

mtl

MORE TO LIFE

Fall 2017 Issue

3 Steps Out of the Quit Pit

**WHAT IS
WORSHIP?**

*7 Style Secrets
You Need to Know*

Chonda Pierce

Behind the Humor

mtlmagazine.com

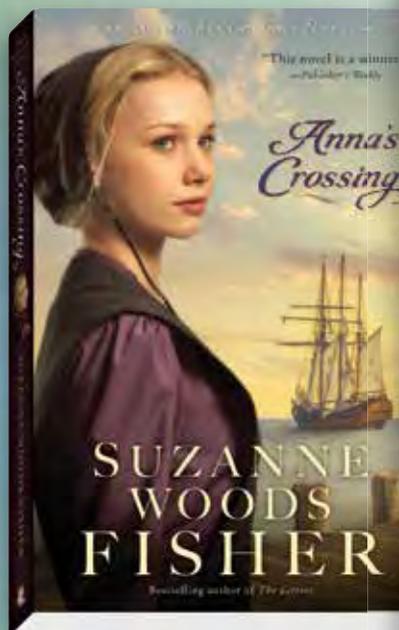
SRP of \$4.95 US



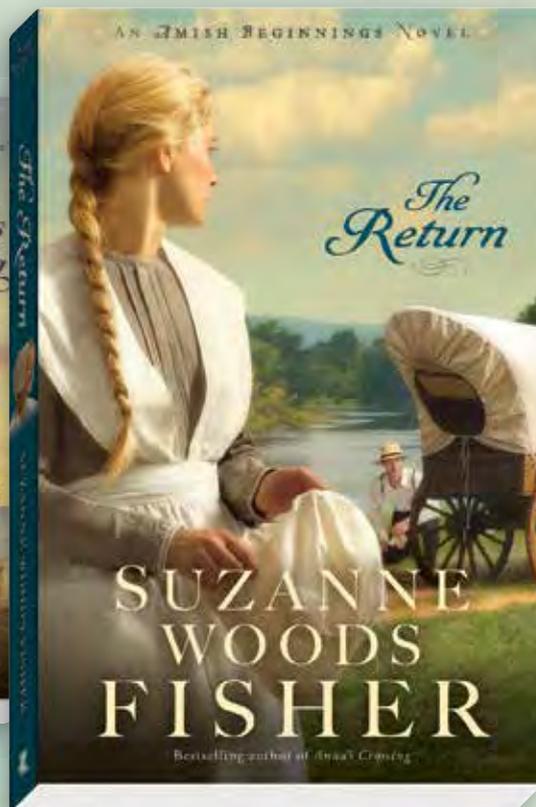
5 68516 20165 1

“Those who summon the courage to read about the *raw immigrant experience* on this treacherous crossing will find a deeply satisfying story of *conviction and hope*.”

—Booklist on *Anna's Crossing*



A young Amish woman fends off the matchmaking efforts of her fellow passengers on the *Charming Nancy*—the ship that brought the first wave of Amish to America in 1737.



As the Amish settle in America, Tessa wishes Hans would notice her. When tragedy strikes—close to home and close to her heart—she discovers the cost of true love. Available August 2017.



As the first Amish in America settle in Pennsylvania, Bairn and Anna's shipboard romance is tested by a newcomer—and a place full of new possibilities.

Visit SuzanneWoodsFisher.com for more information!



mtl contents

ON THE COVER



10 *3 Steps Out of the Quit Pit*
by Jennifer Rothschild

20 *7 Style Secrets You Need to Know*
by Shari Braendel



68 *What is Worship?*
by Laura Story



42

CHONDA PIERCE
An Emmy-nominated and bestselling comedian, television hostess, author and actress, Chonda has channeled her life experiences into positivity, bringing laughter to audiences around the country.



 my life

14 Running with Endurance
with Sanya Richards-Ross

 my world

28 Is Your Phone Distracting You from Others?
by Arlene Pellicane

**32 One Shoebox Can Jumpstart
a Journey to Christ**

 my money

38 Ensure a Bright Financial Future for Your Child
by Ron Blue & Karen Guess

 my health

48 Raising a Child with Down Syndrome
by Heather Avis

52 Carried through Cancer
by Victoria Jackson

 my home

60 A Touch of Fall
by KariAnne Wood

64 5 Ways to Detox Your House
by Jacqueline Ritz

 my faith

72 6 Stops Along the Road to Renewal
by Ellen Miller

 my family

78 Is Your Child Ready for School?
by Sissy Goff

82 Navigating Difficult Firsts for Your Daughter
by Wynter & Jonathan Pitts

86 How to Have "The Talk"
by Josh Mulvihill

90 The Road to Success is Paved with Failure
by Jim Daly

 my relationships

94 Making the Most of the Moments You Have
by Nichole Nordeman

98 Unforgiveness is a Prison You Choose
by John Finch

102 Seasons of Life
by Cynthia Ruchti



In Every Issue

18 The Only Way
26 FOMO: Fear of Missing Out
36 Gift Guide
56 Fall Recipes

76 Mom Moments with Dannah
106 Ordinary Women,
Extraordinary Lives

AUTHENTIC INSIGHTS FOR TEENS



★ **TRUSTED** ★
for 15 years

REVISED TO BE
= **RELEVANT** =
TODAY



Updated for this generation, the best-selling *NIV True Images Bible* and *NIV Revolution Bible* are packed with tools and insight to help teens navigate today's contemporary cultural issues with confidence, love, and grace.

READ A SAMPLE, TAKE QUIZZES, AND VIEW TIPS AT:

www.NIVbiblesforteens.com

NIV™

ZONDERVAN®

NEW WORSHIP ALBUM FROM GATEWAY
MONUMENTS

NEW WORSHIP ALBUM FROM GATEWAY



*every miracle
every step of faith*

*every victory rises up to you
we are the Monuments of your faithfulness*

NEW WORSHIP ALBUM FROM GATEWAY

FULL ALBUM AVAILABLE
SEPTEMBER 15TH



Letter from the Editor



In most parts of the country, cooler weather is on its way. And many gladly welcome the change with pumpkin spice lattes in hand. But what about changes in life?

That can be a different story. Feeling upset, overwhelmed or afraid are common emotions we all face when things don't go as we had planned. But when we react that way, what we're really doing is doubting that God's plan is best. Ouch.

"As for God, His way is perfect: The Lord's word is flawless; He shields all who take refuge in Him" (Psalm 18:30).

By trusting what we know is true—God and His Word—rather than our circumstances, we can choose to appreciate a new season in life for what it is—an opportunity designed by God.

Someone who knows that better than most is our cover girl, award-winning comedian Chonda Pierce. Laughter is the best medicine, and Chonda shares how she finds humor and hope in the hard times.

If you have children at home, you will undoubtedly experience your fair share of changes. How do you handle those? You'll want to check out the articles in the Family section—articles about gauging the emotional, social and spiritual well-being of your child, navigating firsts and allowing your child to learn from failure.

Of course, sometimes we're ready for change. To help you enjoy the moment you're in, singer and songwriter Nichole Nordeman offers a personal piece "Now and Next: Making the Most of the Moments You Have" that you can easily relate to.

And in "Seasons of Life" on page 102, author Cynthia Ruchti equips you to plan for change as you consider the various aspects of caring for your aging parents.

The best change you can make though is a healthy change. One of my favorite ways to do that is through home improvement. Whether it's decorating or detoxing, the articles in the Home section will inspire you to make your home a better place.

Whatever transition you may be in, we hope the articles in this edition of MTL will encourage you as you head into this next season.



OWNERS: Robert & Martha Munce

PRESIDENT: Kirk David Blank

EDITOR: Andrea Stock

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Mike Solava

ADVERTISING & CONTENT DIRECTOR: Sue Brewer

ACCOUNTING: Ania Hansen

CONTRIBUTORS

Katrina Cassel

Tracy Higley

Chelsea Crockett

Dannah Gresh

Shari Braendel

Dianne Neal Matthews

Mary Manz Simon

Lori Wildenberg

Linda Wood Rondeau

David Ferguson

Angela Breidenbach

Terri Snead

Karen Whiting

Janet Perez Eckles

Lane P. Jordan

EDITORIAL OFFICES

200 West Bay Drive, Largo, Florida 33770

P: 727.596.7625 F: 727.593.3523

letters@mtlmagazine.com

Reproduction in whole or in part, without written permission, is strictly prohibited.

Comments on this issue? We welcome your feedback and ideas for consideration in future issues.

Please send comments to: info@mtlmagazine.com

For more information regarding the products featured in MTL magazine, visit your local Christian retailer or mtlbookstore.com

Copyright © 2017 Munce Marketing. All rights reserved.

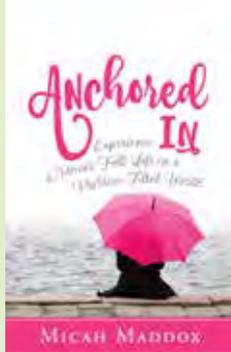
Book Picks

Find God's Power in the Deepest Places of Life

Anchored In: Experience a Power-Full Life in a Problem-Filled World

by Micah Maddox

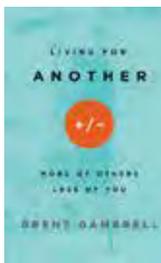
Anchored In isn't a book of Christian clichés or sweet stories to warm the heart but rather an authentic look at the hard parts of life. It challenges us to stop running from and clinging to the past, and to grasp tightly to the only unshakable Anchor that is able to sustain our souls through the storms of life. Living anchored in God's presence is a beautiful gift that few truly experience simply because they do not understand the key to God's power – surrender. Through simple, tangible steps, learn to surrender in every season of life.



"When heartbreaking seasons shake us to our core, we often grab for everything other than God. But Micah tenderly reminds us page after page that Jesus is the only true Anchor who will hold us, steady us, and bring us through to the other side of every storm."

—**Lysa TerKeurst**, *New York Times* bestselling author and president of Proverbs 31 Ministries

Think Differently

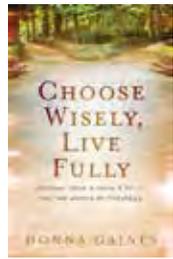


Living for Another: More of Others, Less of You

by Brent Gambrell

In society we see a lot of disconnection and “me-monsters.” But Christ teaches that we were made to intentionally pour our lives out to others, and in so doing we will be fulfilled and have abundant life. This book helps us embrace that philosophy and explores the heart of the Father, the life of the Son, and offers an example of someone who put this attitude into action. We can course correct to live a life that pleases the One who gave his life for us.

Embark on a Journey of Faithfulness



Choose Wisely, Live Fully: Lessons from Wisdom & Folly, the Two Women of Proverbs

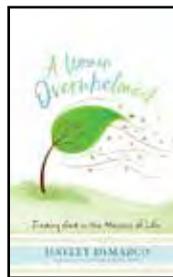
by Donna Gaines

Author and speaker Donna Gaines applies the wisdom of Proverbs in very practical ways to the issues women face. *Choose Wisely, Live Fully* examines the blessings and curses associated with the choices made by the two women in Proverbs. This book is a wonderful discipleship tool that will equip you to: discern the voice of God and follow his clear path between Wisdom and Folly; experience the joy of wholehearted obedience; and let God help you to mentor the lives around you in remarkable ways. A free downloadable resource on how to offer a mentoring program to help other women in their walk of faith is available online.*

“I love the Book of Proverbs. It weaves deep theology with the kind of practical handles a guy like me needs every single day. That’s also why I love *Choose Wisely, Live Fully*. Donna Gaines does a great job balancing the unvarnished truth of Scripture with real-life application. That powerful combination can change your life—and the lives of those you love.”

—**Dave Ramsey**, best-selling author and nationally syndicated radio show host

Discover the Ultimate Stress Reliever



A Woman Overwhelmed: Finding God in the Messes of Life

by Hayley DiMarco

Learn to focus on what we know about God to help hold onto faith even when it seems that all is lost. DiMarco shares biblical insights and personal stories to offer a glimpse at the comedy of an overwhelmed life and offers encouragement to discover the greatness of, and freedom in, God's love and power that is truly overwhelming. A companion Bible study focused on what Mary, Jesus' mother, can teach us about an overwhelmed life is also available.

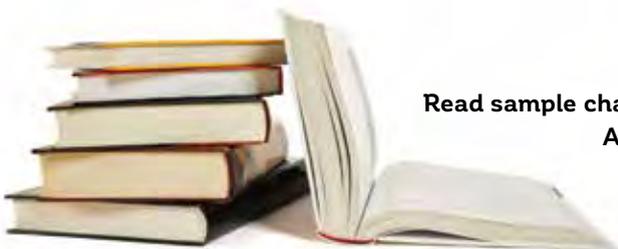
Be Inspired by History



Godspeed: Voices of the Reformation

by David Teems

This 365-day devotional, that commemorates the 500th anniversary of the Protestant reformation, features the words of prominent reformers, including Martin Luther, William Tyndale, John Calvin, and others, thoughtfully illuminated with both historical precision and charm.



Read sample chapters and download a free mentor guide* at:

AbingdonPress.com/MTLFall17

 **Abingdon Press**
Growing in Life, Serving in Faith



3 Steps Out of the Quit Pit

by Jennifer Rothschild

It was way past 10:00 P.M. when I found my high schooler, Clayton, lying on his floor. He was supposed to be finishing a big English project.

“What’s going on?” I asked in disbelief. “What about your portfolio? Are you already done?”

All I heard was a groan. “Oh. Ugh. Mom, I’m just overwhelmed. This is too much. I’m too tired. There’s not enough time. I just can’t do it.”

He was paralyzed by his project. It seemed bigger than he was; and instead of forging forward, he was ready to quit. I got down on the floor with him, feeling helpless to motivate him—and tempted to wring his neck! This child didn’t just need motivation, he needed a miracle! No pep talk from Mom would change a thing for him that night. And that’s the raw, hard truth.

Sometimes we just get low on hope and dogged by failure. We’ve all been there. When motivation is running on fumes, we just want to throw in the towel, or the portfolio! We can tell ourselves a million times, “You can do it!” We can hear the cheers of others telling us, “You can do it, you can do it!” But, when we don’t think we can do it and are falling deep into the quit pit, we need more than happy talk.

We need a first step out of our dilemma.

So, here’s the way I made perseverance practical for him that night—and it’s the way I make it practical for me too. If you are stuck in a quit pit, tie your shoes and get ready to move!

1. Turn Your Feelings into Action

If you feel overwhelmed because a project is due, do the project. Yes, I know that sounds too simple. But sometimes real answers are simple. If a particular circumstance intimidates you, take a deep breath and confront it. Instead of ruminating about your feelings, do something—even if it seems like a

small, inconsequential something. Get off the floor. Pick up a pen. Lift your chin. Open a document on your computer, and type the first word. Be like Peter getting out of the boat and walking on the storm-churned sea. He threw one leg over the edge of the boat and put his full weight on H₂O—his eyes locked on Jesus.

I know this sounds simple, but just because it is simple doesn’t mean it is easy. Through God’s strength, you can do that one thing! You can trust Him for the first step to get you going in the direction you need to go. Then, you can trust Him for the next and the next and the next!

Steady, small actions will slowly reduce the big feeling that is paralyzing you. All feelings are real, but they aren’t all based on reality, and they certainly aren’t all productive. You may feel like you can’t do it, but that feeling is not a fact. Instead of spending more of your precious emotional energy lying on the floor and pondering how overwhelmed you feel, lock your eyes on Jesus and take a step!

Write a to-do list, and then do one thing on that list. Do what you dread; tackle the very thing that terrifies you. Turn your feelings into action.

2. Affirm Your True Identity

Recognize that who you are and what you struggle with are not the same thing. You may struggle with fear or staying motivated, but that doesn’t mean you are a scaredy-cat or lazy! You are not how you feel. Just because you have failed at something doesn’t mean you are a failure. As Reggie Jackson put it, “Home run hitters strike out a lot.”

Your true identity is a child of God! You are a daughter or son of the King, and when you grasp that powerful truth, it is who you are that will define you, not what you do.

continued on page 12 >>

Identity statements will always begin with “I am.” “I am” is not the same as “I feel.” Find Scriptures that express your identity and remind yourself of those truths!



Don't let feelings define you; let who you are define your feelings. Acknowledge how you feel, but affirm who you are.

3. Feed the Truth, Starve the Lies

A wise penguin in the movie *Happy Feet* said that “triumph is just trying with a little oomph!” I love that. In *The Spiritual Life*, Walter Elliott wrote, “Perseverance is not a long race; it is many short races, one after another.” Both the author and the penguin make a wise point. What you invest in pays off. In other words, what you feed grows, and conversely, what you starve dies.

If you continue to feed your feelings of failure and defeat, those dark emotions will grow, creeping across your soul like long winter shadows. If you continue to feed your low self-esteem with “I can't” or “It's too hard for me,” your low self-esteem will grow. But if you begin to starve those lies, they will slowly die.

So, how do you starve those lies and unproductive feelings? Feed the truth instead. When you feel a big “I can't” coming on, starve it by showering it with the truth: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). When you feel like giving up, starve that thought by drowning it with the truth: “We are not of those who shrink back” (Hebrews 10:39).

We can refuse the lies, replace them with truth, and then repeat the process for as long as it takes.

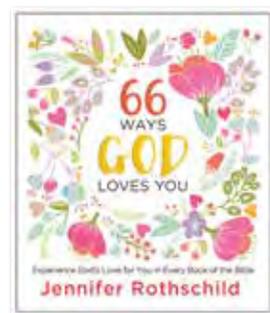
What are you feeding down there in the quit pit? “I can't do it.” “It's too hard.” “I'm not good enough.” Is it time for you to withhold nutrition and let those damaging lies die?

No matter what you are facing, you can take steps of perseverance and show that thing who is boss! Turn your unproductive feelings into productive action, affirm who you really are, act on it and never stop telling yourself the truth—starve those lies one truth at a time! Before you know it, the portfolio is done (yes, it was and he got a B), the challenge is met, the conflict is over, the project is finished and the quit pit is in your rearview mirror. 

For more from Jennifer Rothchild, check out *Me, Myself, & Lies* on mtlbookstore.com

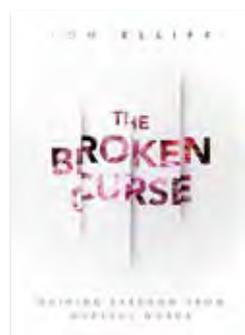
Jennifer Rothchild is a recovering perfectionist who has learned to live beyond limits ever since her life drastically changed at the age of 15, when she lost her sight. Now, more than 30 years later, as a speaker and author of 15 books, Jennifer travels internationally, offering fresh, grounded, biblical truth to audiences who, like her, are determined to pursue healthy and fulfilling lives in spite of their circumstances.

Related Products:



66 Ways God Loves You
Jennifer Rothchild,
\$14.99

She Reads Truth Bible, CSB
\$39.99



The Broken Curse
Tom Elliff, \$14.99

don't forget...



1.

2. **National Coloring Book Day**
Coloring is not just for kids anymore. Find a coloring book and pull out your colored pencils.

3.

4. **U.S. Coast Guard Day**
National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day

5.

6. **Friendship Day**
Take time to let a friend know what he or she means to you. Today is also Sister's Day. Sometimes your sister is your best friend.

7.

8.

9.

10.

12. **National Garage Sale Day**
It's a good day to clear out some clutter. Consider donating your profits to a mission project.

13. **National Lefthander's Day**
Did you know there have been eight left-handed presidents?
James A. Garfield (1831 - 1881) 20th
Herbert Hoover (1874 - 1964) 31st
Harry S. Truman (1884 - 1972) 33rd
Gerald Ford (1913 - 2006) 38th
Ronald Reagan (1911 - 2004) 40th
George H.W. Bush (1924 -) 41st
Bill Clinton (1946 -) 42nd
Barack Obama (1961 -) 44th

14.

15. **National Relaxation Day**
Use your downtime to read the latest book by your favorite author.

16.

17. **National Thrift Shop Day**
Your local thrift shop might be the perfect place to pick up some used books to read.

18.

19. **National Honey Bee Awareness Day**
Be sure to include honey in your meal plan for today.



20.

21.

22.

23.

AUGUST

24.

25.

26. **Mother Teresa's Birthday**
Born in Yugoslavia, she founded a religious order of nuns in Calcutta, India, known as the Missionaries of Charity. She devoted her life to helping the poor in India. What one good deed can you do today?



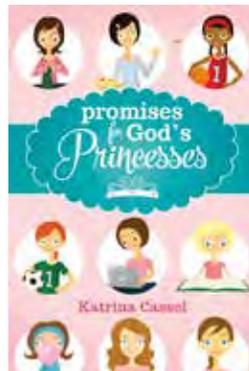
27.

28.

29.

31.

30. **National Grief Awareness Day**
There is no timeline for grief, but sharing it aids healing. Journal or talk to a friend.



For more from Katrina Cassel, check out *Promises for God's Princesses* on mtlbookstore.com



Running with Endurance

with Sanya Richards-Ross

As a nine-year-old girl in Jamaica, Sanya Richards-Ross dreamed of becoming an Olympic track star.

When a track coach spotted her potential during a field day at school, she began by running shorter sprints, doing well in the 100- and 200-meter. Then in high school, her dad suggested she train for the 400-meter.

