ought to treat pain like a beacon. A signal that we are not yet home. An alert that we are in a broken world full of evil that is fleeing from its Maker. And He has not stopped this world's rebellion because His work is not yet complete. ▲





SHATTERED

By Elisha Richardson

At the age of four, not realizing what was going on at the time that my parents divorced, God was right there with me. When my father was left with my little brother and me, God soon gave me a new mother and big sister.

Growing up in a small town and being home schooled, I grew up sheltered, for which I am very thankful. My dream in life was to marry a Christian man and raise a family and even home school my children. I thought my dream had come true in 2000 when I married a Gospel preacher. I had no idea what being a preacher's wife meant or entailed, but I wanted to learn and do the best I could. We were able to work with the church in Russia, Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. We met so many Christians along the way. God also blessed us with five beautiful children.

In the eleventh year of my marriage, my world came crashing down around me. I found out that the man I married had been committing adultery for several years. Because of the publicity surrounding his adultery, the men of the church where he was preaching at the time, heartsick because they loved him and our family so much, had to let him go from his preaching position. That church eagerly strove to help us spiritually, financially, and physically. They loved us so much and they still wanted us in their lives. They kept our children for us so that we could get help in our marriage, they purchased a vehicle for us, they supplied us with food and even gave my husband a job and provided the money for it.

God has never left me nor forsaken me in my life.



Other Christians called, wrote, and even talked in person to us trying to help our marriage. I was devastated when I finally had to file for divorce.

Even through this horrible experience that my children and I had to endure, God never forsok us. He was there the whole time.

I have learned so much through this journey, even though at times I could not understand why my children and I had to go through it. It felt, at times, as though God had forsaken me. I needed to work on putting all my trust in God and making my faith stronger, because, deep down, I knew that my God loved us, and that He was right there no matter where our lives took us. He promises that He will never leave us and that He will take care of us. He promises that! "Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:3-5). "My soul waits silently for God alone; for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation. He is my defense. I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory, the rock of my strength and my refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times, you people. Pour out your heart before Him. God is a refuge for us" (Psalm 62:5-8). "But the Lord is faithful who will establish you and guard you from the evil one" (2 Thessalonians 3:3). "Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7). "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." (Luke 12:7) "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10) He must be the center of everything in our lives. Without Him nothing else matters.

I had to learn to be content about where God put my children and me and what He gave us. I no longer had my own home, I was not married, our home was broken, and I ended up having to live with my parents again. Although there was a lot to be thankful for in all that, there were times I struggled with being content and happy when I saw other people getting married, getting their own homes, thriving. There were times when I felt like there was no hope, that I was suffocating to death. That's when I had to stop and reevaluate what God had done for me and my children, and thank Him, casting all my cares on Him. "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5). "Now godliness with contentment is great gain . . . And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (1 Timothy 6:6, 8). "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own

things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matthew 6:34).

I learned to increase my prayer and Bible study so that my faith would get stronger. "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6). "Continue earnestly in prayer being vigilant in it with thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:2). "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit; being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18). "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

I also learned that the church are truly God's people. God brought so many Christians into our lives who loved us and took care of us. So many have cried with us, prayed with us, and financially helped us. Because of God's people, we never went without anything that we needed. Now that my children and I live with my parents, the church we had to leave still provide some financial gifts and keep in touch with us. They truly are a blessing from God. Our family loves them dearly. The church is one big way that God helps us get through our trials. We need to be there for each other. I don't know where I would be now without such support. Because of one of my biggest support groups—my parents—God has allowed me to still live part of my dream: being able to stay home with my children and school them. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." (Philippians 2:4). "Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well being" (1 Corinthians 10:24). "A friend loves at all times" (Proverbs 17:17).

Although I have learned so much, I still have not arrived. I still struggle. Some days are great, but there are still days that are hard. I struggle with contentment, with remembering that God is there and that I am supposed to cast all my cares upon Him; that Heaven is my goal. I still struggle with letting go of pride and asking for help. But I want to encourage others to go to the Scriptures to find comfort and encouragement and to go to the church for support. And I want to encourage the church, also, to support those who are going through troubling times.