The 400-meter race is a quarter of a mile or one whole lap of the track. Usually it is considered the toughest race on the track because it is a long sprint. As Sanya explains, “It’s like an endurance race, but you’re trying to sprint the whole way. It’s really tough on the body.”

Sanya ended up breaking the national record the very first time she ran the 400-meters indoor. And that’s when she found her stride.

In the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Sanya scored the fastest time in the qualifying rounds for the 400 and was favored to win. She went on to win gold in every race that year—except the 400.

“I was absolutely devastated,” she recalls.

For the 2010 Olympics, Sanya took a break to address health issues, to train and to marry her college sweetheart and professional football player Aaron Ross.

Then came the 2012 London games. Sanya competed again in the 400. This time, she won gold.

“To come back in 2012 and be able to accomplish this goal I’ve had since I was nine years old was by far the best moment of my career. I had wanted to win that race for so long,” Sanya says.

After her victory at the Olympics, she had surgery for the first time on the joint in her toe. According to Sanya, over the years of running, especially running on the curve, she had put so much pressure on the right inside foot that she had worn down all the cartilage in her joint.

Within those two years, she had multiple surgeries that enabled her to run on it again, but not without a lot of pain.

The real Achilles heel, however, happened three weeks before the 2016 Olympic trials when Sanya pulled her hamstring. Although she needed six weeks to recover from the hamstring, she went to the Olympic trials and competed in the first round, knowing it would be her final race.

“It was a bittersweet moment,” Sanya recalls. “I tried to execute my race the way I have so many times before.

continued on page 16 >>



But I could feel that hamstring not allowing me to switch gears to run the first part of the race as aggressively as I usually do. So, as I ran down the back stretch, I was starting to lose ground. And about midway in the race, I stopped running. And I've never actually stopped running. I remember kind of hanging my head down and feeling really disappointed. I knew I probably wouldn't make the Olympic team, but when it really happens, it's crushing. I'd been successful every other time in the Olympic trials."

But something happened in that moment. Sanya says a woman yelled out to her, "We love you, Sanya!"

"[That] literally brought me back to the moment," she shares. "And as I jogged off the track, the entire stadium gave me a standing ovation. That kind of love and appreciation for my career made me feel better."

Although Sanya has been fortunate to win a lot more races than she's lost in her career, she can relate to moments of disappointment.

"Those have ultimately been my best moments with Christ," she admits. "When I realize, first of all, He doesn't care if I win or lose on the track. He loves me anyway. And He is with me on my journey. A lot of times, I feel like He's taught me lessons in those moments—whether it's to lean into Him or whether it's humility. Sometimes the lesson is that other people have worked hard too and deserve to have this moment. It teaches you empathy. And through a lot of my disappointments, they have added to my character and made me a better human being."

*I had wanted to win
that race for so long*

In racing, there are some other lessons Sanya has learned about "running the race" of life, as the writer of Hebrews 12 says it. And in her new book, *Chasing Grace*, she details each of these.

"The book is divided into four sections: push, pace, position and pose. And then there's the secret 'p' that's pray, which goes with all of the sections," she explains. "It was a strategy my coach taught me for the 400. And over time, I realized it was actually a good strategy for life."

Sanya says the push phase is when you're just starting out and working hard—whether that be in a career, at school, in a relationship. This is the time to stay motivated.

Then, on the back side of the 400-meter, Sanya says you have to pace yourself.

“There comes a point where you have to find your rhythm, find what works for you. Settle into that pace of life. And most importantly during that time, you want to check in with God, asking what He wants from you and how you can do that.”

Sanya believes the third phase, the position phase, could be the most important phase in life.

“That’s the phase where you have to go for it. In the 400, you set up the race for the first 200. But in the last 200, if you don’t make the choice to position yourself for victory, then you’re not going to win the race.”

*He doesn't care if I win
or lose on the track.
He loves me anyway*

The last phase is staying poised by being appreciative and grateful for everything that has happened. Instead of just racing through the moment, stop and enjoy what God has given you.

These days, Sanya continues to live her life a mile a minute.

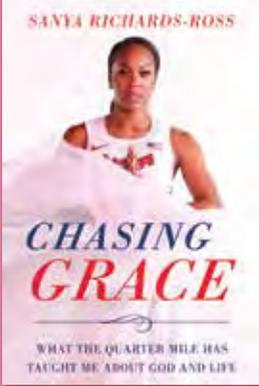
Between writing *Chasing Grace* and a book for children and teens and going on the book tour, Sanya is a commentator for NBC with the track and field series and owns two businesses in Austin, TX, with her sister and husband.

Sanya can’t sit still for long, which is good, considering she and her husband are expecting a new addition to their family in August—a baby boy.

Her secret to running with endurance is staying prayerful through it all. And that’s one of the things she loved most about racing.

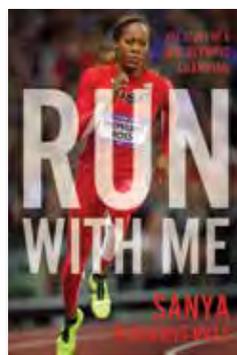
“I do believe my gift came from God—my gift of speed and love for competing,” she shares. “For me when I run, I feel closer to God. I felt like I was doing what I was created to do. A lot of times when you’re walking in your purpose, it kind of comes easy to you. Running came easy to me. But ultimately, I loved it because it was a time when I would pray warming up or working out. It always felt good to my spirit.”

Racing was a way for Sanya to use the gift God had given her. And using that ability to race meant honoring Him with each win . . . and each loss. 

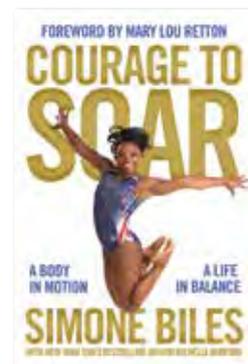


For more from Sanya Richards-Ross, check out *Chasing Grace* on mtlbookstore.com

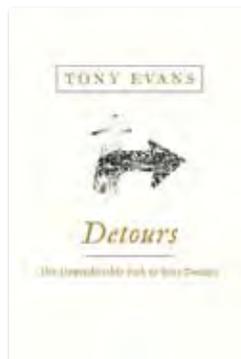
Related Products:



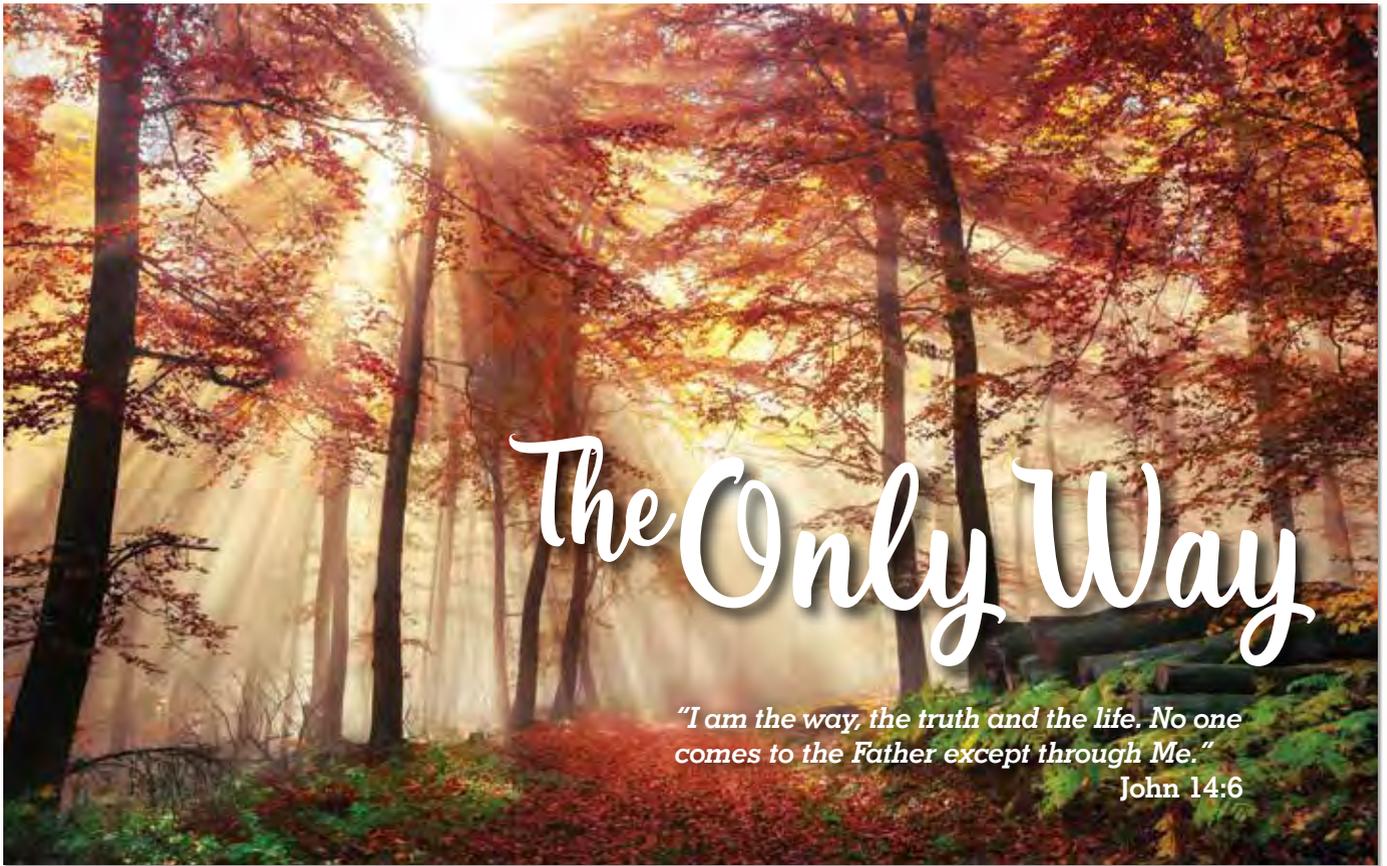
Run with Me
Sanya Richards-Ross, \$16.99



Courage to Soar
Simone Biles, \$24.99



Detours
Tony Evans, \$19.99



The Only Way

"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

John 14:6

Along the road of life there are many paths we choose to take. Some paths are filled with happiness and laughter; others are marked with sadness and regret. Regardless of the paths you choose along life's road, you will inevitably come to a place in your journey where you must choose between one of two paths to eternity—the path that leads to life or the path to what the Bible calls the second death.

In today's society, it may seem as if there are various paths which lead to eternal life; but the writer of Proverbs 14:12 states that *"there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."* God's Word affirms that pursuing our own way to eternal life will not work. There is only one way to heaven, and that way is through God's Son, Jesus.

Romans 3:23 says, *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* This means that everyone is a sinner; and as sinners, we will never be "good enough" to earn our way into a relationship with God. According to Romans 6:23, *"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* As part of a working society, you may know that wages are what a person earns for something he has done. Because of our sin, the one thing we have earned is death, eternal separation from God in hell.

Although we as sinners deserve eternal death, God has given us a gift—the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. According to Romans 5:8, *"God demonstrates His own love*

toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Jesus, the perfect sacrifice, paid the price for our sins through His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. He did what we as sinners could not do for ourselves. Therefore, it is only through Him that we are able to have the gift of eternal life.

The path to eternal life is now before you; what will you choose?

The following prayer is a guideline to help you tell God that you want to accept His gift of eternal life:

Dear God,

Thank You for sending Jesus to bear the wrath for my sins through His death on the cross. I know that I am a sinner and trust that it is only through Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection from the dead that I am able to have forgiveness for my sins and eternal life with You in heaven. Thank You for saving me by Your grace.

In Jesus' name, Amen

According to Romans 10:13, *"Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."* If you accepted God's gift of life, we suggest reading the Gospel of John in the New Testament to learn more about life in Him.

Scripture verses quoted from the New King James Version.

Chelsea's 5 Favorite beauty tips for Fall



Photo: Sai Cincotta

by Chelsea Crockett

COMING IN
OCTOBER



For more from
Chelsea Crockett,
check out *Your
Own Beautiful* on
mtlbookstore.com

Hey y'all! It's your girl, Chelsea Crockett! Summer's over, the weather is changing. It's time to plan our fall look. Let's get ready for fall with my top five favorite beauty tips of the season!

① METALLIC LIPS!

Recently, MAC sent me some shimmery dark and bold lipsticks in the mail. They were covered in glitter! They captured the essence of what the tubes of lipstick contained inside. The beautiful autumn lipsticks are "metallic" shades, and they have many available on MAC's website.

② COORDINATE YOUR MAKEUP WITH YOUR OUTFIT.

Bold lipsticks could be complemented by wearing a velvet A-line skirt. I personally LOVE these skirts as they elongate legs and are comfortable to wear. These skirts look great paired with a band T-shirt, or just a plain V-neck.

③ MOISTURIZED SKIN IS HAPPY SKIN.

As the weather starts to get colder, our skin gets drier. I love using a lotion that has no fragrances. Lubriderm has always worked so well with my body. I apply it mostly to my legs and on my elbows. These aren't the only places that get dry. My face takes the hardest hit in the colder months. Just remember with the face, less is more! When applying your moisturizer, make sure to take little dabs on each section of your face and pat into your skin.

④ PROTECT THOSE LOCKS!

Fall months bring on a whole new set of problems with hair. For some of us, our hair gets frizzy. For others, we just like to curl it more often. A pretty fall trend that I've noticed is bigger and loose curls. When I curl my hair, or even blow dry it, I use hair protectant. One of my favorites is Orchid Oil spray that you can find at Walgreens or Target. It comes in a pink bottle and it smells heavenly. It also adds such a nice shine!

⑤ KEEP YOUR TOOLS CLEAN & ORGANIZED.

I think it is so important to preserve the makeup products you have. Your makeup brushes should be cleaned out every month. The products you used in the summer should be kept in a dark and cool area so that they stay fresh. With the change of seasons, it might be fun to move your makeup products around a little on your desk or vanity. I keep my makeup organized by my essentials, and then seasonal makeup in different plastic drawers. This helps a lot to have the season's colors ready for me to use each day. Fall and winter colors are very different from spring and summer!

7 Style Secrets

YOU NEED TO KNOW

BY SHARI BRAENDEL



Ever wonder how some women make looking good seem completely effortless? Apply these style secrets and take the guesswork out of getting dressed.

#1 CREATE OUTFITS AROUND YOUR SHOES

A smart way to build an outfit is to work from the bottom up. Running errands? Wear comfy flats and pick pieces that work with them. For example, if you're wearing the black oxfords with cuffed jeans like the ones pictured, add a cashmere sweater in your favorite color and follow Style Secrets #4 and #7 to complete your winning look.

#2 A GREAT HAIRCUT TRIUMPHS EVERYTIME

When was the last time you received a compliment on your hairstyle? If you can't remember, it's time for an update. Your hair is one of the first things people see, and if your crown of glory hasn't been a priority for you, schedule an appointment with a stylist who can assist in determining what's best for you in terms of cut and color. Not sure where to find a great stylist? Ask your fashionable friends . . . they always know where to go!

#3 MIX TRADITIONAL WITH FEMININE

Classic wardrobe pieces rule. A tweed blazer, camel trousers, a great fitting pair of jeans, white blouses and timeless pumps never go out of style, but try bringing out your girly side by adding feminine touches to these more traditional pieces. Instead of a plain white blouse with your camel trousers, wear a romantic silk blouse with ruffles in a color like bronze, rose gold or pewter. When wearing your favorite jeans, add a trendy blazer and stylish pumps (or flats shown in Style Secret #1). Combining softer looks with traditional pieces takes your look in an upward direction . . . one that is in style and unexpectedly avant-garde.

continued on page 22 >>



FASHIONED
by God

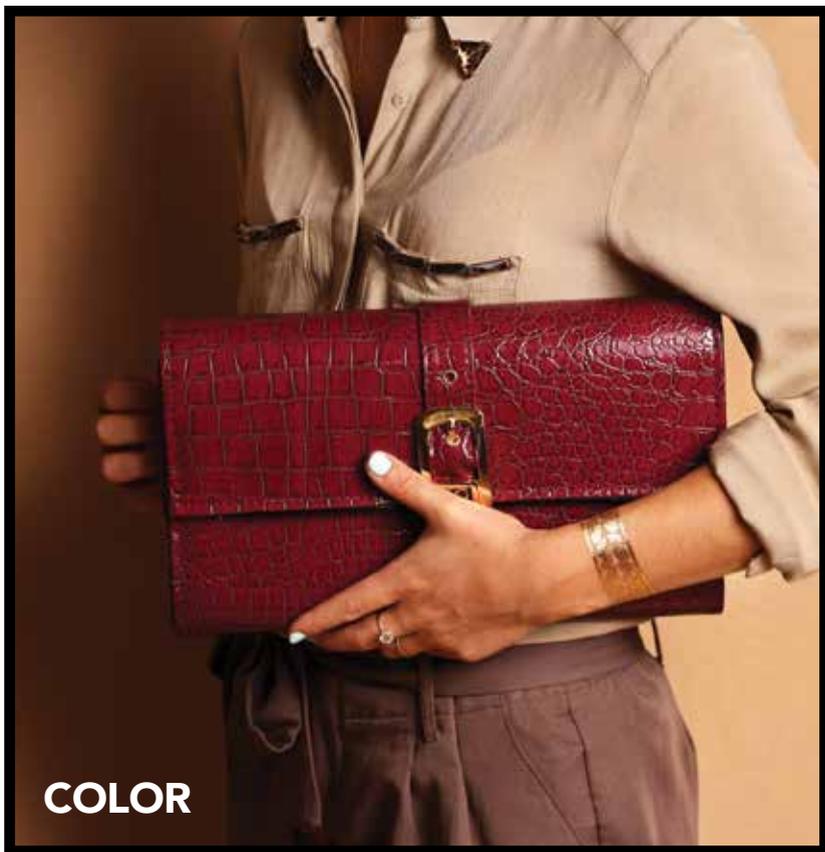
FEMININE

#4 POP IT WITH "3"

The quickest way to add style to an otherwise plain ensemble is to add three accessories, thus making your outfit POP. Let's say you're wearing your skinny jeans and a sweater. To pop it with three, add a scarf, big earrings and an interesting bracelet. Wearing a dress? Add a necklace, patterned tights and a big ring. It doesn't matter what three accessories you decide to wear, just choose them and go! And don't forget Style Secret #7 to finish your look.



ACCESSORIES



#5 WEAR JUST ONE COLOR BUT VARY TONES

Monochromatic dressing has always been a fashion insider's secret to looking slimmer. However, sometimes wearing the same hue from head to toe can be a little, well, monotonous. For a new take on dressing slimmer, wear just one color but vary the tones, like the softer and deeper shades of burgundy in the photo. Add Style Secret #6 in a shade of burgundy too!

continued on page 24 >>

27 HANGERS

FALL IN  WITH YOUR CLOSET!

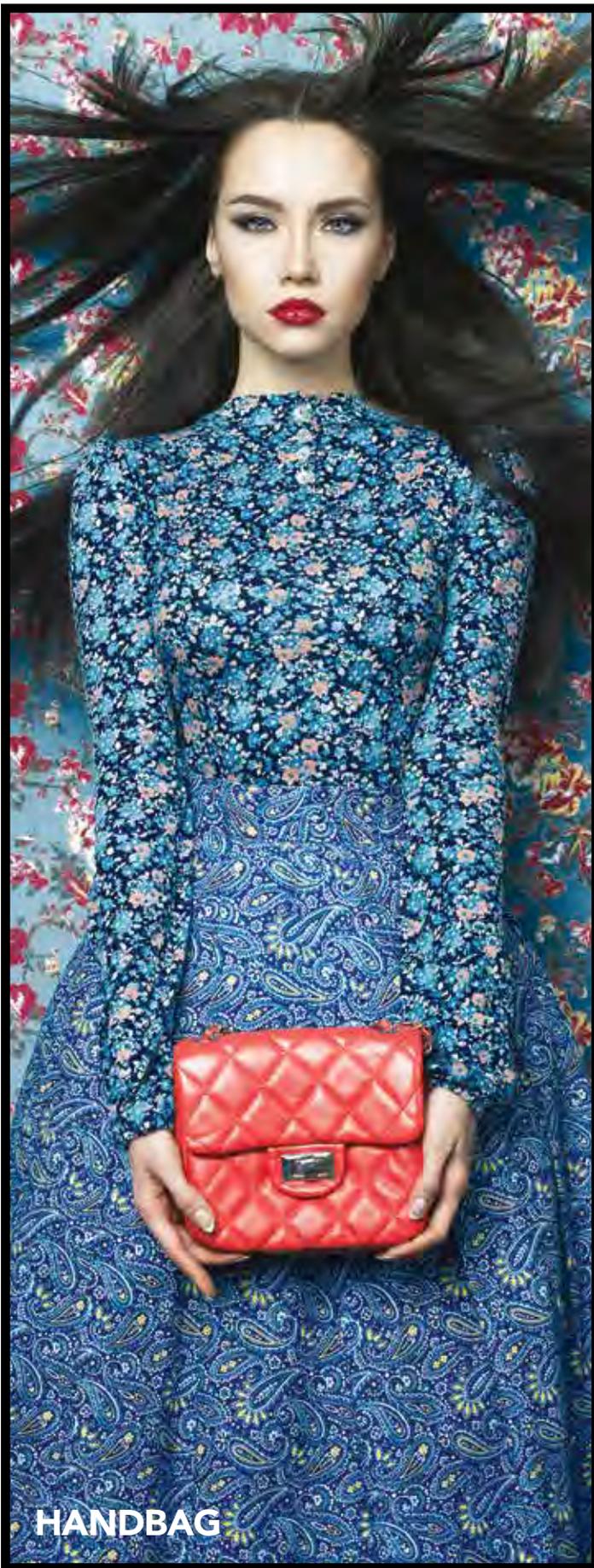


DO YOU HAVE A CLOSET FULL OF CLOTHES BUT NOTHING TO WEAR?

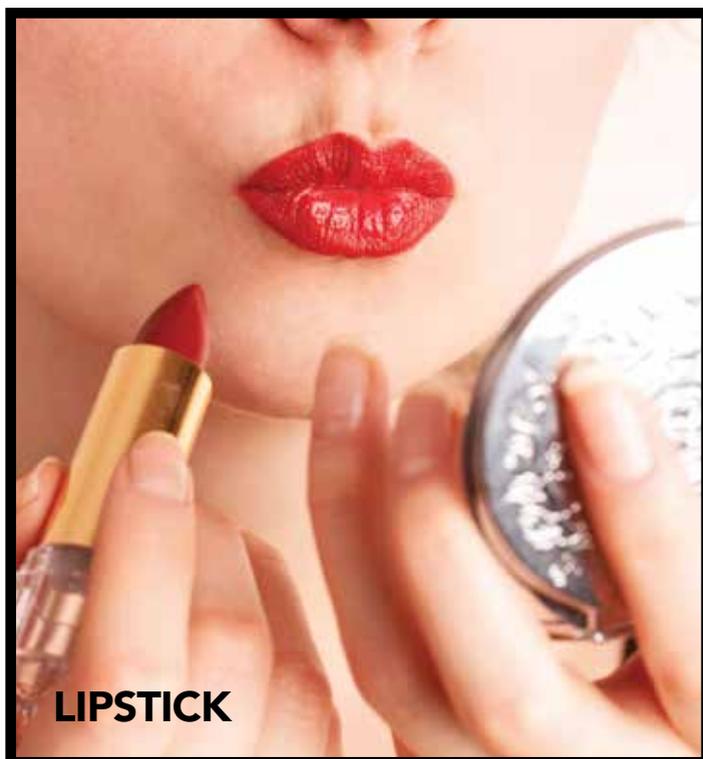
JOIN AMERICA'S #1 CHRISTIAN PERSONAL STYLE EXPERT, SHARI BRAENDEL, IN HER ALL-NEW ONLINE ACADEMY WHERE YOU'LL LEARN TO CORRAL THE CLUTTER AND CHERISH THE CLOTHES IN YOUR CLOSET WITH JUST 27 HANGERS!

CONTROL THE CLOTHING CHAOS TODAY AT WWW.27HANGERCLOSET.COM

The 27 Hangers Online Academy is a product of Fashion Meets Faith - www.FashionMeetsFaith.com



HANDBAG



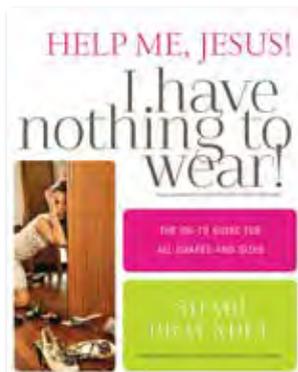
LIPSTICK

#6 LIPSTICK IS YOUR SECRET WEAPON

Ready to take on the world? Fire up those lips in a color that shines! This is the makeup product a girl should never be without as it can take you from day to night, and you'll always look like a million bucks! And even if you don't add the other style secrets to it, your lips will steal the show!

#7 ONE FABULOUS BAG

No woman exudes style without carrying an amazing handbag. Next time you're out and about, look for the most fashionable woman in the room and check out her purse, and you'll see what we mean! Don't know what color to buy? Match your hair color and you'll have a bag that coordinates with every outfit. Get the best quality bag you can afford because this piece can last you awhile. It's the best "completer" piece there is to have in your wardrobe.



For more from Shari Braendel, check out *Help Me, Jesus! I Have Nothing to Wear!* on mtlbookstore.com

grace & truth™

where faith meets fashion

Faith, Fun, and Fashion lifestyle brand by **Kerusso**

Adorned with graceful thoughts, grace & truth™ fashion tees convey a lighthearted approach for women of all ages to express themselves – and look good doing it!

Super Soft

- Wide scoop-necks
- and modest V-necks

Simple, graceful messages

Feminine, yet modest silhouette

Comfy, fashionable fit

Ringspun premium yarn

graceandtruth.com

FOMO

FEAR OF MISSING OUT

WEARABLES *Dress for Success*

by Dr. Mary Manz Simon



A glimpse at trends on the frontlines of life today

WHAT ARE WEARABLES?

Clothing or accessories with embedded technology.

WHY SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT WEARABLES?

We're on the front edge of a wearable explosion. Researchers project that one third of adults will have wearables within the next two years. Right now, watches and fitness bands are popular. Even an inexpensive watch will read text messages, check the weather, track sleep and provide metrics from a workout.

New products are launching all the time. Sensors are embedded in jewelry, shirt buttons and even flip flops! Many of these advances are being driven by applications in professional athletics. Waterproof wearables distinguish between swimming strokes and offer built-in coaching while you're still in the pool! However, non-athletes are becoming wearable champions too.

WHY ARE WEARABLES BECOMING SO POPULAR?

Wearables are shrinking in size, prices are dropping and battery life is improving. In some demographics, wearables have become a fashion statement. For less than \$5, a preschooler can wear a watch that counts steps and tells time.

Functionality is also growing beyond the scope of health and wellness metrics. Now that electronics can be woven into fabric, there are multiple opportunities for integrating into many product categories. Embedding small size technology into a shirt sleeve, swim cap, jacket collar or shoe sole allows seamless connections without carrying a phone.

WHAT IS THE REAL-TIME APPLICATION OF WEARABLES TO EVERYDAY LIFE?

Many companies no longer rely on employees self-reporting healthy habits. Instead, employers are integrating wearables into wellness programs. When biometrics are documented, workers are rewarded for meeting fitness goals.

Demand is increasing for medical device wearables. Products that offer early warning signs for patients with chronic illnesses might reduce the need for emergency care and shorten hospital stays. Check with your insurance company to see if registering workout data from your wearable will result in a discounted rate.

Many of the new wearables are coming from the infotainment sector. Look for virtual reality gamer goggles and smart watches used basically for communication. One of our MTL readers commented on a wearable linked with socially-responsible causes, a bonus benefit which is trending.

To encourage early literacy, some wearables count the number of words an infant hears each day. Today's babies will never experience the "fear of missing out"! 



For more from Dr. Mary Manz Simon, check out *The Pumpkin Gospel* on mtlbookstore.com

WHAT ARE OTHERS saying?

Accountability Partners

I purchased a Fitbit to be aware of how much activity I was getting each day. I work in an office and can sit for hours at a time. I thought that this would motivate me to be more active.

Now I make sure to get the number of steps in each day! It's a little mini-competition I have in my mind!

**-Rachel, marketer
Nashville, TN**

I chose the Garmin because it is waterproof. My Garmin keeps track of my steps, stairs, heart rate and calorie burn. When I'm flying or driving, it constantly vibrates with the word *Move* written across it. The benefit for me is that I'm more aware of moving and definitely taking the stairs more often. I also have my Garmin connected to my smartphone and it keeps track of my sleep patterns.

**-Paula, sales manager
Pasadena, MD**

My husband bought me my first Fitbit for Mother's Day per my request. My goal is to walk more, drink more water and move more often. Hopefully, the reminder function on the device will keep me more aware. My biggest obstacle is my competitive nature. I'll want to "win" and beat my bracelet's suggestions. I'll need to remember that the device is a guide . . . not a whip!

-Linda Wood Rondeau, author and speaker

The Next Step

I generally use the Fitbit just to track my steps. Wearing it has not changed my activities, although it confirms I lead an active life and usually hit the 10,000-step goal by noon. When I have checked the sleep function, it tells how many times I woke up during the night. The Fitbit merely confirmed what I thought.

My granddaughters have wearables from Target that encourage them to walk. The kids get excited, not because of the exercise, but because their steps can help others. They earn points for walking. Through a free app, their points are transferred to unlock food packets delivered to needy children.

**-Dorothy, retired
Wimberley, TX**

The Next Step, cont...

I really focus on how much sleep and the quality of it because I'm a workaholic. I can get so driven that I forget what time it is. I've set my smart phone to tell me when to wind down and then watch how much sleep I logged. In the last two years, I've been more conscious; and because of that mindfulness, I've raised my regular sleep from 4.5 hours a night to 6+ hours. Often, I've reached 7 hours! (But okay, no, not regularly yet, though I'm hitting a stride at 6.5.)

For working out, when my heart rate drops too low or flies too high, I take a break from the elliptical. My Fitbit helps me figure out if I need more sleep, a workout rest or if I can push harder.

**-Angela Breidenbach, author of "His Indentured
Bride" in *The Captive Brides Collection***

Privacy Concerns

Privacy concerns don't bother me too much because I am only connected to my immediate family.

**-Cathy, mother
Spring Hill, FL**

Privacy worries me a little; almost everything technological is going the way of being connected. I try to be aware of the device's privacy setting and what other information the device is linking to. In the case of wearables, I like to wait until something has been out for a while before using it myself.

While I really don't consider the data my Fitbit collects sensitive, when it comes to other connected devices with important data, it's wise to have a long, random password, even if it is a pain. Having an easy to remember password is convenient only until it gets compromised. I've heard it said and tend to agree that convenience is the number one threat to data security.

**-Natalie, marketing director
Camarillo, CA**



IS YOUR PHONE DISTRACTING YOU FROM OTHERS?

BY ARLENE PELLICANE



I remember those first days of falling in love with my husband James. During one afternoon date, he looked intently at me and asked, “Do you know what I see when I look into your eyes?”

“What do you see when you look into my eyes?” I asked dreamily.

“I see the letters AV. Your contact lenses say A-V?”

I went home floating on air that day. At the first opportunity, I popped my contact lens out. My contact really did have the letters AV stamped on it. My beloved had looked into my eyes so deeply he could actually read the tiny brand on my contact lens.

We locked eyes and our hearts connected.

Almost 20 years have passed since that date. We didn’t own mobile phones or iPads back then. We couldn’t text or send emojis. We stared at each other for hours at a time. We talked to one another late into the night on landline phones. We wrote letters almost every day when his job took him several states away.

We built our love note to note, voice to voice and face to face. All these years, we’ve maintained that same love, not by subscribing to a “Friends and Family” calling plan. Not by playing video games or scrolling through each other’s Facebook pages. We’ve grown closer by a daily time of being together without screens.

This once common way of connecting is threatened by the popularity and ever presence of screens in our lives. Research shows that pulling out a smartphone is a sure romance killer. The smartphone can be the third wheel in a relationship. In recent findings published in the journal *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 35 percent of respondents claimed their partner pulls out the phone mid-conversation if a notification arrives. Twenty-five percent said their partner actively texts people during the couple’s face-to-face conversation. Seventy-five percent reported the phone is a problem in the relationship.

Children are also being affected by the uptick in device usage. One study found that more than half of kids feel their parents check their devices too often, and one third say they feel unimportant when their parents are distracted by their smartphones.

These are troubling findings because none of us buy a smartphone to disconnect emotionally from our families. On the contrary, we want a way to be more reachable to those we love.

Does the way you use your phone communicate “I love you” to your spouse and your children? Or does your phone use communicate “I am busy and preoccupied”?

continued on page 30 >>



4 WAYS TO DISCONNECT... IN ORDER TO CONNECT WITH OTHERS

If you need some help disconnecting with your phone more often, here are four simple habits you can begin to practice at home:

ENJOY SCREEN-FREE MEALTIMES.

Mealtime is a precious time to connect with your family, to swap stories and share life together. But when there's background noise from the TV or family members on the phone, mealtime ceases to be a source of strength for a family. Make the commitment to eat together without screens both at home and in restaurants. Put your phones away on a shelf, in a box, in a purse or stacked in the middle of the table. Train younger children to wait for food without the amusement of a screen. If you need a phone because you have to pick up someone from practice, explain this to your family and only answer the phone for this reason.

CHARGE YOUR PHONE OVERNIGHT IN ANOTHER ROOM.

It's easy to check your phone last thing at night and first thing in the morning when it's on your nightstand. But is that the most relaxing, rewarding way to begin and end a day? Take away the temptation to text during the night or check email upon waking. Unless you are an emergency worker who needs to remain accessible, charge your phone overnight in another room. Enjoy your sleep without digital interruptions. Begin your day with prayer instead of the stress of texts and to-do lists.

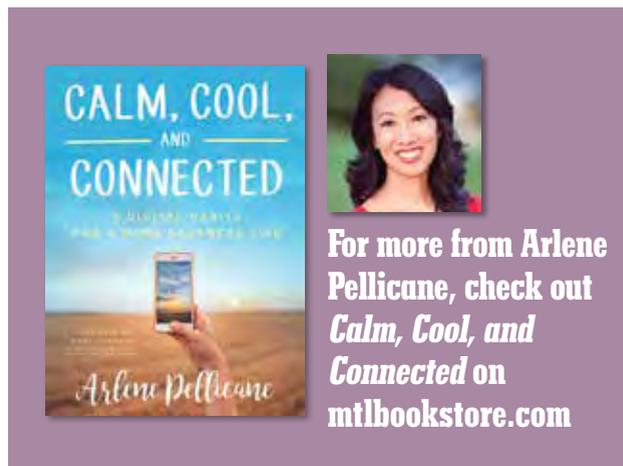
PRACTICE "THE PIVOT."

I spend hours working at my computer, writing and answering emails. There's nothing inherently wrong with this as many people are able to work from home nowadays. The problem comes when your spouse or children feel like they are talking to the back of your head much of the time. There is a simple solution which I like to call "The Pivot." When someone in your family approaches you, pivot your chair away from your screen to face him or her. If you are holding your phone, bring your phone down to your side and pivot your gaze to your spouse or child. By using this kind of body language, you are communicating volumes. You are saying, "You are more important than my phone."

ASK YOUR FAMILY FOR REGULAR FEEDBACK.

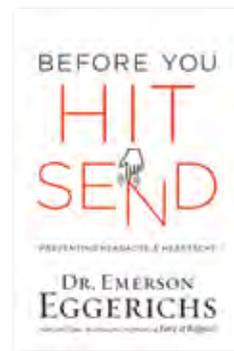
Ask your spouse or kids, "Do you think I am on the phone too much? Is there anything I can do differently with my technology that would make you happier?" Fight the urge to be defensive if a few suggestions arise out of this conversation. If a family member thinks you are spending too much time with a device, take it as a compliment. It means he wishes he could spend more quality time with you. The more you are open to correction, the more open your family members will be too. Maybe it's your child or spouse who is spending way too much time on screens, constantly looking down at the phone. Changes you make in your life can serve as a springboard for other family members to make improvements as well.

If you find your phone is distracting you from tending to your most important relationships, there's good news. Getting back on track is as easy as looking your spouse and children in the eyes. The more you lock eyes, the closer to one another you'll get. Who knows? You might even be able to read a pair of contact lenses. [mtl](#)

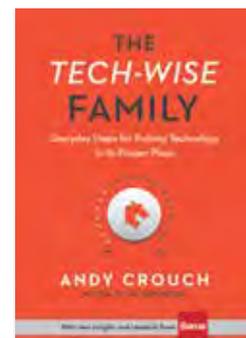


Arlene Pellicane is a speaker and author of several books including *Calm, Cool, and Connected: 5 Digital Habits for a More Balanced Life*. She and her husband James have three children. Find her blog and Happy Home podcast at ArlenePellicane.com.

Related Products:



Before You Hit Send
Dr. Emerson Eggerichs,
\$19.99



The Tech-Wise Family
Andy Crouch, \$13.99



12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You
Tony Reinke, \$14.99



Cell Phone Etiquette: *Excuse Me, Your Cell is Showing*

by Linda Wood Rondeau

4 WHEN WITH FRIENDS OR IN A GROUP SETTING, PUT YOUR PHONE ON MUTE

Your immediate need to respond sends a subliminal message to your companions that what they say is not as important as whoever just texted you. If you must use your phone, offer a polite explanation to those whom you are with. Find a quiet corner to converse.

5 DON'T BE QUICK TO JUDGE

For us on the other end of the seemingly impolite phone user . . . judge not. Culture is what it is, and love covers a multitude of sins.

To annoy or not to annoy? That is the question. How do we take advantage of the freedom and convenience our cell phones provide without offending those within earshot?

In an age where people 50 and under use their phone far more than a computer, I asked a variety of people what they found the most bothersome about other people's cell use. The responses went across generational lines. Elderly thought cell phones should be pocketed and only used for emergencies. Middle-agers wished folks would pocket their phones when in supermarket lines or in restaurants and other public places. Millennials have no problem with the constant placement of cell phones to the ear, but they thought the phones should be silenced when their group was actively engaged, such as in a game.

Generally, whenever you take out your phone, remember the Golden Rule. Style your cell phone behavior according to how you wish others would act around you. Then set the example. Also, adapt your behavior according to what is acceptable within your family or friend group. Not all habits are as annoying to all people. If you know a behavior upsets someone, avoid offending that person.

Based on my research, I'd offer the following general guidelines:

1 WHEN IN PUBLIC, USE YOUR DEVICE ONLY IN AN EMERGENCY

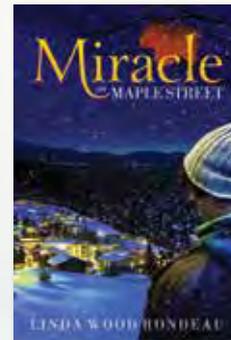
Of course, everyone defines an emergency according to his or her own needs. Ask yourself if your life will significantly change if you use your cell right now. If you must take or make a call, excuse yourself and go to a quiet corner.

2 BE OBSERVANT OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Ask yourself if your phone use will cause a disturbance or distract others.

3 DON'T USE YOUR PHONE WHEN YOU'RE IN MOTION

Your inattentiveness can cause a risk to others and to yourself.



For more from Linda Wood Rondeau, check out *Miracle on Maple Street* on mtlbookstore.com







ONE SHOEBOX CAN JUMPSTART A JOURNEY TO CHRIST

*HOW AN EAST AFRICAN FAMILY
EXPERIENCED THE KINDNESS OF
CHRISTIANS THROUGH OPERATION
CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOX
DISTRIBUTION AND LEFT ISLAM*

Clinton Mutumba was surprised when he was not beaten by the Sunday school teachers at the Kenyan church where his friend had invited him. At the nearby mosque where his mother Mary would drag him weekly, the instructors caned his legs when he mispronounced the Koran's Arabic verses.

The boy's journey from the mosque to the church was near miraculous. It began one day when he simply told his mother that he did not want to go back to his Islamic religious classes.

"Where will you go?" she asked him.

"I want to go to church," he told her. "The Lord will tell me where."

Mary recounts being surprised by this response, but she agreed to his request.

Soon after, a friend invited Clinton to attend his evangelical church.

"Each of us were supposed to invite a friend [to a special event]," his friend told him.

Clinton said yes—realizing the Lord was telling him where to go.

continued on page 34 >>

When Clinton joined his friend at church, he received a free gift-filled shoebox from Operation Christmas Child, a present that had traveled by sea all the way from the United States to Kenya—a fact he would later learn and tell his mother.

A JOURNEY FROM ISLAM TO CHRIST

“We moved from my hometown to Meru and all the people in our neighborhood were Muslim, so we became Muslim,” Mary recounts. She was a single mother moving with her son to a strange new place, and she was seeking a community that would help her. It turned out to be different than she’d expected.

Islam is a growing force in Kenya, especially along the coast and also along the northern border with Somalia, a Muslim stronghold. Meru, five hours north of Kenya’s capital, Nairobi, is a major hub and common destination for transplanted Somalis.

But the area also has an evangelical Christian presence. And Operation Christmas Child and The Greatest Journey are providing resources and training to help local churches effectively proclaim the gospel.

The Mutumbas are a compelling story of the gospel’s power as spread through the words and deeds of Christ’s people.

Mary and Clinton worshiped separately for months after the shoebox distribution—mother at the mosque, son at the church. All the while, Clinton was attending weekly classes of The Greatest Journey, a 12-lesson discipleship program designed by Samaritan’s Purse for shoebox recipients. He was learning a different version of the story of Jesus from what he’d been taught in the Koran and by the imam. He was learning that Jesus wasn’t just a prophet the Muslims called “Isa” but that He was actually much greater than that. Clinton came to trust Him as God’s Son, his Lord and Savior.

Each week he’d return home and tell his mother what he’d learned during class. Each week she became more curious. “Who are these people who didn’t even know him who gave him a gift and are taking time to teach him?” More important, she became curious about the Jesus who compelled them to do this.

LOVE LIKE NO OTHER

So, Mary attended worship services at the church with her son one Sunday last year. She began to learn about the same Jesus whose people had shown so much love to her son.

“I just had to meet these people who gave him this box,” Mary said. “And I had to find out who would send a box full of gifts from another continent and not know where it is going to show love to people they would never meet.

“This kind of love does not exist in Islam. I knew these must be God’s people.”

Weeks later, she joined her son in embracing that love as she received Christ. Soon after, she was baptized.