My prayer for all—including myself—who face trials and temptations, persecutions and shattered homes and lives is that they put God first, and remember that He will get us to the other side of what we face.

Remember: He will never leave us nor forsake us. ▲



Children are very inquisitive. They ask a lot of questions. How do airplanes fly? Why do I have to sit still? How long will it take to get to Grandma's house? But perhaps the most perplexing question they ask is, what does God look like? We say, "I don't know," a response that does nothing to satisfy their insatiable curiosity.

Consequently, children imagine scenes of a very gentle, old man. As they grow into adulthood, they still wonder what God looks like.

The Bible actually gives us a picture of God. Isaiah revealed what he saw when God called him to be a prophet, "I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!'"

Scripture further unlocks the mystery about our Creator. These are intangible things, true enough, but God looks like:

- **Power.** The word *omnipotent* means all powerful. There is none other like God! The first chapters of Genesis begin to describe the incomparable power of the Creator. He spoke things into existence. He formed man from the dust of the earth. He formed woman from a rib taken from Adam's side. Every part of God's handiwork reveals design. It logically follows that if there was masterful design, there must be a Master Designer!

- **Knowledge.** God is omniscient, all knowing. The Psalmist wrote, "O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways . . . For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it (Ps. 139:1-6).

- **Presence.** God is omnipresent, He is everywhere. "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence . . . If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall fall on me,' Even the night shall be light about me; Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You" (Psalm 139:7-12).

- **Spirit.** Jesus explained to the woman at the well, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24).

- **Majesty.** The Psalmist gives a glimpse of what He looks like, "Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty (Psalm 104:1).

- **Light.** When Jesus spoke to the people, He said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12).

- **Love.** The apostle John said, "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John 4:9). He went on, "And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them" (1 John 4:16).

- **Holy.** Holiness does not allow for any sin that would stain the soul. Peter said, "But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:15-16).

- **Compassion, grace, and long-suffering.** The Psalmist spoke of these, "But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth" (Psalm 86:15).

- **Mercy.** The Psalmist declared twenty-six times that God's mercy endures forever. "Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever" (Psalm 136:1).

- **Forgiveness.** Paul preached, "Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you" (Acts 13:38).

- **Wisdom.** "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33, 43-44).

What does God look like? He is Protector, Goodness, Sovereignty, Faithfulness, Righteousness, Listener, Defender, Refuge, Foundation, Provider, Just, Eternal, and much, much more. We have only touched the hem of His glorious garment! ▲

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Matthew 7:1 Re-Examined: **JUDGE NOT, LEST YE BE JUDGED**

Jesus preached, in the Sermon on the Mount, “Judge not, that ye be not judged” (Matthew 7:1, KJV). But what did He mean by that? Did He mean His followers should never criticize some-one else’s behavior? Did He mean we should all just “mind our own business”? How can we call the world to repent if we are not supposed to criticize sinful behavior? And at what point does it become “judging”? Let’s consider this passage in context.

How It Is Often Used

It seems to me, this passage is often used defensively. One person will say to another, “That’s a sin; you shouldn’t do that.” The second person will defend himself by saying, “You can’t judge me. Don’t you know Jesus said not to judge?”

Rather than actually stopping to consider, “Is my behavior wrong?” people turn the tables on their accusers and accuse them of doing wrong. But is this how Jesus intended for this passage to be used? Did He intend for us to use His words as a shield against rebuke and admonishment?

How It Is Often Ignored

On the other hand, many Christians recognize how this passage is misinterpreted and misused, but instead of interpreting and applying it correctly, they simply dismiss it. I’ve seen countless conversations that go like this:

“What you’re doing is sinful.”

“Well, Jesus said, ‘Judge not.’ You have no right to judge me.”

“That’s not what Jesus meant. He also said, ‘Judge with righteous judgment.’ So I’m supposed to judge you.”