“I decided since that time that I would serve the Lord,” Mary said. “That love I received, I want to express that same love to other people.” 



For more info about Operation Christmas Child, visit samaritanspurse.com/occ

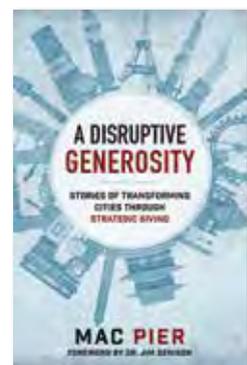
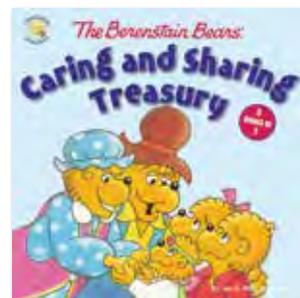
Operation Christmas Child delivers great joy to millions of children around the world through shoeboxes lovingly and prayerfully packed with gifts that will bring delight to a child. In the hands of local churches, every gift-filled shoebox is a powerful tool for evangelism and discipleship—transforming the lives of children and their families around the world through the good news of Jesus Christ! After receiving shoebox gifts, boys and girls are invited to enroll in The Greatest Journey, a 12-lesson discipleship program where children learn what it means to faithfully follow Christ and share their faith with others.

Related Products:



The Kindness Effect
Jill Donovan, \$19.99

The Berenstain Bears Caring and Sharing Treasury
Jan & Mike Berenstain, \$10.99



A Disruptive Generosity
Mac Pier, \$13.99

Send the Gospel to the Ends of the Earth

By packing a shoebox full of simple gifts and sending it off with prayer, you can be part of working with churches to transform entire families and communities with the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

LEARN MORE AT samaritanspurse.org/occ



NATIONAL COLLECTION WEEK
NOVEMBER 13-20


Samaritan's Purse[®]
INTERNATIONAL RELIEF

Helping in Jesus' Name[®]

View solicitation disclosure information for Samaritan's Purse online at samaritanspurse.org/disclosure



\$12.99



\$12.99



\$21.99

Wear it
to
Share it



\$14.99

\$9.99



\$14.99

Support Your Local Christian Bookstore

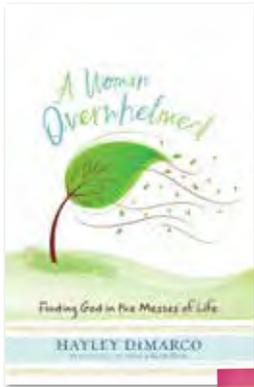
Think Local • Buy Local • Be Local

For a store near you, go to mtlmagazine.com

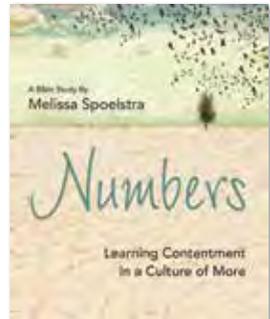
Music

			
Wonder \$13.99	Love Has a Name \$13.99	Hills and Valleys \$9.99	Revival \$11.99

A Woman Overwhelmed
\$15.99



Numbers
\$16.99



Drawn In: Mary
\$7.99



Drawn In: Esther
\$7.99

20" x 10 1/2" \$29.99



\$9.99

For the Home



6" x 6"
\$14.99



\$9.99

Study
the
Word

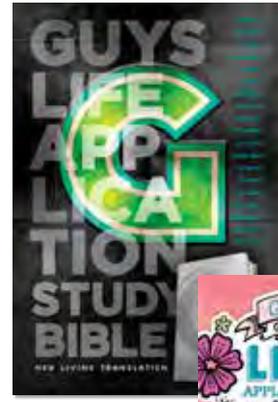
Kids Bibles



Adventure Bible, NIV
\$34.99 each



Children's Bible, ESV
\$34.99 each



Guys LASB, NLT
\$39.99



Girls LASB, NLT
\$44.99



Revolution Bible, NIV
\$34.99



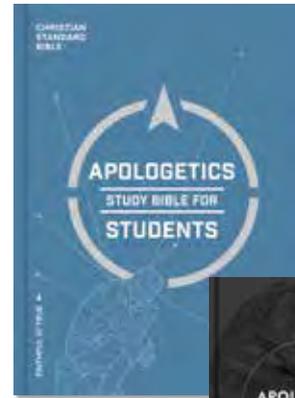
True Images, NIV
\$19.99



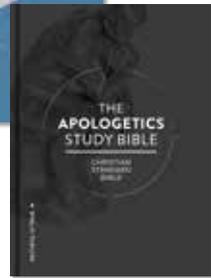
ESV Student Study Bible
\$29.99



ESV Student Study Bible
\$39.99

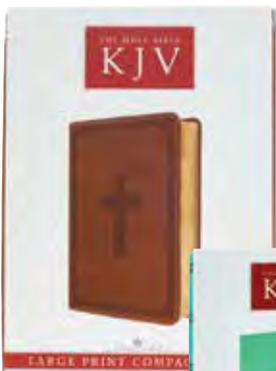


Apologetics Study Bible for Students
\$34.99

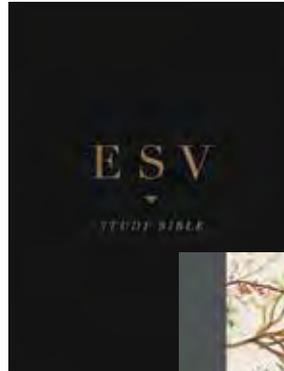


Apologetics Study Bible
\$39.99

Teen Bibles



LP Compact, KJV
\$19.99 each



ESV Study Bible
\$59.99 each



Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, NIV
\$69.99



Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, NIV
\$89.99

Adult Bibles



2 SIMPLE STEPS TO ENSURE A BRIGHT FINANCIAL FUTURE FOR YOUR CHILD

by Ron Blue & Karen Guess

The room had chairs arranged in a circle, like a support group. Sitting in the circle were a group of very caring, invested dads with teenage children at a local high school. Their interest in learning about financial wisdom for their kids was strong enough for them to show up at school on a weekday morning for a workshop, but just one question loomed large: “How?”

“How do we teach our kids to manage money?”

We love that question. It evidences the deep care that parents have for training their children well.

We also love that question because it’s a chance to offer clarity in an area that feels uncertain and even undefined.

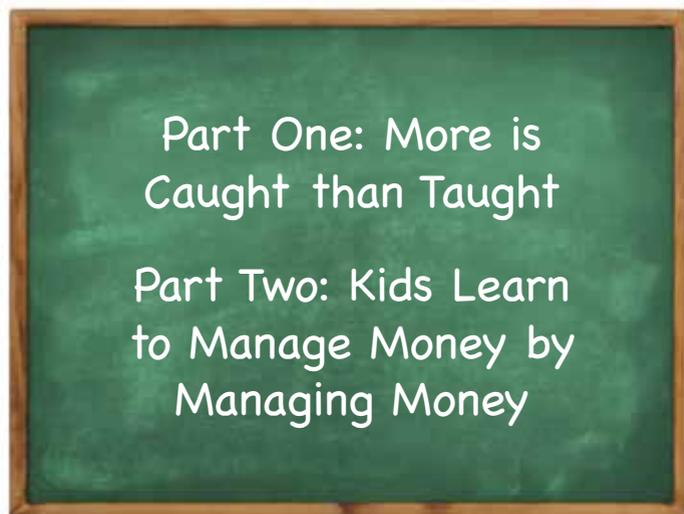
Your world—the parenting gig—is busy and getting busier. Just working through calendars, getting children from place to place with the requisite snacks and then making sure they’re safely in bed at night is practically an Olympic sport.

Not to mention the work involved in determining how to give them wise technology boundaries . . . or a foundational knowledge of Scripture . . . or a chore chart that works . . . or . . . (enter your own heart-level challenge here).

None of us has extra mental energy to spend on teaching wise financial stewardship to our kids, but we all want to leave a legacy. We want to train our children to use money wisely, but that can be a challenge when we are sometimes uncertain about our own financial stewardship.

As a father and daughter team, we understand how you feel. I (Karen) was the hardest of Ron Blue’s five children to wrangle when it came to money. My urge to spend at the first sign of successful advertising was practically insatiable. And I (Ron) have worked for nearly 50 years with families who are interested in leaving a legacy of wise financial stewardship, but I had to work out my own advice in the petri dish of my family. We survived, and we are excited to share a workable plan!

Take a deep breath. The plan is easy; it has only two parts.



So, the very first step in training children is to get serious honing your own financial stewardship. But how?

I (Karen) can share that my parents were a compelling model of financial stewardship. Their amazing example, however, was not composed of the spreadsheets, IRAs, stock market picks or check registers that my mom and dad maintained when I was young. The example that served me best was watching them live out their deep belief that “God owns it all.” Psalm 24:1 says that the earth is God’s and all it contains. If we, as parents and leaders of our home, genuinely live by this truth, we will have an entirely new level of faith, an entirely new devotion to stewardship, an entirely new interest in wisdom and an entirely new experience of contentment in our financial lives.

As you parent, do you hold your money with an open hand? Do you live believing that God’s ownership and your stewardship make your checkbook a blank canvas for His amazing story in your family and in the world at large?

Becoming a wise steward is straightforward. In fact, we teach in our book *Never Enough?* that there are just five things God tells us to do to manage money well.

1. Spend less than you earn. (Proverbs 10:4)
2. Avoid debt. (Psalm 37:21)
3. Plan for financial margin. (Proverbs 6:6-8)
4. Give generously. (Matthew 6:19-21)
5. Set long-term goals. (Ephesians 2:10)

God also says in James 1:5 that if we ask Him for wisdom, He gives it. So, not only do we have these five wise principles, but we also have the Holy Spirit who guides us through financial choices and transitions.

continued on page 40 >>

Living as a steward is not complicated. It can be challenging, but grappling with putting God’s wisdom into action sets a priceless example for your children . . . without having to add anything extra to your “parenting agenda.”

Step two, allowing children to manage their own money is rewarding and enlightening. When I (Ron) was implementing this with my children, I immediately saw which of my five were savers, which ones were spenders and which ones were risk averse. Allowing them to manage their own money helped me meet them in their weak spots and encourage growth in those areas.

Our most potent learning happens when we make mistakes. Children learn this way too. In order to learn how NOT to fail with money, our kids have to experience failure. Wouldn’t you rather them fail financially in small amounts, under your roof?

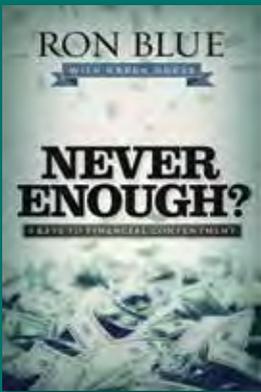


The most basic way to allow children to manage money is to give it to them regularly, in some form of an envelope system, so that they purchase the things you would normally buy for them. When they are responsible for managing their own clothing, gifts, entertainment, giving and saving (the five envelopes we recommend), they learn to implement the reality of delayed gratification and to manage the complexity of simultaneous competing priorities.

In our family, each child was on the envelope system by ten years old until high school graduation. Every child was different, but today they all confidently manage money in the way that works best for their style—something they figured out before they had even left home.

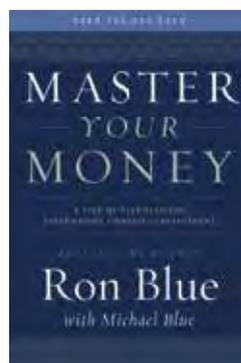
None of us wants to add “more” to our long list of parenting to-dos. The good news about teaching financial wisdom is that it happens as we go, as parents work out their own stewardship and empower their children to make the financial choices that are already happening in the home.

While the undermining influence of the world’s message of materialism is strong, your influence and wise example are much stronger. You can have a lasting impact on your children’s future as you empower them with confidence, teach them delayed gratification and model surrendered stewardship. 

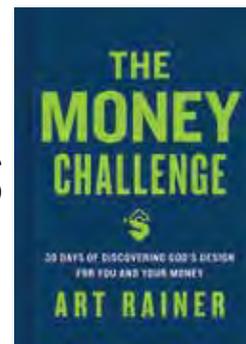


For more from Ron Blue & Karen Guess, check out *Never Enough?* on mtlbookstore.com

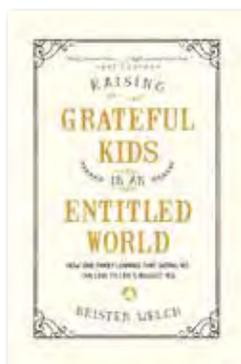
Related Products:



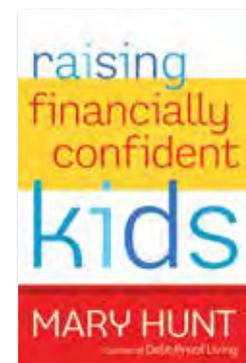
Master Your Money
Ron Blue with Michael Blue,
\$15.99



The Money Challenge
Art Rainer, \$12.99



Raising Grateful Kids in an Entitled World
Kristen Welch, \$15.99



Raising Financially Confident Kids
Mary Hunt, \$14.99

don't forget...

1.

2.

4. **LABOR DAY**
 Need a break? This federal holiday is your opportunity to get a day off, cookout or squeeze in one last long-weekend trip before the end of summer.

3.

5.

6.

7.

10. **Grandparents' Day**
 For ways to honor your grandparents, check out page 105.



7.

9.

11. **PATRIOT DAY**
 September 11 is titled Patriot Day as a national day of remembrance of the people who died in the terrorist attacks on the U.S.A.
 American citizens should display their flag at half-staff.
 A moment of silence is observed at 8:46 A.M. EST—the time the first plane flew into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City.
 Almost 3,000 people lost their lives during the terrorist attack on 9/11. Thousands more were injured.



12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

20.

22. **First Day of Fall**
 Today is the official start of fall, also called the *Autumnal Equinox* when the day and night are the same length of time.



21.

SEPTEMBER

23.

24.

27. **See You at the Pole**
 Prayer returns to school as students unite at the flagpole on their campus and pray for their generation.



25.

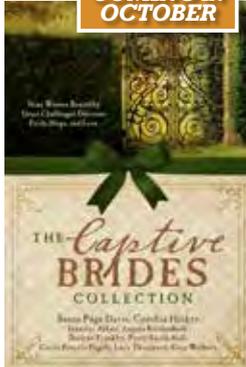
26.

28.

29.

30.

COMING IN OCTOBER




For more from Angela Breidenbach, check out *The Captive Brides Collection* on mtlbookstore.com

BEHIND THE HUMOR

Chonda Pierce

On any given day, when she's not bringing joy and laughter to sold out crowds, you can find Chonda Pierce cutting the grass and cleaning the bathrooms at home on the Funny Farm. With cabins, a lake and an activity barn, the Funny Farm, which is located just outside of Nashville, offers a retreat for pastors and missionaries who need a vacation.

Perhaps that's not what you would expect the most awarded and bestselling female comedian to be doing with her time and money. But there are a few things you may not know about Chonda. The road to her 25-year comedic success hasn't always been filled with humor. There have been hard times too.

continued on page 44 >>





GETTING STARTED

“I’ve had wonderful chats with great counselors about my childhood,” Chonda jokes. “I have ‘the blessing and the curse’ childhood. On one hand, it was fun and vivacious. And at the same time, it was terrible.”

A lot of her childhood challenges came with a father who had a mental illness. When Chonda was 14, she remembers first hearing the diagnosis *manic depressive*. On top of that, her father was the pastor of a rigid holiness denomination, who sometimes didn’t seem to practice what he preached.

“That made for a very confusing childhood,” Chonda admits.

Sharing this with her brother and two sisters made the journey easier. Plus, she had a mother who made life as fun as possible. Or as Chonda says, “My mother put the word ‘fun’ in dysfunctional.”

Chonda’s family life undoubtedly played a role in starting a career as a comedian.

“I’m a middle child, and it’s natural for middle children to be a little more rambunctious in the family,” Chonda reveals. “All those things either worked for me or against me.”

When she was 23 years of age and newly married, her lively personality was an asset to getting a job performing at Opryland theme park. Chonda was part of a show called Country Music USA, which gave the history of country music by impersonating famous people.

“I knew nothing about country music because I’d grown up where I wasn’t even allowed to listen to radio,” Chonda shares. “So that was kind of hilarious that God mapped that out for me.”

Another part of the show was a big dance number. Growing up, Chonda was never allowed to dance, and her first attempt was, well, laughable. In order to be excused from the dancing, Chonda was given the role of Minnie Pearl. She performed in that same show for six years, which is just what she needed at the time.

*we have a loving God
who pays attention to the
details of our life*

“For me, it became very clear we have a loving God who pays attention to the details of our life,” Chonda explains. “I had just lost both of my sisters before I started work there. And my parents had divorced. All that I knew of my childhood had crumbled into pieces. I’m sure I wasn’t handling it well. How could you in that kind of trauma? In a matter of three or four years, everything I knew had changed.

“Here the Lord found me a job that I fell in love with where five times a day, six days a week, I had to make a group of people laugh in order to get paid. The medicine of that! It was medicine to me first before it was to anyone else.”



GETTING SERIOUS

Chonda and her husband David met in high school and were friends from the start.

“I remember when we started dating, so many people said, ‘I thought you two were cousins,’ because we were always together.”

The two of them would laugh about everything, but it wasn’t until their senior year that they got serious.

“He was the best-looking guy in my school and I caught him,” she exclaims.

Four months after they were married, Chonda started getting sick. She was on birth control, so she went to see the doctor. When the doctor said she didn’t need to be on the medicine any more, Chonda asked if that’s what was making her sick. The doctor replied, “No, it’s the baby.”

After their first child, they stopped the birth control and decided to have a big family. “Whatever the Lord wanted us to do, that’s what we’d do,” she says.

When Chonda and her husband started raising their two children, that’s when she realized she was not living the way she was raised, with the importance of a church life.

“I got saved when I was nine. I remember it very well. Then again when I was 10. And twice when I was 14. Let’s not even talk about the college years,” Chonda says with a laugh. “I make a joke that I had a revolving door experience with the Lord. I think that happens often when you’re a preacher’s kid. You go to the altar and get saved so that your mom won’t remember to spank you.”

Around 28 years old, Chonda started getting serious about her relationship and service to the Lord.

“A lot of times you live your life for the Lord for mamma’s sake. Or you serve God because that’s what you always do,” Chonda says. “And there comes a time in every person’s life where you put away the childish things. And that changes everything. And it changed everything for me. I began to not go to the places I used to go. I would find friends who were healthier for me spiritually. I began to walk away from jobs and things that would not be as glorifying to the Lord. And then your relationship with the Lord permeates every facet of your being—from the way you parent to the wife you become. It doesn’t mean you stop making mistakes, it just means you’re focused. And my focus became very clearly toward God.”

GETTING HELP

Of course, living for the Lord is never without its trials and tribulations. As her career was taking off, Chonda was struggling in the dark, battling depression.

“Hindsight is always 20/20,” she says. “I thought I was one of the blessed few who could sleep on a moving bus. But the truth of the matter was I wasn’t sleeping good.”

According to Chonda, sleep deprivation is one of the number one signs of depression, followed by stress.

“I look back now and I can remember after the concerts I was just drained, so drained,” she recalls. “I was grieved and I would begin to cry for my sisters. After the story I had just told thousands and thousands of people, it was like their funerals again.”



“I think years of unraveling that kind of pain took its toll. My body began to want to deal with things I had pushed aside. I thought giving my testimony was enough. But sometimes there is some processing you need to do, and I had some processing to do.”

Chonda says she wrote *Laughing in the Dark* about her own story as “a true labor of love for people who struggle in the dark.”

“I had no idea I was doing anything out of the norm,” Chonda

continued on page 46 >>

admits. “I had run across so many people who were struggling with depression, and I thought the things I was learning would be helpful. I am blessed that I think that at the end of my career one of the things that stands out for people is that I was candid about the journey in the dark.

“In the religious community, we have a tendency that, if you can’t explain it, you almost shame people a little bit. In other words, if you can’t wrap it up in a nice bow and come up with answers for people, then we don’t want to talk about it. We want God to look really good and effective. But God is most effective when we are honest. I didn’t see a lot of that at that time.

“I had church people who would say you need to pray more or you need to find that unconfessed sin that’s hidden in the dark. It’s just terrible what we do to our wounded. We wound people further because we’re afraid of what we don’t know.

“We think we have to have answers, and I think that’s when we do the most disservice as a Christian community. If we could be unafraid of saying, ‘I don’t know,’ it would be much more authentic for people looking in than trying to be the know-it-all.”

Chonda would be the first to admit she’s still learning. In fact, when *Laughing in the Dark* hit the shelves, she had just been admitted to a psychiatric hospital.

“It got worse before it got better,” she says. “And there’s still so much that I’ve learned that I want to share with people out there that are still struggling.”

During this time, Chonda also founded Branches Recovery Center, which provides affordable counseling and services for those with depression, anxiety or addiction.

GETTING HEALING

Chonda continues to find laughter in life, even after the losses, including the passing of her husband after his battle with alcohol. But one of the hardest losses she’s had to face is the loss of her daughter and grandsons.

“I have two beautiful grandsons. Sadly, I have no relationship with them,” Chonda shares through tears. “It is the most broken-hearted thing I’ve ever been through in my life. The saddest part of my whole story in life is that my husband died without knowing the privilege of grandchildren. And he wanted to so badly.

*broken relationships that
don't want any reconciliation
. . . it is a brokenness that is
unexplainable*

“There are things worse in life than death. Death has a finality to it, and you can have a hope of heaven that gives you the

strength to carry on. Broken relationships that don’t want any reconciliation . . . it is a brokenness that is unexplainable.”

Chonda and her daughter have an estranged relationship, which she delicately addresses in her documentaries *Laughing in the Dark* and *Enough*.

“I’ve always heard the prodigal son story growing up. And I thought, ‘That spoiled kid.’ It’s always focused on the prodigal son. Never did I know what it must have felt like for that father for the child to leave. He had so much he wanted to give him, but the son chose to leave,” Chonda explains. “I never understood the father in that story until now. No wonder he wanted to throw him a big party when he came back.”

While Chonda understands that her daughter is an adult and that her husband has chosen this life for their family, she still wrestles with feelings of failure.

“The parent of a child who has gone wayward has to fight constantly the feelings of guilt and shame. My biggest feelings of guilt and shame is the question, ‘Did I not instill in my child the importance of what forgiveness looks like?’”

*the parent of a child who
has gone wayward has to
fight constantly the feelings
of guilt and shame*

Yet Chonda’s bigger concern is the condition of her daughter and grandchildren’s heart. “You just want to know that they’ll be in heaven,” she says.

Chonda admits it would be easy for her to say that talking about this is off limits. And sometimes she does. But when she does discuss this on occasion, it’s to help other families going through the same struggle.

“There are parents out there grieving the same grief and can’t figure it out,” she shares. “The only way you can find some healing in that is in the sense of community of knowing you’re not alone. You’re not the only family that’s going through something like this. People every day are grieving grandchildren they are not allowed to see. The only reason I tell about it is telling how beautiful God can be and how tender He can be to a grandparent’s broken heart. And He has been so good to me.”

Sharing her story isn’t easy, but it’s what Chonda does—in order to point people to the Lord’s saving grace.

“You can’t explain what He’s done for you unless you tell what you’ve been through,” she explains. “It’s been a formula I’ve used my whole career. Some days I’d just like to have a different testimony.”

Chonda jokes. And behind the humor, she’s just being honest. 





For more from Chonda Pierce, check out *Laughing in the Dark* on mtlbookstore.com

Related Products:



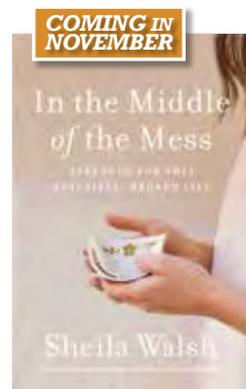
Stand-Up for Families
Chonda Pierce, \$14.99



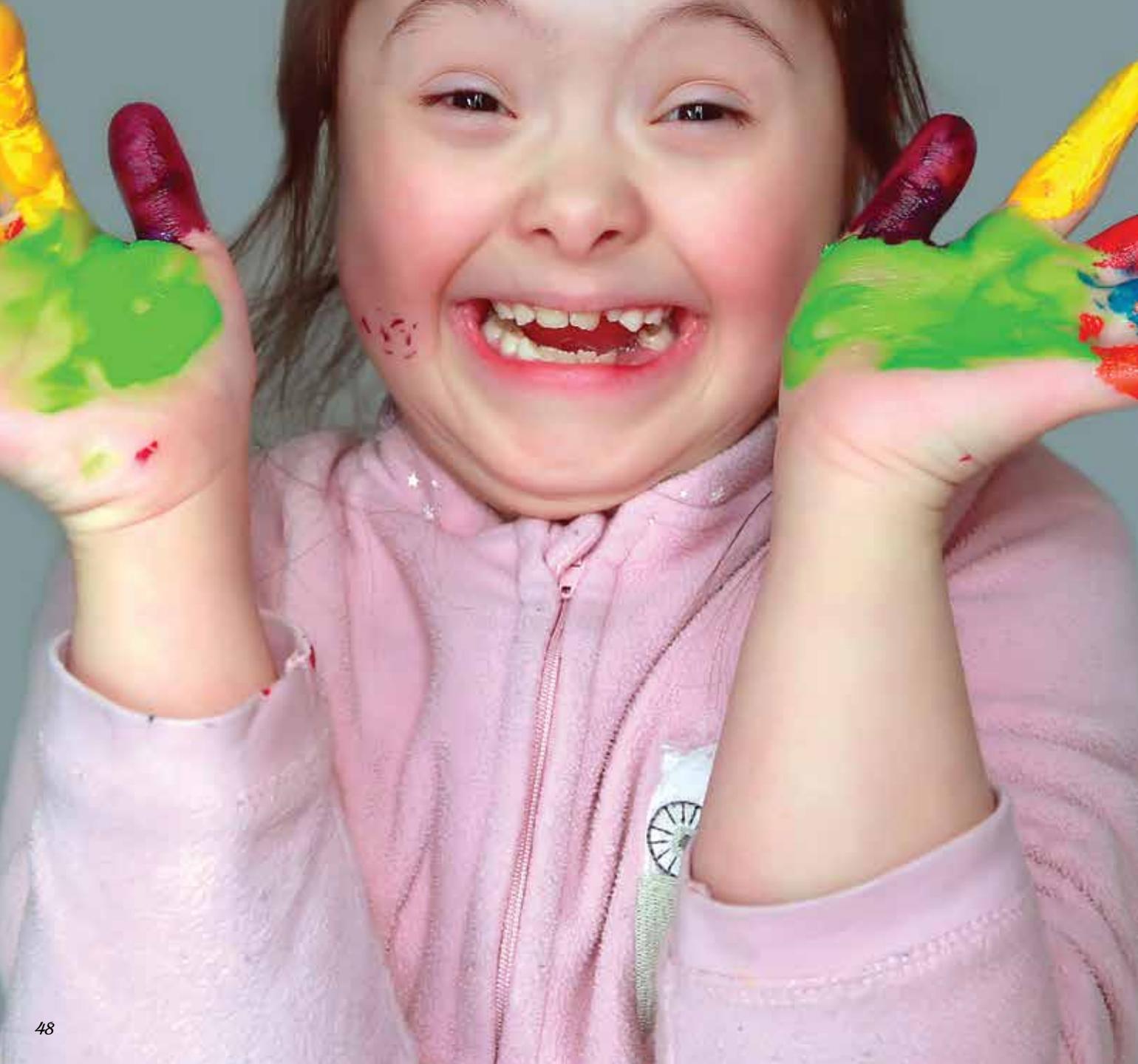
Out of the Dark
Mandisa, \$11.99



Dogs Go to Heaven
Mark Lowry, \$19.99



In the Middle of the Mess
Sheila Walsh, \$22.99



Life Lessons from Raising a Child with Down Syndrome

by Heather Avis

It was October 29, 2008. The sun had set and the moon began to creep into the sky as I sat quietly in an overstuffed olive green rocking chair, rocking my baby girl. It was *her* third month of life but *my* first night as a mother. My daughter was born with Down syndrome. And on that miraculous day of her birth, shortly after her first breath left her tiny lungs, she was placed in the care of an adoption agency because her birthparents were unwilling to parent a child with Down syndrome. Three months later she was placed in my arms as my daughter.

While a child with Down syndrome was never in my plans, I was lucky enough, to be crazy enough, to be willing, to say “yes” to the little baby with Down syndrome who would become my first child.

The journey to my daughter was found far from the path I had originally set out on. I trudged through years of infertility before setting out toward an adoption I thought would end in a healthy infant. No, she was not my original plan, yet when she entered my life, the very breath I breathed became sweeter.

It’s been almost nine years since my first night as a mother. Nine years since I said “yes” to adopting a child with Down syndrome. I do not know what life would be like if I had said “no” all those years ago and pursued a “healthy” child. But I am sure my life these past nine years is more beautiful and worth living because Down syndrome has been a part of it.

I have learned so much about life with Down syndrome. And while I have so much more to learn, here are a few chunks of wisdom I love to pass along.

The Most Difficult Aspect of Raising a Child with Down Syndrome Is Not Down Syndrome:

I often get asked what I consider to be the most difficult aspect of raising a child with Down syndrome. For the first few years, I may have said the cognitive delays or additional health concerns most commonly associated with Down

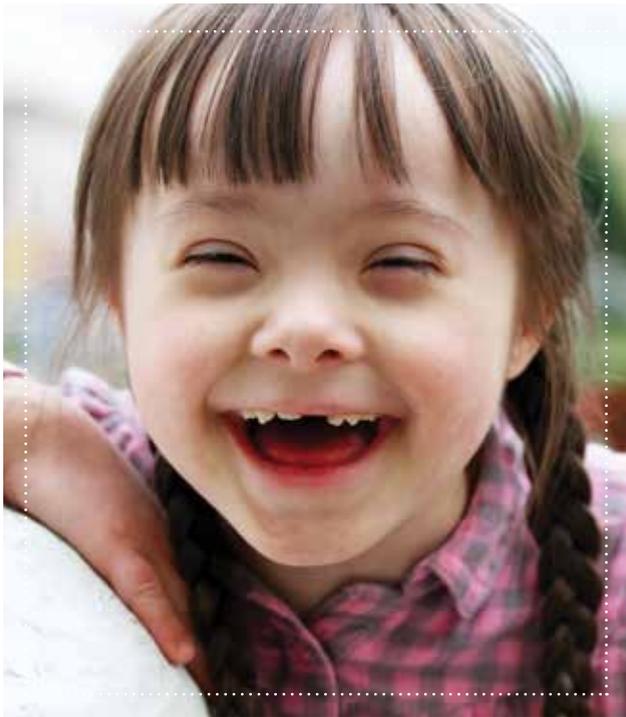
syndrome. And while these realities can sometimes be an added challenge, as the years have gone on, I realized the most difficult part of raising a child with Down syndrome is a world in which his or her worth goes unrecognized. As I send my kids with Down syndrome out into the world, I dream of the day they can step into it just as they are being fully included, accepted and celebrated in each space they enter. Sadly, this dream is not the reality. But while we work hard to make it happen, we will continue to recognize the blessing Down syndrome truly is.

people with Down syndrome are made in the image of God

I Will Need to Work Twice as Hard for My Children with Down Syndrome to Be Viewed as Half as Much:

My husband and I have put countless hours into helping our children with Down syndrome be successful in a world that does not have a space for them. This looks like hours of speech therapy, physical therapy and occupational therapy. It looks like hours of studying the laws and knowing our rights when it comes to their education. It looks like constantly having to educate the people who cross our paths about how to interact with our children. I have learned if I want my children to be seen as worthy, I will need to be a shouter of their worth. I have learned no matter how loud I shout their worth, it most often falls on deaf ears. People with Down syndrome, and those of us who adore them, are working tirelessly to make sure the world recognizes their worth. We want the world to know people with Down syndrome are worthy and valuable and amazing because of their Down syndrome, not in spite of it. It is hard work, but every second and every shout have been completely and totally worth it.

continued on page 50 >>



Down Syndrome Is from God: Here is the best part, people with Down syndrome are made in the image of God. They are hand crafted by a Creator who adores them and intended for them to be just as they are. That extra chromosome—the one people try to pray away, the one people think will ruin their life—it was beautifully and purposely added to every single cell in my daughter’s body, by a Creator who thinks she is amazing. If God cherishes Down syndrome and adores those He blesses with it, we all should too!

if God cherishes Down syndrome, we all should too

Living life with Down syndrome has taught me that the time has come for the Down syndrome narrative to shift. This starts by recognizing that the difficulties and struggles people with Down syndrome face are not because of Down syndrome, but because of a society which still refuses to make room for them and celebrate them just as they are.

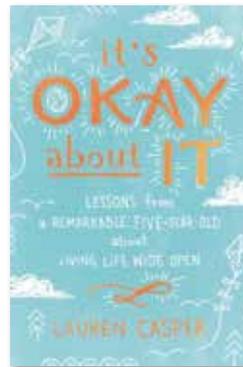
My prayer for the future for Down syndrome is parents would meet their child’s diagnosis with a sacred elation. High fives, instead of devastation. While they may find themselves mourning the loss of certain expectations, or what they thought would be, I pray our unified voices, shouting the worth of people with Down syndrome, would have been so loud, those parents with a new diagnosis will have heard us and, rather than hold tight to the hope of their new diagnosis being a mistake, they will hold tight to the hope that in fact their child with Down syndrome is a masterpiece! And they are lucky to have a front row seat. 



For more from Heather Avis, check out *The Lucky Few* on mtlbookstore.com

Heather Avis is the founder of the popular Instagram account @macymakesmyday, which currently has more than 96k followers, and author of *The Lucky Few* (Zondervan).

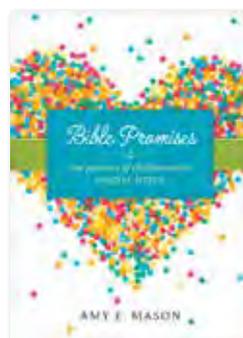
Related Products:



It's Okay About It
Lauren Casper, \$16.99



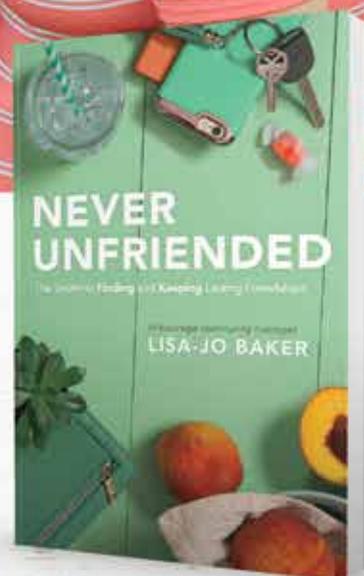
Mr. Blue Sky
\$19.95



Bible Promises for Parents of Children with Special Needs
Amy E. Mason, \$6.99



But what if we knew we could *never* be unfriended?
Would we *risk friendship* then?



Starting with that guarantee from the most faithful friend who ever lived - Jesus - this book is a step-by-step guide to friendship you can trust.

(in)courage
FIND YOURSELF AMONG FRIENDS

B&H Every WORD Matters™
BHPublishingGroup.com

NeverUnfriended.com



Carried through Cancer

A comedian's insights into breast cancer

by Victoria Jackson

When I got my diagnosis—Stage 3B Ductal Something-Something Breast Cancer Malignant Something—a couple of things flashed across my mind: how soothing the charming southern drawl was of the woman on the phone, telling me the news (they must teach a course in that—telling people bad news in a comforting way—she gets an ‘A’), and the jolt of reality that abruptly ends your fairytale life.

Nothing too terrible had happened to me yet. Always an optimist, I could think my way out of any bad situation. I have no money? I’ll get three jobs. I’m lonely? I’ll find a husband. I want to be an actress? I’ll move to Los Angeles and find out how to get a role. I bite my nails? Buy some fake ones! I could always come up with a solution. But this problem had me stumped.

Cut the cancer out immediately was a good start. Ask the experts what to do next? Check. Oh yeah, PRAY. Doh. Why do I always think of that last?! Oh, and I might be dying soon. Well, Philippians 1:21 flew into my head, “For me to live is Christ, to die is gain.” Whew. Win/win. I’d heard, read and memorized that verse my whole life. Now I get to live it. Okay. What will that look like? Well, Jesus has my soul, so I have nothing to be blue about. I don’t like being blue. Bubble gum helps. Chardonnay used to help, but I see on the Internet that alcohol causes breast cancer . . . and “sugar feeds cancer.” Uh oh. I have to quit sugar?!

The next verse that came into my mind was Romans 8:28, “All things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” And then Isaiah 61:3, “A crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.” So I decided that dying would be a great opportunity to share the gospel. I’ll write a book! Cancer and death are what everyone is afraid of. Maybe my *Saturday Night Live* connection mixed with the word *cancer* would bring people to read my story and then hear the gospel. Hallelujah! Because the gospel *is* my story. It is the reason I have been an optimist since age six when I learned to read and realized that the preacher was not just talking to the congregation when he quoted John 3:16, but that God, Jehovah, Creator of the Universe was speaking to me, Vicki, as an unique individual. He created no two people alike and He was giving each of us the opportunity to love Him back, personally. I knelt by my bed with my Baptist deacon/ex-vaudevillian/gymnastic coach dad and asked Jesus into my heart. I thanked Him for dying for my sins, although I could only think of two at the time (I was six), and I have followed Jesus ever since.

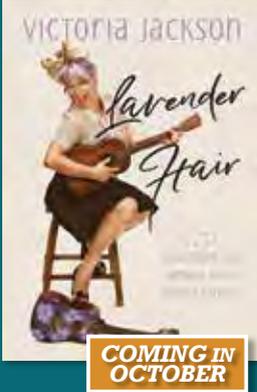
Show business is a difficult place to be a Christian. I turned down a lot of roles, did some I should have turned down and omitted bad words from my scripts. I was many times the only Christian on the set, but I felt like God led me there, and I tried to be an example of professionalism and of His love at all my job opportunities.

As I say in my book coming out in October, *Lavender Hair: 21 Devotionals for Women with Breast Cancer*, cancer doesn’t make all your other problems go away, it just shuffles them around and cancer lands at the top of the list. It is urgent and serious and life threatening. I tried to lighten up the situation by wearing various wigs to all my chemo visits and checkups—purple, pink, Raggedy Ann and Pippy Longstocking were some of my favorites.

The medical staff at Vanderbilt Breast Clinic were so kind and loving—I basked in their genuine care. And I walked with God. Rather, He carried me and my husband through the ordeal—double mastectomy, five months of chemo, 33 sessions of radiation, followed by an anti-estrogen pill for the next five years. Through it all, my feet weren’t touching

the ground. I was metaphorically weak in the knees, so He carried me.

I am cancer free for now. I feel great, I’ve changed my lifestyle into a healthy one with lots of fruits and vegetables, and I’m closer to Jesus than I’ve ever been. He is more real to me than at any other time in my life. During my walk today around the neighborhood, I sang the song “Victor’s Crown” with Darlene Zschech on my iPhone and lifted my arms to the sky to praise God. I almost wasn’t even afraid if anyone was looking. 




For more from Victoria Jackson, check out *Lavender Hair* on mtlbookstore.com

COMING IN OCTOBER

Victoria Jackson is the author of *Lavender Hair* and is best known for her six seasons on *Saturday Night Live*, 1986-1992, and has also appeared in many films. Victoria was raised in a Bible-believing, piano-playing home with no TV. While at college on a gymnastics scholarship, Victoria discovered drama. Johnny Carson’s talent scout saw her six-minute stand-up comedy act and put her on the *Tonight Show* where she appeared over twenty times. In 1992, Victoria was reunited with her high school sweetheart, Paul Wessel, and left show business to raise a family in the suburbs of Miami. Victoria still performs stand-up comedy and appears in an occasional film. She and her husband now reside in Nashville, TN, to be near their daughters and grandchildren.

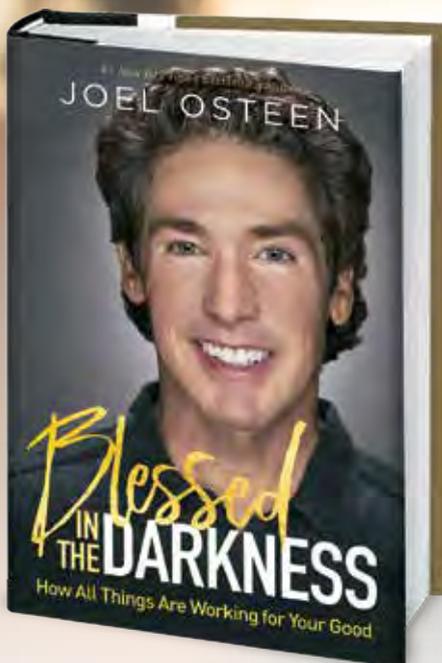
Related Product:



Peace in the Face of Cancer
Lynn Eib, \$15.99

Change Your Life This Fall!

FaithWords is dedicated to bringing you the best faith-based books that will enrich your life and help you deepen your relationship with Christ. Here are just a handful of our new inspirational fall releases from our bestselling authors. For more information about all of our new titles, please visit us at www.faithwords.com or follow us on social.



BLESSED IN THE DARKNESS

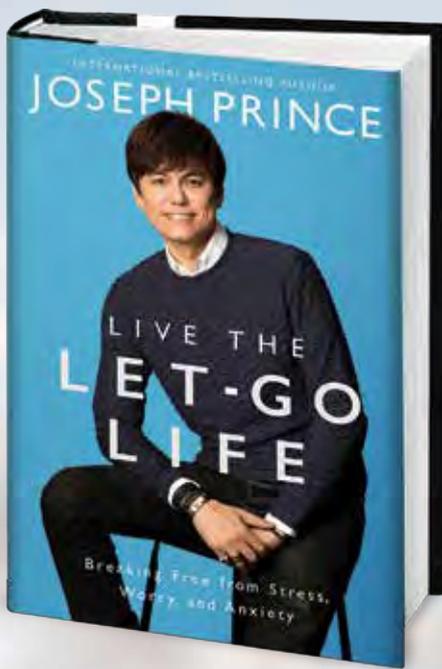
How All Things Are Working for Your Good

Joel Osteen

On Sale: October 24

Available in hardcover, ebook, and audio formats.