Not so fast! Jesus really did say, “Judge not.” So let’s discuss what He meant and how it applies to our lives today.

What the Passage Means

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is primarily indicting the hypocrisy of people like the Pharisees (see Matthew 5:20). The Pharisees were people of double standards. They were people who appeared to be keeping the Law, but were really twisting the Law to suit their own purposes and to use it as a weapon against others.

They were very big on religious traditions and ceremonies. They were very big on keeping up appearances. They prayed, fasted, tithed, and performed purification rituals. But they also perverted justice and neglected mercy. And one of the things that makes God angry—perhaps the thing that makes Him most angry—is “religious” people who neglect the poor and vulnerable.

The Pharisees judged tax collectors and prostitutes, who came repentantly to Jesus, as being unworthy of the kingdom of God. But Jesus let them know that it was actually them, the religious elite, who were unworthy of God’s kingdom. With that in mind, listen to the Messiah’s words:

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.”

The judgment of the Pharisees was wrong for at least two reasons:

1. They judged by their own standards.

2. They were hypocrites.

The Pharisees judged by their own traditions and twisted interpretations of the Scriptures. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus corrected their misinterpretations and misapplications of the Law. He was helping them to see how their standard of judgment was wrong. They were wrong for saying things like, “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy” (Matthew 5:43).

Furthermore, the Pharisees were “hypocrites.” Meaning, they had the appearance of being one thing, but they were really another. They tithed herbs from their garden, but “neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness” (Matthew 23:23). They had a huge beam in their eye, but were more concerned about the tiny little speck in their brother’s eye.

How to Apply This Passage

We need a mighty big dose of Jesus’s words today! Aren’t we guilty of being far too similar to the Pharisees?

- Don’t we have double standards?
- Don’t we give ourselves the benefit of the doubt, while assuming the worst about others?
- Don’t we judge people based on religious traditions and Biblical speculation?
- Don’t we get all caught up in matters of religious ceremony and ritual, while neglecting the weightier matters of justice, mercy, and faithfulness?

Don’t be quick to dismiss this passage. When you accuse someone of wrong doing and they turn around and accuse you of judging, consider whether or not they might be right. Are you trying to bind your own standards and traditions on them? Are you being a hypocrite? Are you being entirely too harsh and critical?

How NOT to Apply This Passage

With all of this said, don’t use this passage as a defense against judgment. Jesus actually invited people to judge Him. He knew He was in the right and told people if they judged Him with right judgment, they would see He was in the right (see John 7:14-24).

But sometimes you are not in the right. Sometimes you need to be corrected, admonished, and criticized, don’t you? I know I do. Sometimes I have a beam in my eye, or even just a speck, and I need someone to point it out to me.

As people who want to do what is right, we need to accept criticism and judgment if it is based on the truth of God’s Word. Listen to the words of Proverbs 12:1, “Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.” Instead of telling people not to judge you, why don’t you just start asking whether or not their judgment is right? If you’re being judged unfairly, ignore it. If you’re being judged rightly, repent. ▲

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OFFENDED

We live in a world where people get offended a lot. It seems worse now that social media and the mainstream media are able to publicize everything to the world with just a push of a button. When someone gets upset about something, or someone's opinion, they tend to derail. They get offended and then begin to express why their opinion is more important than the other person's.

A lot of times people get offended easily because they believe the comment was directed straight towards them. Even though it wasn't, there is a guilty part of that person's mind that thinks that it is them. They feel that they are being spoken to directly and in turn it hurts their feelings.

People back down to the truth in a lot of scenarios. They are afraid that they will hurt someone's feelings so they don't point out things that can be potentially helpful for others.

We see this type of action a lot in the church today. Preachers are afraid to step on the toes of the members of the church because they don't want to hurt them. From experience, I have seen more people respond to the Lord's invitation when someone is stepping on their toes than when they are not. Why? Because the obvious has been pointed out to them and there is a guilty part in them that knows that what they are doing is wrong. Although the preacher was not directly speaking to them, they know that they need Him.

Do we need to stop saying or doing something just because someone is offended? Absolutely not. Jesus offended people often. Did He stop? Did His actions of offending people stop him from preaching and teaching the truth? When a person takes offense to something, a lot of the times, it

tells much more about the heart of that person rather than the one who offended them.

In John, Jesus was preaching and during His sermon, He stopped to ask one simple question, "Does this offend you?" (John 6:61). Did Jesus stop and change the message He was preaching because the crowd was offended? Did He soften up His words to avoid any more confrontation? No. Jesus didn't. As a matter of fact, He kept preaching and then went on to add even more to His sermon.

Christians should work on spreading God's Word. Make sure it is the truth. Point out things that are not scriptural and stand firm on what you believe. People that live in sin or have dishonest hearts will always be offended when others share the truth.

We should always strive to be Christlike. Do not go out looking to offend people just to make them mad. There are ways to bring them to the truth without tearing them apart. Social media is a good tool to help spread the truth. You will offend people but you will also open the eyes of others. Stand firm on your beliefs and make sure they align with what Christ teaches.

If you have been offended in any way and what you were offended by is in line with the values of Christ, please take the time to rethink what is important in your life.

If this article has offended anyone, I will pray that your eyes will open up to what God wants for you. ▲

God Is Good . . .



Sunday Go-To-Meeting “Christianity”

Many things are actually much simpler than we think. One example of this truth in real life involves applying the principle of Cause and Effect. This law of physics generally holds true in everyday life. Therefore, the reason a model of Sunday-Go-To-Meeting Christianity often finds a significant presence is because we encourage it and nurture its continuing existence. Cause and effect in action.

How do we encourage this, you might likely ask? We encourage this model through our fascination with attendance numbers. We are excited by big Sunday morning numbers! We want to be completely full. We try to beat previous benchmarks. We set numeric goals for special events. We compare congregations by how many they have on a Sunday morning. In short, we give the impression, whether we mean to or not, that people in the pew is how we measure success. Large numbers mean we are doing well!

Adding reinforcement to this mindset, when the question is asked about whether or not a person is faithful, the response is frequently expected to deal with whether or not they regularly sit on a pew.

Actually, discipleship is what ought to get our primary attention. Discipleship is, after all, what Jesus has commanded (Matthew 28:18-20). In this emphasis, He actually had a crowd reduction model we might well call “discipleship” (John 6:15-69). Apparently, Jesus wasn’t simply a numbers man.

Consider this, if the tally board says 300, how many of these are faithfully pursuing Christlikeness (the essence of discipleship)? First, subtract

children. Next, subtract Sunday-Go-To-Meeting Christians (not meaning those who otherwise cannot attend). Now, subtract those for whom Jesus is not the first priority in their life (i.e. disciples). Ouch!

Do our congregations expect discipleship? Can the way we pursue discipleship reasonably be expected to create a culture of discipleship? If not, what might we otherwise reasonably expect? We should reasonably expect what we commonly get because what we get is in place for a reason; it is the result of what we do.

Jerrie Barber has a question he asks when he works with congregations looking to resolve a problem. He asks, “What is it about your problem that you like?” When the answer is, “We don’t like it,” He says, “You like it better than what you would need to do to solve it.” He is, of course, correct. We do what we want to, even when we don’t necessarily like it. The alternatives are things we like even less.