The same God that leads you through green pastures guides you through the valleys. #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Joel Osteen shares how God uses the dark places in life for good.



LIVE THE LET-GO LIFE

Breaking Free from Stress, Worry, and Anxiety

Joseph Prince

On Sale: October 31

Available in hardcover, ebook, and audio formats.

Letting your problems go into the hands of the One who created the universe is the most powerful thing you can do to live carefree and joyful.

UNSHAKEABLE TRUST

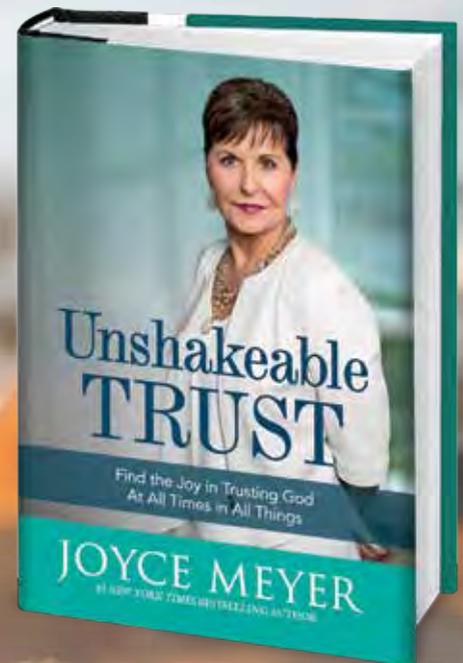
Find the Joy of Trusting God at All Times, in All Things

Joyce Meyer

On Sale: September 12

Available in hardcover, ebook, and audio formats.

In her new book, *New York Times* bestselling author Joyce Meyer explores the benefits of a life lived in complete and total dependence on God.



SOAR!

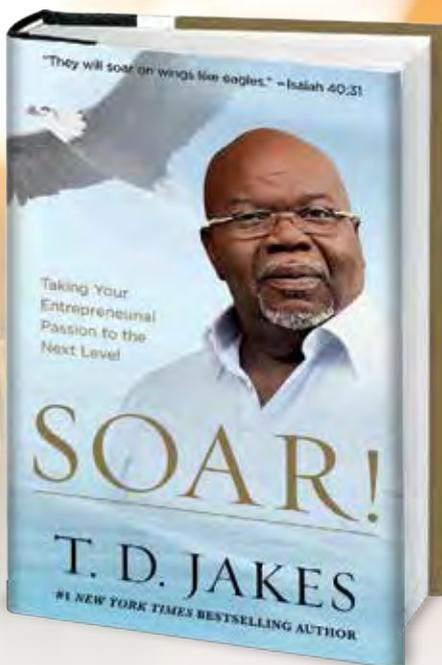
Build Your Vision from the Ground Up

T.D. Jakes

On Sale: October 10

Available in hardcover, ebook, and audio formats.

If you long to maximize your unique abilities and aptitudes, if you strive to combine personal fulfillment with professional satisfaction, if you dream of creating exceptional goods and offering transformative services for others, then you are ready to SOAR!





Breaking Bread Together

by Karen Whiting

"Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart." Acts 2:46

We hiked high in the Appalachian Mountains. A group of Girl Scouts, my husband and I trekked for hours, first in sunlight, then in pouring rain. When lunchtime came, we found shelter and rolled over logs to sit on a dry spot. I pulled out homemade Irish bread from my backpack and mentioned I'd used my grandma's recipe, one used at a family restaurant. We said grace and then passed it around, each breaking off a chunk of bread.

It hit the spot and filled our grumbling bellies. We took gulps of water from our canteens as we devoured the bread. The girls looked a bit downcast as they swallowed the last crumbs. Then, my husband slowly took out another loaf of Irish bread from his pack, and everyone cheered. The surprise of a second loaf had the girls laughing and pulling out some surprise snacks hidden in their own packs. Like stone soup, we soon had a feast.

One blessing can trigger a flow of generosity. Soon we continued on, the rain stopped, and the sun peeped out from behind the clouds.

Working and sharing together with unity makes such a difference in hearts and minds. We faced a higher altitude and steeper climb in the afternoon, but it seemed easier as we sang and cheered one another on. We ended the day at a campsite and spent time sharing a devotion and time of praise.

We hold special memories in our hearts to revive us at times when we feel low. I recall the first time I celebrated communion with whole loaves of bread instead of communion wafers or tiny bread cubes. There seemed such a richness and generosity of spirit in breaking off large chunks from a homemade loaf.

Breaking bread together, whether at church or in another setting, is a time of sharing that can easily become a time of praise.

IRISH BREAD

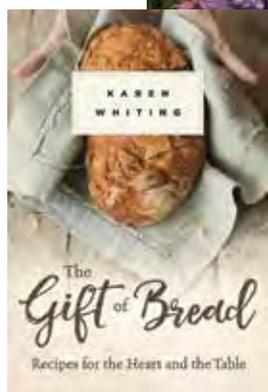
INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups flour
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup margarine
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1 12-ounce can evaporated milk
- 2 cups raisins, soaked in water for ten minutes

Directions

Heat oven to 350°F. Mix flour, baking powder, salt, sugar and margarine together with your hands. Add eggs and milk. Drain raisins and add to mixture.

Bake in large pan or cast iron skillet for 1 hour. After 45 minutes, put aluminum foil over the bread so the top won't burn.



From Karen Whiting's
The Gift of Bread
available on
mtlbookstore.com



Flavors of Fall



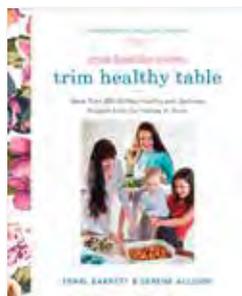
CRAZY EASY CURRY

INGREDIENTS

- 2½ pounds thawed boneless, skinless chicken tenderloins breasts or thighs
- 1 (10 - 12 ounce) frozen bag small cut seasoning vegetable blend
- 2 (15-ounce) cans full fat coconut milk
- 2 (6-ounce) cans tomato paste
- 1 rounded tablespoon yellow curry powder
- 1 teaspoon garam masala (if you don't have this, add another teaspoon or 2 of curry powder)
- 2½ - 3 teaspoons mineral salt
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (add more if you love heat like we do)
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- Optional (16-ounce) bag frozen cauliflower florets
- Optional couple handfuls frozen peas
- Optional ¼ - ½ cup heavy cream

Serves: 6-8

(If your family is smaller, halve recipe or make in full, then freeze half)



From Pearl Barrett & Serene Allison's **Trim Healthy Table** available on mtlbookstore.com



This is the easiest curry you will ever make. It won't fail you! If you are not sure whether you love curry, we got a feeling this just might turn you onto the curry loving side of life. Not a spicy food lover? Don't be put off by the word "curry"—simply use half the amount of chili flakes called for, or leave them out altogether, and you'll get all the delicious flavor without the heat. The creaminess of this Indian dish comes from the metabolism revving coconut milk. This makes it a wonderful dairy free meal, since the heavy cream is not necessary at all but does shoot the yum factor through the roof!

Place all ingredients (except optional heavy cream, cauliflower and peas) in the crockpot and stir. Turn to low and cook for 5-6 hours. If adding cauliflower and peas, add in the last hour. Break up chicken just a little (don't shred). If including heavy cream, stir in at the end. Taste and adjust seasonings until you smile and say, "I love you, Serene and Pearl!" (Sorry, couldn't help it.)

Electric Pressure Cooker Directions: Open cans of coconut milk from the bottom, and pour the liquid only into the pressure cooker. Set aside the coconut cream to add later. Mix together the remaining ingredients (except optional heavy cream, cauliflower and peas). Cook on High Pressure for 8-10 minutes and use natural pressure release for 5 minutes. Stir in coconut cream and optional peas and/or cauliflower, if using. Bring to pressure again for 1 min. If including heavy cream, stir in just before serving.

Make a Family Meal - Enjoy over cauliflower rice, or just have in a bowl alone with a side salad. Growing children can enjoy over whole grain rice for a crossover.



CREAMY GARLIC SPINACH SPAGHETTI SQUASH BAKE

INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium spaghetti squash
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 8 cloves garlic, minced
(or even more for garlic lovers)
- 16 ounces fresh spinach
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 4 ounces ⅓ less fat cream cheese
- ¾ cup parmesan cheese, divided
- 1 teaspoon mineral salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- Optional generous sprinkle
dried chili flakes (to taste)
- 4 cups pre-cooked diced chicken
- 6 ounces part skim
mozzarella cheese, grated

Serves: 6-8

(If your family is smaller, halve recipe or make in full, then freeze half)

Another dish that makes use of our wonderful, non-starchy pal spaghetti squash. We predict this will become a go-to family favorite in your home, or take it to a potluck and watch it get devoured before you can blink an eye!

1. Preheat oven to 375° F. Put whole spaghetti squash on a large baking sheet and pierce in several places with a sharp knife. Bake for 1 hour and ten minutes (or cut squash lengthwise, scoop out seeds and place downward on coconut oil sprayed tray and bake for 40 minutes). We prefer to bake whole because squash is difficult to cut before baking but easy afterward, and you can prebake squash any ol' time and simply keep it in the fridge until ready to make casserole. (Halving the recipe, you can cook 1 squash in an instant pot in only 6-8 minutes).

2. Scrape out seeds from cooked squash and discard. Scrape all the spaghetti squash from 1½ of the squash into a 9x13 casserole dish. Divide the spaghetti strands from remaining half squash into two baggies and freeze for two other single serve meals to top with any sauce or one of our crockpot meals . . . you'll thank us for that later.

3. Put butter in a large skillet on medium-medium/high heat. Add garlic and toss in butter for a minute. Add spinach and toss until it is wilted down. Add cream cheese, heavy cream, ½ cup of the parmesan cheese, mineral salt, black pepper and chili flakes (if using). Stir, then add to dish that contains spaghetti squash. Add diced chicken, then stir altogether very well. Top with grated mozzarella cheese, then the leftover parmesan cheese. Bake at 400° F for 35 minutes.

A Touch of Fall

Easy, Inexpensive Fall Projects for the Home

by KariAnne Wood

I'm not sure if it's the falling leaves or the smell of crisp in the air or the pumpkins or the haystacks or the fact that nature looks like it's about to take a long winter break, but I can't help it. I adore fall—especially when it comes to decorating. There are so many simple, easy and inexpensive ways to decorate your home for the fall season. Here are my favorite ideas:



1. Bring the outside in

This is the time of year to make friends with what's in your yard and invite it inside. There are leaves and trees and branches and pinecones just waiting to decorate your home. Gather fresh magnolia leaves from outside and create a simple greenery swag for your front entrance with wire and branches. Make a magnolia wreath for the front door with magnolia stems tucked into a floral foam wreath form. Layer in magnolia branches on the table with pears and lemons and fall leaves for a simple fall centerpiece.

Pinecones are another great source of outdoor inspiration. Loop wire over the end of a pinecone, tie a ribbon through the wire and hang a grouping of ribboned pinecones in place of a wreath on the front door. Dip pinecones in metallic paints and use them to fill a glass cloche for simple fall decor with shimmer and shine. Or print out a name on a piece of card stock, weave the piece of card stock through the layers of a pinecone and set beside a place setting to use as a place card holder.

2. Add fall color

One of the best things about the fall season is the color. Magenta, brilliant orange, sienna and crimson leaves dot the roadside and spill out over the rolling hills. Take inspiration from God's handiwork and use this color palette for a simple hutch display. Start with a collection of white dishes, layer them on the shelves of the hutch and then add in pops of color with tiny orange pumpkins tucked behind plates, piled in bowls and stacked on top of urns.

3. Texture

Layering texture in fall is like preparing your home for a really good snuggle. Start with a textured throw in a bold, chunky knit and drape in folds over a chair or sofa. Next, add in woven pillows sewn from velvets, linens and natural fibers. Fill pillows with down inserts for an extra layer of comfort. Lastly, add baskets made of jute or rope or crocheted fibers and fill them with books and magazines.

4. Handmade

In the world of home décor, handmade is king. Personalize your spaces with projects, crafts and DIY's you can make yourself. String a garland with different sizes of beads on jute twine and add a pom-pom to the end. Make your own no-sew pumpkins with a circle of fabric, a little stuffing, glue and twisted wire for the stem. Create a monogram out of a piece of reclaimed wood and tiny pinecones glued in the shape of the letter. Paint styrofoam pumpkins with layers in an ombre pattern and sprinkle them with glitter.

Handmade projects like these celebrate the season and your own unique design perspective. Take an afternoon for you and the home that you love to deck the halls with joy and creativity. See page 62 for a fun and easy project to get you started—a leather and felt fall garland.

continued on page 62 >>



Step 1: Select the felt

It's very important to start with the right felt for this project. All felt is not created equal. For this project, you want to select the thickest felt you can find. If your felt is too thin, the leaves will wilt when you string them on the cord.

Step 2: Trace leaf outlines on felt

Begin by tracing the outline of the leaves onto the felt with a pencil. Use a pencil, rather than a marker, so the lines of the leaves just fade away when you cut them out. I bought a small package of foam leaves from the fall department and used these as my stencil, tracing around the edges. You could also free-hand the leaves if you were feeling craft-bold, trace leaves from your yard or even print out leaf shapes from online.

To change up the project a little, I used two different colors of felt—gray and white. I also varied the size of the leaves and traced some small leaves, medium leaves and some larger leaves in different shapes onto the felt.



Leather and Felt Fall Garland

Supplies:

leather cording
gray and white
felt pieces
tiny hole punch



Step 5: Thread the leaves

The last step is simply to thread the leather cording (found in the jewelry section of the craft store) through the leaves. Start with a single leaf, place the cording through the tiny hole and pull it through. Repeat the same process with the second leaf, alternating colors. I mixed up the gray and white leaves and threaded them onto the leather cord in a random pattern.

Continue threading leaves until you have the entire cord completely covered. When you come to the end of the garland, thread one final leaf and then tie off the end of the cord behind the leaf.

That's it! The garland is finished and ready to decorate. Drape the garland over pumpkins on your mantel or hang it from the top of the hutch or decorate the front of a table display. It's easy to add a little flair to the season with simple, handmade projects like this.

Happy fall decorating! 

Step 3: Cut out the leaves

To make the cutting out part of the project easier, I traced onto a top piece of felt and then cut the designs out of two layers of felt at one time. This saves so much time.

Step 4: Punch holes

Don't use a regular hole punch for this step or the holes will be too large and your cording will just slide through. Instead, use a tiny hole punch for this project. Tiny hole punches typically retail at the craft store for under \$5.00.




For more from KariAnne Wood, check out *So Close to Amazing* on mtlbookstore.com

KariAnne Wood writes the award-winning lifestyle blog Thistlewood Farms from the back porch of her turn-of-the-century farmhouse in the rolling hills of Kentucky. Her blog has been named one of the top 10 decorating blogs by *Better Homes and Gardens* as well as a *Country Living* Decorating Blog of the Year. She has been featured on websites such as Buzzfeed, Huffington Post, Bob Vila and This Old House. She is a popular speaker at women's retreats and conferences nationwide. KariAnne and her husband are the parents of three children.



5 Ways to Detox Your Home

by Jacqueline Ritz

Many Americans have heard of the benefits of doing an annual detox to eliminate any toxins, chemicals or heavy metals that are built up in their bodies. This involves eating specific foods to help get rid of built up toxins and reset your body to get it back on the right track.

Truth is we breathe more than we eat, so we should also be very concerned about the air that we breathe. Sadly, most people spend 90% of their time indoors, so air quality should be very important to everyone.

Poor air quality comes from the dangerous chemicals found in cleaning supplies and pesticides that are used inside your home as well as exposure to dust, mold, synthetic carpets and rugs, water and even body care products.

Many of these common household and personal care products have a negative impact on your health and are known hormone disrupters.

Let me recommend five simple steps to make your home environment safer and more enjoyable, plus three practical recipes to get you started.

1. GET RID OF THE TOP 8 TOXIC CLEANING SUPPLIES

The first step to a safer environment is to get rid of the dangerous toxins and chemicals that are lurking in your cleaning supplies. Pull out all your cleaning supplies and read the labels carefully. The top problematic cleaning products are:

1. **Glass cleaner:** most have ammonia, which can irritate the skin, eyes and respiratory system
2. **Air fresheners:** these coat your nasal passages with an oil film called methoxychlor
3. **Oven cleaner:** most contain extremely corrosive bases of sodium hydroxide or potassium hydroxide
4. **Anti-bacterial cleaners:** The Centers for Disease Control says that anti-bacterial cleaners can interfere with immune system development in children, and they also contain triclosan, which can be absorbed by the skin and cause liver damage.
5. **Bleach:** extremely corrosive and can burn your skin, eyes and respiratory tract
6. **Bleach-based cleaning powders:** Many cleaning powders contain a formaldehyde, which is a known carcinogen recognized by the World Health Organization, called benzene chloroform. Side effects can include cancer, asthma and reproductive disorders.
7. **Furniture polish:** contains nitrobenzene, which is extremely toxic
8. **Dishwasher detergent:** contains chlorine, and any residue left on your dishes gets consumed by you when you eat

2. USE NON-TOXIC CLEANING SOLUTIONS

You probably already have available in your home many of the natural, safe items you can substitute for commercial household cleaners. These common, safe products can be combined to create homemade cleaning products. Here is a list of just a few of these products that you may already have.

- **Baking soda:** cleans, deodorizes, softens water and scours
- **Castile soap:** natural soap that does not contain petroleum
- **Lemon:** very effective against household bacteria
- **White vinegar:** cleans, deodorizes, disinfects
- **Cornstarch:** cleans windows and can be used to shampoo carpets and rugs
- **Olive oil:** an excellent wood polish
- **Hydrogen Peroxide:** an excellent substitute for bleach and fabric softener

Jacqueline Ritz is the founder of www.thepaleomama.com, which is a popular health and wellness website. Four years ago, Jackie and her husband decided to ditch the city and start farming. She convinced her husband to buy her a few chickens and some goats. The rest is history! Jackie has a 10-acre natural farm in Asheville, NC, where she, her husband and two children, raise most of their own food using organic and sustainable farming practices.

3. STOP WEARING SHOES IN YOUR HOUSE

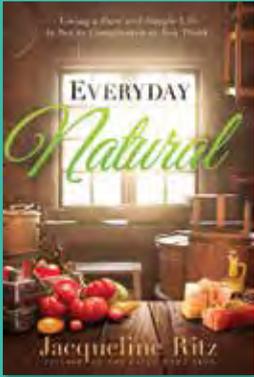
Keep the dirt, dust and pesticides you've stepped on outside! Walk barefoot or use slippers in your house. This really helps to eliminate a lot of toxins in the home.

4. GET HOUSEHOLD PLANTS

Plants help to improve air quality by reducing formaldehyde and indoor air pollution. Some of my favorite household plants include: Boston fern, English ivy, aloe vera and other succulents, spider plant and the peace lily.

5. REPLACE SYNTHETIC AIR FRESHENERS AND PLUG-IN AIR FRESHENERS WITH ESSENTIAL OIL DIFFUSERS

These fresheners are loaded with dangerous toxins and are usually within arm's reach of small children. You will love the aroma of using an essential oil diffuser. Citrus essential oils like wild orange, lemon, lime and lemongrass smell wonderful and purify the air.



Living a Pure and Simple Life by Pulling Your Family Out of the Concrete Jungle

EVERYDAY
Natural

Jacqueline Ritz



For more from **Jacqueline Ritz**, check out *Everyday Natural* on mtlbookstore.com

3 recipes to get you started with detoxing your home

Every home that is detoxing needs a few ingredients like essential oils, vinegar, castile soap and baking soda. I love using essential oils because you can use them in so many different ways. My favorites are for diffusing, giving your house a natural air freshener, and also for cleaning.

Here are a few recipes to get you started with some homemade green cleaning.

All-Purpose Cleaner

This is what I use to clean my kitchen countertops, sinks and bathrooms. You can mix up the essential oils that you use to create your own preferred fragrance.

Items Needed:

Empty spray bottle	30 drops of a disinfecting essential oil
1 cup of water	(e.g. clove, lemon, tea tree,
1 cup of white vinegar	cinnamon or wild orange)

Put all the ingredients in your empty spray bottle. Shake and use!



Multi-Purpose Floor Cleaner

The beautiful thing about making your own natural cleaning products is that you don't have to worry about damaging your floors with harsh chemicals. This recipe works if you have tile, hardwood, linoleum, ceramic, laminate or vinyl. You can mix any of the recommended essential oils or use one single oil.

Items Needed:

1 cup of white vinegar	15 drops of essential oils
1 tablespoon of castile soap	(e.g. clove, lemon, cinnamon, eucalyptus or peppermint)

Put all the ingredients in a bucket of water and mop the floors.



DIY Laundry Detergent

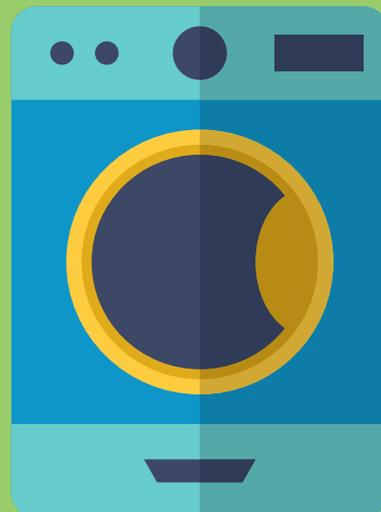
Makes almost a gallon

I've been making my own laundry detergent for years now. This recipe smells so good, cleans the clothes as good as store bought and is so cheap to make. You'll save about \$0.10 a load when you make your own laundry detergent, and trust me, the pennies add up!

Items Needed:

3 cups of borax	2 bars of soap
3 cups of washing soda	30 drops of essential oil
3 cups of baking soda	(I use a 50:50 mix of wild orange and lemon)

1. In a large bowl, mix the borax, washing soda and baking soda.
2. Grate the soap with a cheese grater. Toss the grated soap into a food processor. Add about 1 cup of the powdered mixture from the bowl. This allows the food processor to process the soap into smaller pieces without sticking to the blades.
3. While the food processor is on, drop the essential oil into it. This allows the essential oil to blend into the soap.
4. Take the grated soap mixture out and add it to the large bowl.
5. All done! Add 1-2 tablespoons to each load of laundry!



If you're a coupon cutter, penny saver and aluminum foil washer like me, then you will love some of these everyday items that can be used in multiple ways!



BABY WIPES: Other than cleaning a baby, these wipes are great for cleaning your TV remotes, cell phones, keyboard/mouse, counter tops and anything related to painting, such as hands and brush handles.



TIE RACKS AND S HOOKS: A tie rack is perfect to display your scarves, belts or jewelry. An S hook, great for hanging pots and pans in the kitchen, is also wonderful for hanging purses, umbrellas and scarves, and they take up less room in the closet than a hanger.



MAGAZINES AND POOL NOODLES: Roll the magazines up and stuff in your boots to help them stand straight and not crease or use pool noodles, cut to size and placed inside your boots. Noodles can also be cut/formed into a circle, decorated and used as a door wreath.



OLD BABY FOOD JARS: These have been my main stand-by for years. They can hold different sizes of jewelry; bathroom supplies, such as eye and lip liners, cotton balls and cotton swabs; garage items, such as nails and screws; office supplies, such as rubber bands, thumbtacks, paper clips, pens and pencils; paint thinner for artists and most importantly, they can house tiny flowers and lightning bugs for your children!

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS WITH MULTIPLE USES

THE COTTON SWAB



So small and unassuming, yet this little guy can get more than one job done.

CLEANING: Dab the swab in rubbing alcohol and wipe away the grime between the keys on your computer keyboard or other appliances with crevices.

MAKEUP: Apply (or remove) makeup around the eyes or gloss on the lips and touch up spots with a clean sweep every time.

ARTS AND CRAFTS: Use as a child's paint brush or a precision applicator with glue.

NAILS: To remove nail polish on the skin around your nails, dip a cotton swab in nail polish remover for easy clean up.



For more from Lane P. Jordan, check out *12 Steps to Becoming a More Organized Woman* on mtlbookstore.com



What is Worship?

by Laura Story



When you think of the word *worship*, what comes to mind? An hour-long service you attend on Sunday morning? A genre of music played on your local Christian radio station? Or maybe you think of something less positive, like the musical preferences that split the church you grew up in. It is not an overstatement to point out that some of the biggest struggles within the church occur when the Subject and the Object of worship, God the Creator, is replaced with a focus on style, form and medium of worship. My very first “real job,” other than a couple of summer stints at a local pizza joint, was at Perimeter Church in Atlanta, GA. They needed a worship leader and I was naïve enough to think that my brand-new music degree and the four chords I knew on guitar would be enough. Four months into this new job, my husband of less than two years faced severe health issues, and I no longer knew how to stand before a congregation of people and sing songs of praise to God. How could I lift songs of joy when my life was falling apart and my faith was crumbling? During this season, as a floundering follower, my idea of worship changed from a warm and fuzzy feeling to a choice to praise an always worthy God.

Even the holy Scriptures give many different pictures of worship. In the Psalms, we find David shamelessly dancing before the Lord. In Job, we see a man deep in despair, broken and physically afflicted, choosing to praise God even though his world has collapsed around him. As I searched the Scriptures for a definition of worship to get me through the challenges I was facing, I found my answer in the book of Romans.

true worship begins with surrender

The first 11 chapters of Romans contain what most theologians agree is the most concise doctrine on grace found in the Bible. After those 11 chapters of rich truth, it is as though Paul, in the first verse of chapter 12, takes a deep breath and answers the question hanging in the air, “Considering all that Christ has done for us, His atoning death, our freedom from both the penalty and power of sin, how are we to respond?”

The answer is both simple and complex. *Present your bodies, as a sacrifice.* As Paul wrote these words, his audience would have understood the Jewish sacrificial system and would, no doubt, recall the suffering Jesus had endured. Hearing this may have made a few of them anxious. A sacrifice? Me? I really must give it *all*!

Paul quickly adds this clarification: *a living sacrifice.* Paul wasn’t necessarily asking these followers to die for their faith; he was asking them to live for their faith. He was calling them to live lives *holy and acceptable to God.* Why? Because, *this is your reasonable act of worship.* Some translations even use the word *rational.* The point is the same. Considering all that God has done for us through Jesus, the rational response is to give our lives back to Him, to His cause and to His Kingdom. This is the worship God

continued on page 70 >>

longs to receive from His followers. This is true worship.

My first response to this truth was relief. In Paul's paradigm of worship, surrender precedes emotions. True worship begins with surrender. Of course, true worship engages our emotions, often in different ways for different people; but for Paul, worship began with an act of submission, of deep trust. The proper response of someone who has been given everything is to present his life to the one who has given him everything. *This is our reasonable act of worship.*

My second response was one of apprehension. A holy and blameless sacrifice? Me? Anyone who has ever met me knows I wouldn't qualify for this description. And Paul himself just finished reminding us in chapter three that *all* have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. But that's when we look back to the beginning of verse one for how we present this type of worship. *By the mercies of God.* God does not expect perfection from His children. When He looks at each of us, despite the skeletons in our closets, our constant bent toward self-centeredness or the many failures that await us in the future, He sees us clothed in the righteousness of Jesus rather than our filthy rags. We don't give our lives to God to gain His favor; we give our lives as a response to the favor He has freely shown us because of the work of Jesus. *This is our reasonable act of worship.*

So, what does worship look like in your life? Let me propose two potential steps forward.

First, surrender. You may need to think differently about worship. The root of worship is not a style of music or some longing for an emotional experience; rather, it is a surrendering. Surrender yourself to God, the Father. If you feel hopelessly estranged, be reminded that the cross has dealt with the sin that we all struggle with in our daily lives. If you are in a hard season, your tendency may be to "fake it until you make it," but surrender is a step of faith, believing that all you ever need has been provided by the finished work of Christ. Our confidence is in God's faithfulness, not our own. He takes our smallest expression of faith and turns it into praise.

Second, let me encourage you that what we are talking about here is, as Paul said, a "reasonable" act of worship. What makes this reasonable is the fact that God Himself has mercifully provided the means for us to engage with Him in worship. As you embark on a life of worship, keep it simple. Worship is "How Great Thou Art" sung by a hundred-voice choir, but it's also the broken hallelujah uttered from the ICU waiting room. It is David's dance and Job's sweet cries, and every day in between.

My prayer for you is a deeper worship experience, based not on your practice of worship but on the depth of the Object of your worship, so that all we are may be lost in the depths of who He is. [mtl](#)

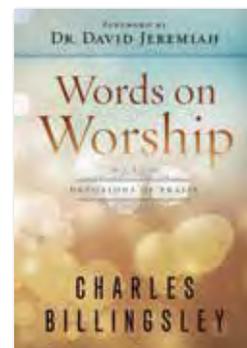


For more from
Laura Story, check
out *Open Hands*
on mtlbookstore.com

Related Products:



Indescribable
Louie Giglio, \$16.99

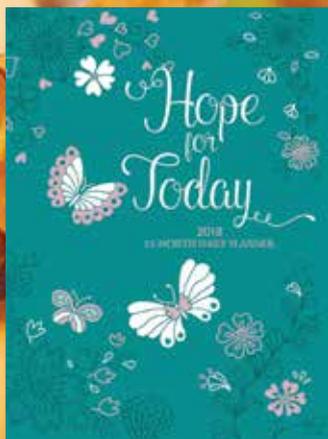
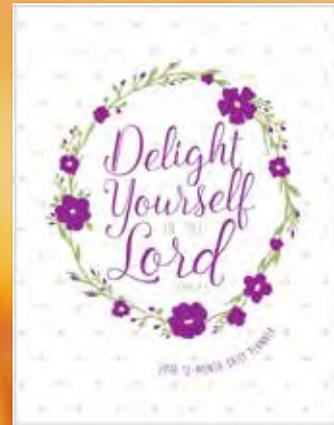


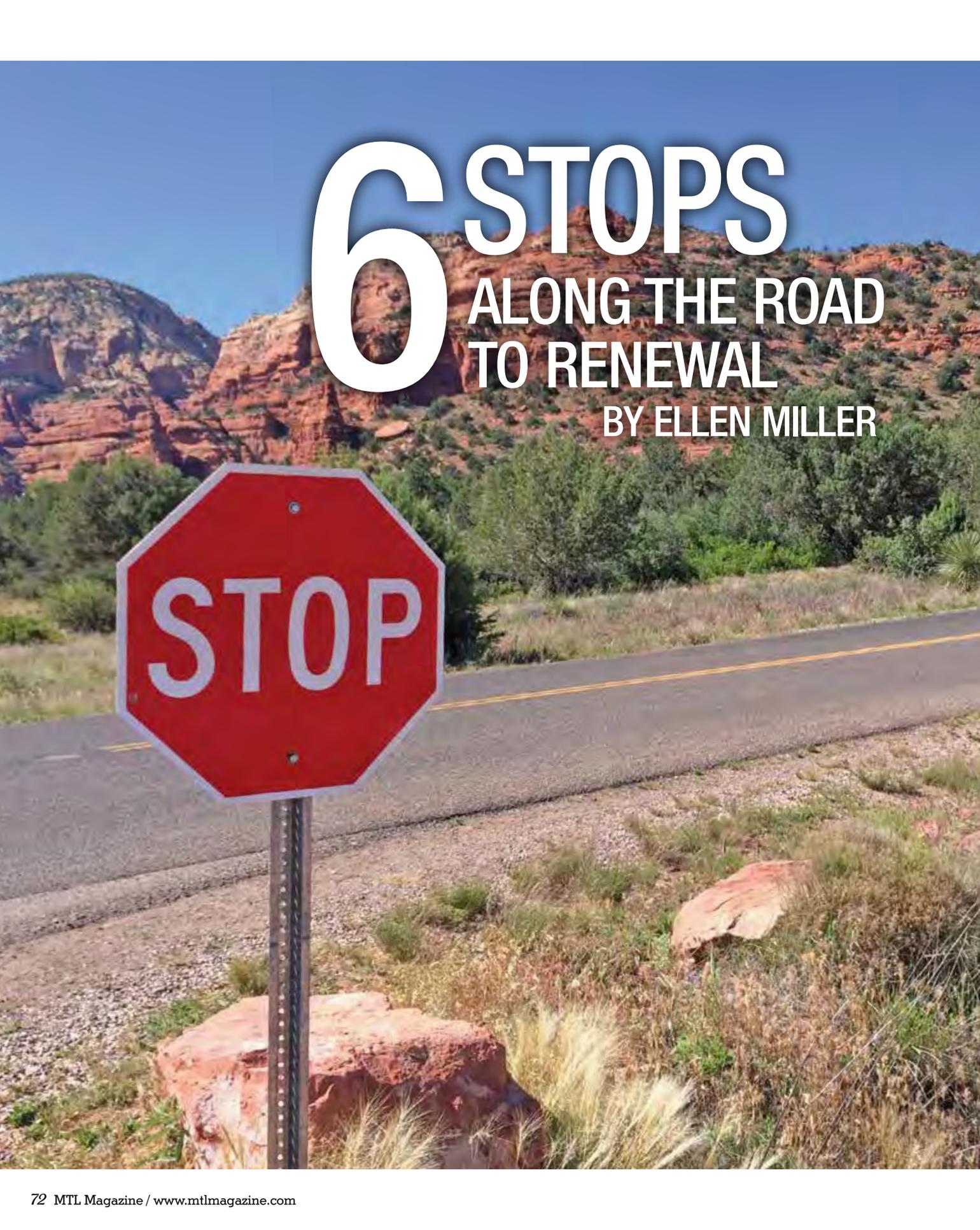
Words on Worship
Charles Billingsley, \$14.99



Wonder
Hillsong UNITED, \$13.99

Inspired ORGANIZATION 2018





6 STOPS

ALONG THE ROAD
TO RENEWAL

BY ELLEN MILLER



Sister, are you exhausted, overwhelmed and maybe even feeling a little cray-cray on any given day? If you're a mom, I so get it. Everyone wants a piece of you, and you dish yourself out to the point where there's nothing left but crumbs. It's sweet of you to try so hard to please everyone, but is that really in the best service to your family and more importantly to God?

A mother's sacrificial resolve begins when that little stinker is barely seated in the womb. No more than the size of a peanut, my little doll had me giving up my breakfast (literally). Within a few months, she ensured I would have my last eight hours of uninterrupted sleep for almost a year (perhaps this was my "training" for the 2:00 A.M. feedings she would demand for her first seven months). *And*, to give her the healthiest start possible, I embraced a diet devoid of any food that was "fun" (much to my chagrin, Dr. Pepper and Cheetos were not included on the food pyramid). But this is what we do. We so love our cherubs that, with little thought, we begin the selfless journey of denying ourselves for the sake of our wee one. This seems impressive, but after that little bun is out of the oven, I'm not thinking this is biblical.

*our purpose is to
glorify God by serving
with our best talents*

The call for us to refresh our mind, body and soul begins in Genesis and continues through the teaching of Christ in the New Testament. The concept of a Sabbath with a full 24 hours of rest, worship and enjoyment sounds awesome! (*Can you imagine?*) Unfortunately, most moms I know have felt exempt from this commandment because . . . well . . . we're moms and moms know there's *no* Personal Time Off on *this* job—at least for a while. Until your Sabbath can be fully reclaimed (there is joy in the empty nest), there are some stops along the Road to Renewal you can take that will be restorative to your being, will impact your family for the good and will glorify God:



SACRIFICING YOUR QUIET TIME. Prayer and study are your number one priority (or at least a close tie with a stinky diaper). A few moments spent each morning in quiet prayer and a few moments stolen during the day to meditate on God's Word is not a luxury but a necessity. Take a Sabbath from the world.

continued on page 74 >>



SAYING YES. When we excessively volunteer or agree to serve every time we're called, we can spread ourselves too thin. Our purpose is to glorify God by serving with our best talents. Don't sacrifice your most rewarding service that will bring God, you and those you serve considerable joy for something that others can do. Take a Sabbath from saying yes.



DOING EVERYTHING YOURSELF. Girlfriend, it's time to delegate. If the kids are young, invite your Superman for a sweet chat over a candlelight dinner and lay out the opportunities for him to come to your rescue (poor thing, even with his x-ray

vision, he can't see you need help getting the kids in the bath). If your children are older, it might be time for them to do their own laundry: pink towels for the girls; blue towels for the boys. Yes, there will be laundry disasters and some days they will wear dirty jeans to school, but they'll live and so will you. Take a Sabbath from being their maid.



NEGOTIATING. That formidable four-year-old with the negotiation skills of a CEO is not your peer. Sacrificing your energy and peace for your children's sense of self-esteem is depleting your energy and fueling

their expectation that they are in control—which will not serve them well in second grade. Take a Sabbath from negotiating.

you must be refreshed in order to refresh others.



WORRYING. God's got this—whatever "this" is—and will have a solution you never dreamed of. Review the first stop . . . faith is built during time spent with God, studying His truth and promises and learning to rely on His plan for

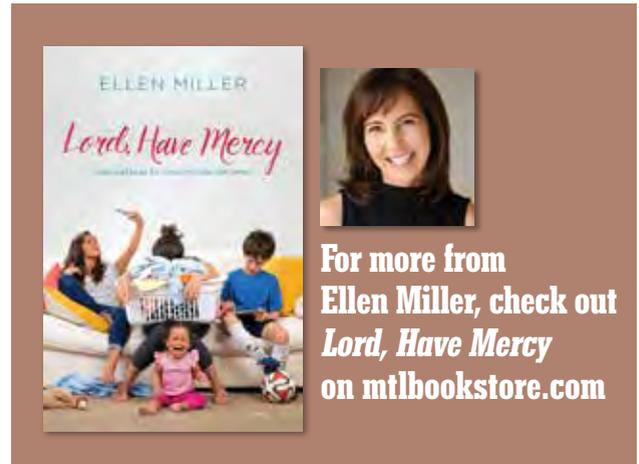
you and your family. Take a Sabbath from worrying.



PUTTING YOURSELF LAST. You must be refreshed in order to refresh others. You were beautifully and wonderfully made for divine appointments and some of those are in your own kitchen as you scramble eggs

and butter the Eggos. You can't hear them clearly, discern well the issue, or counsel wisely if you're exhausted. Take a Sabbath from sacrificing yourself—both for you and those you love.

The Road to Renewal comes to an end at this beautiful place where peace and purpose abound, but it's a difficult destination to reach if you keep missing the stops. 



For more from Ellen Miller, check out *Lord, Have Mercy* on mtlbookstore.com

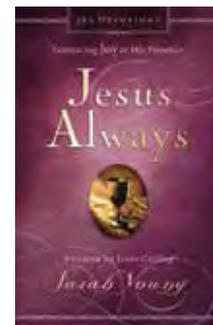
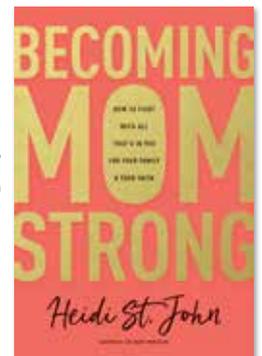
Ellen Miller is the author of *The One Year Book of Inspiration for Girlfriends*. A former corporate officer for a Fortune 500 company, she currently serves as the founder and visionary for the technology marketing firm Insider Marketing. She and her husband, Steve, live in Dallas and have two grown children. Her latest devotional, *Lord, Have Mercy*, released from Tyndale Momentum in April 2017. Follow her blog at ellenmiller.com.

Related Products:



Long Days of Small Things
Catherine McNeil, \$14.99

Becoming Mom Strong
Heidi St. John, \$15.99



Jesus Always
Sarah Young, \$15.99



How to Get More Done

...without Burning Out

by Tracy Higley

Productivity.

We're all searching for more of it. Grabbing up the tips, tricks and hacks to get more done. But behind all the time management and self-discipline, there's that niggling fear . . . *what if I'm working hard on all the wrong things?*

Each of us wants life to be about more than productivity. We want our lives to have purpose and meaning. To make a difference—in our families, in our communities, in our world. The truth is we want more than productivity. We want *impactivity*. To discover the calling and the dream that God made us for, to pursue it with healthy balance and to know the joy of being in exactly the right place, getting the right things done.

So how do we get to this elusive place? This mix of passion, balance and joy, where we are truly thriving in the dream God's given us to live?

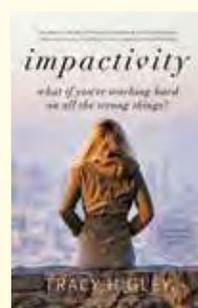
To live a life of impactivity, we need to focus on the six elements that will create that healthy environment.

1. First, we need to **DREAM**—to discover the adventure God meant our lives to be as we partner with Him to build the kingdom with the unique gifts, skills and passions He's built into our hearts.
2. But life sometimes gets in the way, doesn't it? Too much clutter in our houses, our schedules and our minds. We need to **UNSHACKLE** from much of it, finding the freedom to pursue that dream.
3. Once we've stepped into freedom, it's time to map out a clear vision and strategy for the dream. We need to **DESIGN** the path of our adventure, so we know how to take those first steps, and have a picture of the exciting place we're headed.
4. Then we're ready to get started on this God-given dream! Setting up healthy routines and habits, understanding how to prioritize our tasks and time and learning how to focus deeply on the work we've been given all are important steps as we **IGNITE** our workflow and start getting things done!
5. But to live a life of impactivity, not mere productivity, we also need to embrace a healthy understanding of what it means to **RECHARGE**. We're all striving for work/life balance, but when we're loving our dream, we

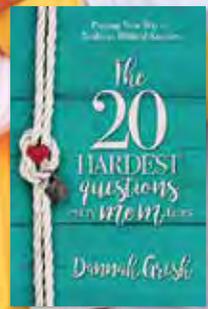
may not think of it as work. Better to strive for work/rest balance—that healthy place of both expending and renewing energy.

6. And lastly, every God-given adventure was meant to be pursued in community with others. When we **CONNECT** with like-minded friends who share our commitment to living the adventure and are willing to hold us accountable and cheer us on, we're able to do more, do it better and love life!

We all want lives of impactivity. To arrive there, we need to be intentional, to both discover and embrace the unique adventure of our lives. But the rewards are fantastic . . . the exciting pursuit of a dream carved out solely for you, and the chance to make a difference in your world!