In this, remember that **Jesus calls us to rest**. Discipleship isn’t wearisome or laborious as long as we fully embrace it. Our adopting a reasonable discipleship/Christlikeness model isn’t intended to run people over, it is intended to bring about the rest of true transformation. “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30). ▲

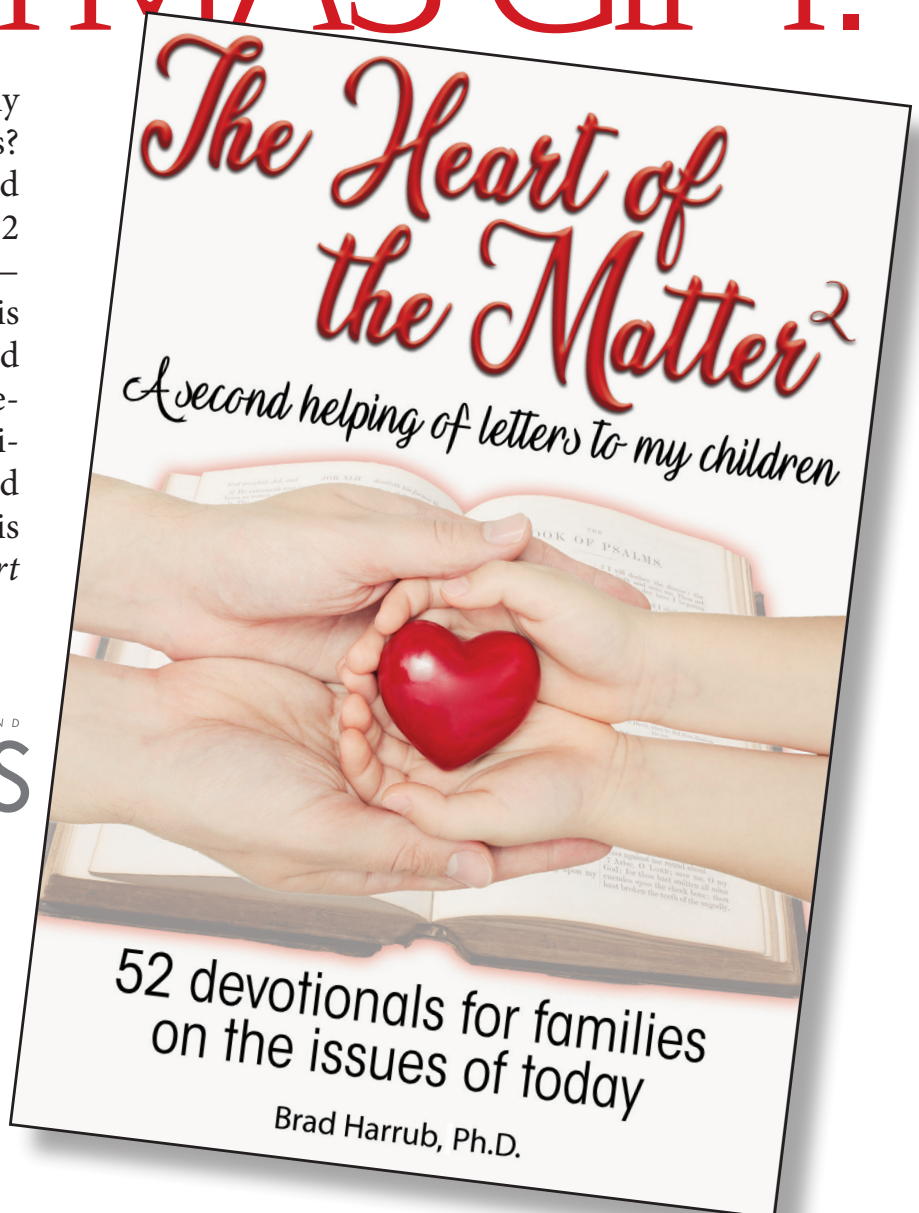
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Season Your Words

Having looked into the tearful eyes of parents whose children have abandoned the Faith, I have learned there are a million miles between our children “going through the motions” in reference to their spiritual lives versus our children possessing hearts that dictate their actions. In this column, I plan to share with you what I hope to instill in the hearts of my own children and those whom I love.

“Stick and stones may break some bones but words will never hurt me.” I can remember those words from elementary school, but had no idea then just how wrong those words were.

Words can sting. They can hurt deeply. Words have the ability to build someone up, but they can also tear down.

How many individuals have walked away from the church simply because of the words that left someone’s mouth. I recently met a woman who visited the church decades ago, but left after hearing a church member say, “She’s only coming here for the free food.” It took her more than 20 years before she was willing to enter a church building again.

Maybe it’s a comment on what someone was wearing. Maybe it is a comment on how someone parents. Maybe it was an unkind comment made to someone else about you that eventually found its way to your ears. Or maybe it’s constructive criticism that was delivered too harshly at the wrong time. Or maybe it’s just someone venting and you happen to be the one who received all his or her steam. Whatever it may be, the fact of the matter is words can hurt.

Here’s what I intend on teaching my children about seasoning their speech.

Oh, if I had a dollar for every time we had to remind you to say kind things to your siblings I could retire a wealthy man. Do you remember how it felt when your siblings would say mean things to you (i.e., “You don’t know anything.” “You are soooo dumb.”). Remember how you wanted to lash out and say something mean back? Well stop for a moment and imagine if those hurtful words had never been said to begin with. Colossians 4:6 says “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”

Sadly, sometimes we use our mouths to hurt the ones we love the most. The Bible is crystal clear that we should be using our words for good and not tearing down. Paul admonished, “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29). In Proverbs 18:21 we find a father reminding his son, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.” Just three chapters later he wrote, “Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles” (Proverbs 21:23).

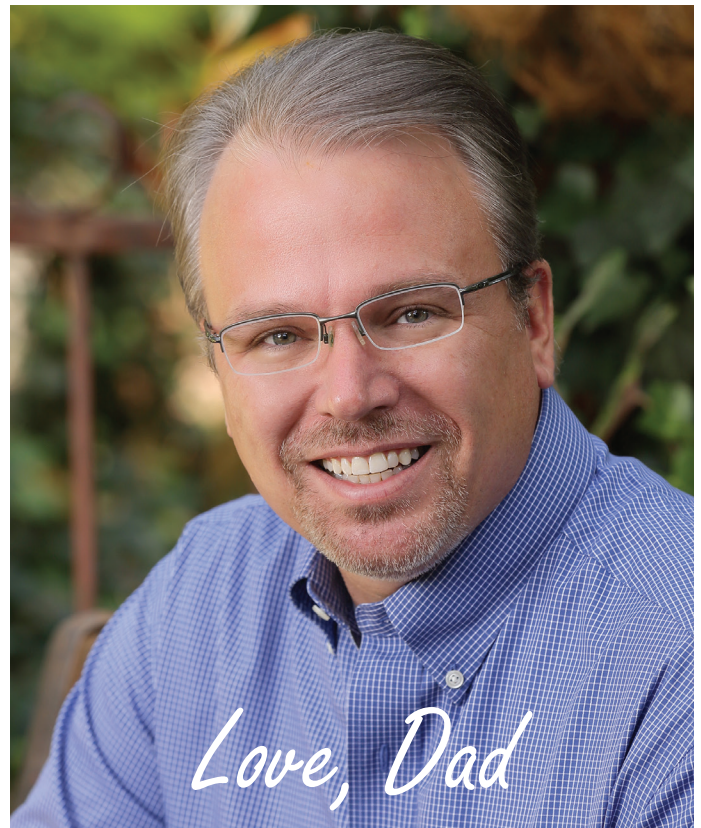
Ask yourself this: Do you like to be around people who say mean things to you? Do you seek them out to be near? An honest person will say, “No!” We don’t like being around people who hurt us with words.

Now take that thought into your Christian walk. Do you think lost people want to hear about God’s Word from someone who is constantly criticizing, belittling, complaining, or tearing others down? Matthew 12:36-37 says, “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Learn to control your tongue. Go back and study James 3. You need to watch what words come out of your mouth (and are posted on social media). Because words can hurt.

My prayer is that you will use your words to encourage and build up others. I love Proverbs 12:18 that says, “Here is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise **promotes** (or *brings* — *BH*) health.”

Stay humble and chose your words wisely. If you can do this, your words will impact the souls of many people in the future. ▲



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