For more from Tracy Higley, check out *Impactivity* on mtlbookstore.com



For more from Dannah Gresh, check out *The 20 Hardest Questions Every Mom Faces* on mtlbookstore.com



Dannah Gresh

MOM MOMENTS

WITH DANNAH

CAN A CHRISTIAN EMBRACE TOLERANCE? *PREPARING YOUR CHILDREN FOR A NEW SCHOOL YEAR*

by Dannah Gresh, Creator of *Secret Keeper Girl*

Recently, a student I knew had been temporarily caught up in the party and sex scene, but she didn't like how it made her feel. When she decided to embrace abstinence and sobriety, she experienced ridicule from her self-proclaimed "tolerant" friends. This prompted her to ask me: "Why is there tolerance for everything but sobriety and abstinence here? Aren't those healthy choices worthy of respect?"

It's not just peers doling out pressure for our students to embrace the new tolerance. School policy and worldly messages of tolerance can cause confusion as our children navigate through the years of deciding if they will embrace what mom and dad believe. On the high school campus of my husband's hometown, a female who identifies as male was using the men's locker room in accordance with the school policy. Several male students felt their right to privacy was invaded, but the school is sticking to its position.

From religion and God to gender and marriage to political opinions, the word *tolerance* is going to come up a lot. Here are a few questions your children may have and a head start in discussing an answer with them.

What is tolerance? Tolerance is defined by Merriam-Webster as "sympathy . . . for beliefs or practices differing or conflicting with one's own." It is neither indifference nor acceptance. At its core, tolerance is treating another person with respect, even if we find his ideas and beliefs in contrast to our own. The Bible encourages us to show "tolerance for one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2). The world's new tolerance starts with the premise that there are not rules, so we can't judge anyone's choice. Biblical tolerance starts with the premise that God has guidelines for living but also offers us free will to obey them. A Christian is charged to share God's truth "in gentleness and respect" (I Peter 3:15). Gentleness and respect are core characteristics of true biblical tolerance.

Can I disagree with people who have views different from mine, and still be tolerant? Sadly, we live in a society that offers an incoherent definition of tolerance. Rather than making space for us to respectfully disagree with each other, our culture mandates that we define tolerance as leaving everyone alone to do as they see fit (even when their rights offend our own rights). It says, “I disagree with your right to express your opinion unless it aligns with my own.” That’s actually *intolerance!* Tell your children that they *can* disagree and voice their opinions. It’s actually a part of tolerance—biblical or otherwise.

True tolerance declares, “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”¹ (This quote is often misattributed to Voltaire. I’m not sure who said it, but I like it. It’s a great sentence to unpack with your kids.) Genuine tolerance allows for, and even demands, robust debate about ideas and values. The very presence of disagreement and opinion and choice is evidence of tolerance.

Does disagreeing with someone’s core beliefs mean I can’t love them? Pastor Rick Warren recently said, “Our culture has accepted two huge lies. The first is that if you disagree with someone’s lifestyle, you must fear or hate them. The second is that to love someone means you agree with everything they believe or do. Both are nonsense. You don’t have to compromise convictions to be compassionate.”

From a gospel perspective, I don’t know that anyone is ever won to Christ because he or she is proven wrong. A person is won to

Christ because he is loved. Above all, “put on love” (Colossians 3:14). How can your children show love to someone they disagree with? They could show them compassion when they seem to be having a bad day. They could defend them when they are being bullied for their beliefs. They could—like Jesus did with the woman at the well—go hang out with them when no one else will.

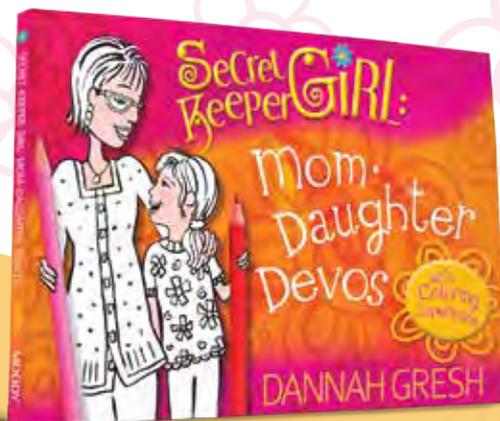
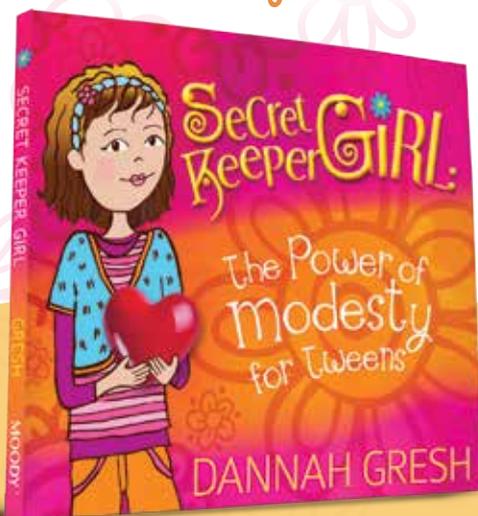
How do I show respect for someone if I disagree with them? Ask questions. The only people Jesus truly confronted with harsh statements were the highly legalistic, intolerant Pharisees. He didn’t have the same words of anger for prostitutes, thieves and rebels. While He never failed to speak truth, He also welcomed the respectful dialogue of thought. He did this by asking questions or inquiring statements—“Go and bring me your husband”— or presenting decisions for them—“Let the one who is without sin cast the first stone.”

When your child is talking to someone who doesn’t believe God exists, tell her she doesn’t have to prove that He does. Instead, she should ask questions like, “How did you come to that conclusion?” “Do you ever doubt your conviction?” Questions arrest the defense system and create an open space to present ideas. It’s a good idea for a Christian to have the humility to go first in listening. Then, wait and see if your ideas will be welcomed too.

If they aren’t, keep loving! 

¹Evelyn Beatrice Hall, summarizing the perspective of Voltaire, in *The Friends of Voltaire* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1907), 199.

Coming soon from **Dannah Gresh:**



MOODY
Publishers®

From the Word to Life®

Middle school used to be the time to talk with young girls about modesty and body image, but now the at-risk demographic is ages 8–10. These resources will spark those conversations.

Secret Keeper Girl and the companion *Mom-Daughter Devos* help tweens understand their dignity in Christ and the power of modesty. The book has many interactive features to help them absorb the message, and the devos come with talking points for moms and daughters to discuss together.



Is Your Child Ready for School



• Sissy Goff •



...in more ways than one?

As a counselor for kids, one of my busiest times of the year is October. It's not that the days are shorter and people begin to struggle with Seasonal Affective Disorder more. Although that does happen. Or even that the holidays are getting closer and people are more reminded of loss. Again, yes, but it's not primarily that. It's that the first quarter of school is over and parents have had their first sit-down with their child's teacher.

"I didn't even have my bottom in the chair at my parent-teacher conference last week before the teacher said, 'We're concerned about Martha.' She went on to tell me that Martha is struggling in relationships. She said she pushes other people away. She even used the word *annoys*. I don't have any idea what she's talking about. That's certainly not what we're seeing at home."

"Andy's getting in trouble with the teacher. She said he can't keep his hands to himself. He's distracted, can't focus and is starting to distract the other kids. I'm not sure what to do. The teachers have been working with him, but it's like he's not connecting the dots."

Teachers—yes, even the ones who push our kids—are some of their and our best resources. Your child's teacher has a window into his or her life that you simply don't. They see your child interacting with peers . . . working with others on a project, managing the cafeteria line, navigating playground politics. They catch glimpses of our kids and see sides, positive and negative, that we need to be aware of, even when it might be a hard truth.

Your child's school life is multi-faceted. Academics are important. We want to track their grades, even more closely when they're younger. We want to be aware of the degree of effort they're putting into those grades and let our expectations be more tied to effort than to outcome. But the school day is made up of much more than how diligently they're doing their work, or how many answers they got correct on a quiz. The emotional and social life of your child is a pivotal part of his or her school life as well. How is your daughter doing emotionally at school? How is your son

doing socially? You want them to be growing each year—not just academically but also emotionally and socially.

In our book, *Are My Kids on Track?*, David Thomas, Melissa Trevathan and I outline four emotional, four social and four spiritual milestones, in order, that we want our children to be reaching. In fact, it's those milestones—in areas of their life other than academic—that define who the kids we love will be someday as friends, spouses, co-workers and even parents themselves.

When you think about the emotional life of your child, it's important to start with the basics. We want to teach kids a basic **emotional vocabulary**, the skills they need to not only understand but express their little hearts. In counseling sessions with parents of toddlers, often the most common emotion expressed by those toddlers is anger. Anger, however, is a secondary emotion, meaning there's always another emotion that's lurking underneath. We need to give our kids, from their earliest stages, the ability to truly express their emotions.

As kids learn to express their emotions, we want to help them learn to regulate them. In other words, we want to help kids find **perspective** from an emotional standpoint. I ask many kids in my office to think of a 1–10 scale of emotion. Many of these kids need to work on their perspective because everything registers as a 10, so much so that I've been calling this scale a "dramamometer." Instead, we want to help them understand what a 10 truly is—even have them give an example of a 10 in a calmer moment. So then, when they're using big language to describe their big emotion, we can take them back to the scale to help them learn this vital milestone of perspective.

Empathy would be layered in next, as children develop the ability to see life from the viewpoint of another. We want our children to learn to care for others, and researchers believe kids typically should be hitting this milestone around the age of 8 or 9. If your parent-teacher conference includes references to a need for empathy, practice makes a profound impact. Take your son or daughter with you to volunteer. Help them

continued on page 80 >>

by role-playing and asking questions that help them see the viewpoint of another.

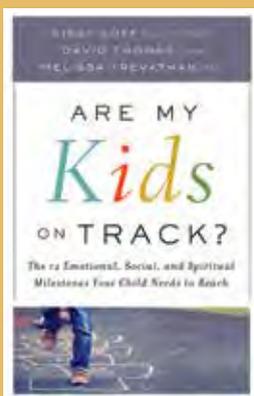
And finally, we add in the emotional milestone of **resourcefulness**. We want the kids we love to grow up seeing themselves as capable, believing not only that they want to make a difference born out of that empathy but that they can make a difference. In an age of helicopter parents, children have less opportunity to do things for themselves. In fact, we see parents today who are so busy being their children's resources that those kids don't have the opportunity to develop their own resourcefulness. Asking questions is one of the most important building blocks of resourcefulness. "What do you think would help?" "What do you believe is the right decision?" By asking thought-provoking questions, we not only help our children learn to think logically through a situation but also communicate that we believe they're capable of thinking through a situation.

Socially, kids progress through milestones as well. Skills like **awareness, reciprocity, ownership** and **boundaries** are crucial to healthy social development for the kids we love. As they learn awareness of how they impact others, they can experience the mutual back-and-forth-ness of relationship that many adults we know have never reached. Saying "I'm sorry" teaches them ownership and sets the stage for healthy relationships. Finally, boys and girls both need a sense of boundaries in relationship as well . . . how to offer others a combination of kindness and strength at the same time.

*your child's school life
is multi-faceted*

Spiritually, we lay a **foundation** first. We build on that foundation by helping our kids discover their **identity**, whom God has uniquely created them to be. When they're teenagers, we want them to start to gain an understanding of mercy, God's **mercy** for them and the mercy they can have for others. And, finally, in later adolescence, we can help them discover **meaning**—that God can use whom He has uniquely created them to be to change the world.

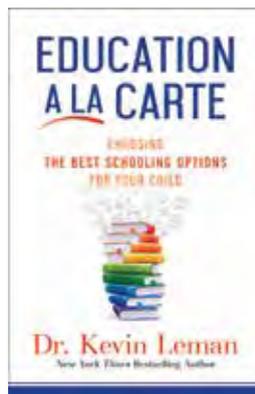
These skills—these developmental milestones—are ones we believe every child needs to reach. As they develop, they'll be quick to meet some and potentially slower to meet others. Going back to school this fall may create more awareness on your part of just where your child is in terms of those milestones. Lean in. Listen. Ask the teacher how you can help. And then talk with your child. In our book, we have practical suggestions at the end of each chapter to instill that particular milestone in the life of your child. But more than anything else, we'd say practice. Give children opportunities to learn and grow in more than just their academic setting. Their lives and relationships—now and forever—will be changed in the process. And you might just be changed right alongside them. 



For more from Sissy Goff check out *Are My Kids on Track?* on mtlbookstore.com

Sissy Goff, M.Ed., LPC-MHSP has been counseling girls and their families since 1993 at Daystar Counseling Ministries in Nashville, TN, with the help of her counseling assistant/pet therapist, Lucy the Havanese. A sought-after speaker, she's also the author of eight books including *Are My Kids on Track?* and *Raising Girls*. You can find and follow her blog at www.raisingboysandgirls.com.

Related Products:



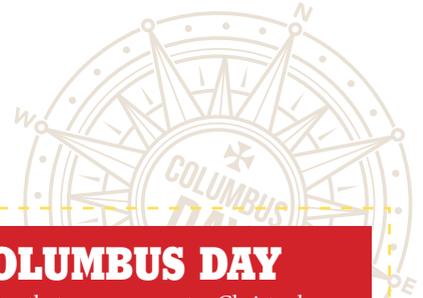
Education a la Carte
Dr. Kevin Leman, \$17.99

Fearless Parenting
George Barna & Jimmy Myers, \$14.99



Parenting Is More Than a Formula
Jim Newheiser, \$6.99

don't forget...



1. **BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH**



This month-long campaign aims to raise awareness of the disease, the importance of early detection and the support services available, as well as raise funds for research. About 1 in 8 women in the U.S. will experience invasive breast cancer during her lifetime.

DYSAUTONOMIA AWARENESS MONTH

Dysautonomia (Dis-auto-NO-mia) describes any disorder of the autonomic (automatic) nervous system. By raising awareness, the goal is to help physicians recognize and treat one of the most misdiagnosed medical conditions. thedysautonomiaproject.org



8. **Clergy Appreciation Day/Month**

Get creative as you plan tangible ways to honor and express gratitude to your pastor and his family for their hard work and dedication to the well-being of the body of Christ.

9. **COLUMBUS DAY**

On this day that commemorates Christopher Columbus landing in the New World in 1492, try to imagine the sailors' joy. Until their two-month voyage, three weeks was the longest anyone had sailed in one direction out of sight of land.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16. **Dictionary Day**

Increase your vocabulary by learning a new word or two on this anniversary of Noah Webster's birthday in 1758.



17.

18.

19.

20.

21. **Sweetest Day**

Reach out to someone who needs a reminder of the sweetness of life by sharing a kind deed, encouraging words or a small gift.

22.

23.

OCTOBER

24.

25.

26.

27.

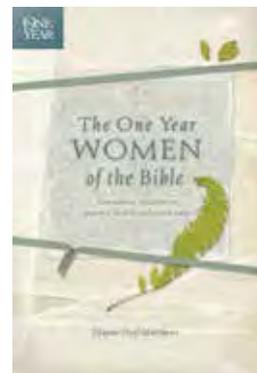
28.

29.

30.

31. **HALLOWEEN (ALL SAINTS' EVE)**

Get treats ready for neighborhood children who ring your doorbell, or look around for a fall festival to attend at a church or community venue.



For more from Dianne Neal Matthews, check out *The One Year Women of the Bible* on mtlbookstore.com

Navigating
Difficult Firsts for
Your Daughter
with *Grace*

by Wynter & Jonathan Pitts





Our oldest daughter, Alena, just turned 13. Other than being the lead child actress in the Christian film *War Room*, she is just a normal little girl. Or should we say teenager?

We are often asked how the movie has affected her life. Many people assume that everything has changed but, honestly, not much has. Outside of being recognized on a fairly regular basis while shopping or doing public activities, life after the big screen has gone back to being pretty normal.

The movie was a big “first,” but there have been many firsts along the way for her and for us. We are thankful for those firsts in her life because we will soon repeat most of them multiple times with our three younger daughters.

We’ve ebbed and flowed as we’ve enjoyed each stage of Alena’s life, but the latest first has been a real whopper! Coming into it, we thought that people were exaggerating. We thought they were embellishing for effect.

It turns out we couldn’t have been more wrong.

We’re talking about **puberty**. In Alena’s world right now, everything is exaggerated: the joy, the sorrow, the excitement and the pain. All the emotions are heightened, and it’s changing our home.

One night recently, we watched the latest film about talking dogs. It was cheesy, hilarious and sad all at the same time. While the other five members of our family were full of “ooh” and “aah” sounds, Alena burst into tears with a deep cry from her gut. We could not believe the emotional reaction she was having—it was exaggerated to say the least! Whether it’s dealing with sibling conflict, criticism from a teacher or just the normal parental correction, nothing seems to be without strong feelings for her.

*this roller coaster is
not for the faint of heart*

We are enjoying the ride but have learned since walking through the turnstile from tween to teen that this roller coaster is not for the faint of heart. And though many of our days have significant stress as we wrestle through them with her, we sleep easy at night because we’ve given her all of ourselves—imperfect as we are.

For 13 years, we have been intentional and have done everything that we can to prepare Alena for this point. We have reached for heaven in our prayers, asking the Lord to grab her heart, protect her mind and grant us the grace and stamina we need to steward the gift that God has given us

continued on page 84 >>



in her precious frame. And we have been single-minded in our resolve to point her to Christ, as if her life depends on it—knowing that it does.

We're not perfect, and she knows it. But we live content knowing that we have done the best we can with the knowledge we have been given as we've tried to model a life of authenticity. We have been quick to acknowledge our mistakes, hoping to impress upon her that life is just as much about owning failure as it is about achieving success, and we need to trust God with both.

So far Alena has been a sponge, absorbing the best and worst of us. The worst of us has been a huge part of that experience, so we are continually pointing her to the mercy and grace of God. She certainly knows that we need it, and her mind has been trained to know that she needs it too. She has a clear understanding of the reality that it is only God's presence that makes everything else in this life make sense. His Word and Spirit are the compass to help her navigate every emotion and experience she will face from here on out.

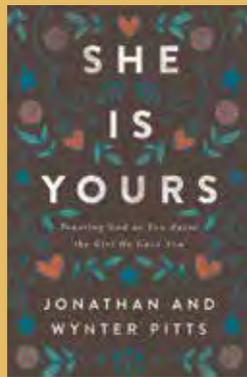
For 13 years, we have poured into her, and we will not stop. We are doubling down with her, and all our girls, in these three ways:

1. **We pray.** We wrote a simple prayer many years ago that we continue to pray: "She is Yours." Every day we give our children back to God, asking Him to take the gift He gave us where we cannot.
2. **We focus.** We have determined there is nothing in this world of greater value we can give to our girls than Jesus. In a world that is desperate to give our girls everything else but God, we are single-minded in our efforts to give them real hope.

"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf."
Hebrews 6:19-20

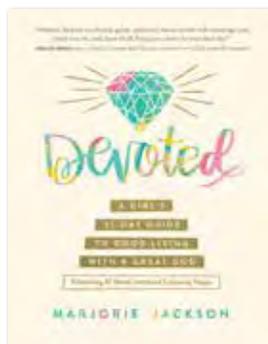
3. **We fight.** We have no choice. We fight and trust that God is fighting for us. Nehemiah said it best:
"After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, 'Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.'"
Nehemiah 4:14

We pray that you will join us on the journey of giving your children back to God. Focus on the finished work of Jesus and fearlessly fight for your children—so that no matter what emotion they feel or circumstance they find themselves in, they will have an anchor for their soul that does not change. 




**For more from
Wynter & Jonathan
Pitts, check out
She is Yours on
mtlbookstore.com**

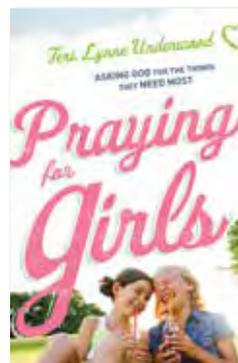
Related Products:



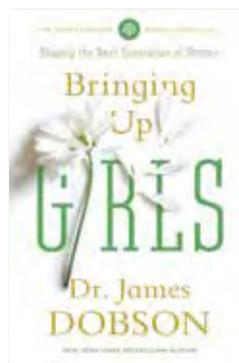
Devoted
 Marjorie Jackson, \$12.99



**Girls' Life Application
Study Bible, NLT**
 \$22.99



Praying for Girls
 Teri Lynne Underwood, \$13.99



Bringing Up Girls
 Dr. James Dobson, \$15.99

10 Halloween DOs & DON'Ts

by Lori Wildenberg

To boo or not to boo—the Christian’s Halloween dilemma. We have three choices. We can receive, reject or redeem Halloween. If you and your family choose to participate in Halloween on some level, here are 10 dos and don’ts.

DO Study the history of Halloween. The Christian festival of All Hallows’ Eve is where our current Halloween celebration originated. Note that All Saints’ Day follows Halloween (the celebration and remembrance of believers who have died during the year).

DON'T Assume all Christians are responding to Halloween the way your family has decided to.

DO Discuss the meaning of the words: *Hallow* and *Eve* (Holy Night).

DON'T Act in a way that dishonors the Lord. Choose to honor the Lord with good manners when giving and accepting treats and display desirable behaviors while going through the neighborhood.

DO Take this opportunity to talk about some spiritual things with your teens. You may want to unpack the verse in 1 John 4:4, “The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” Discuss what faith over fear looks like.

DON'T Forget the flashlight!

DO Teach your kids the difference between superstition and faith or luck and God’s will.

DO Talk with your family about how you can show God’s love to others at Halloween. Meet and greet your neighbors.

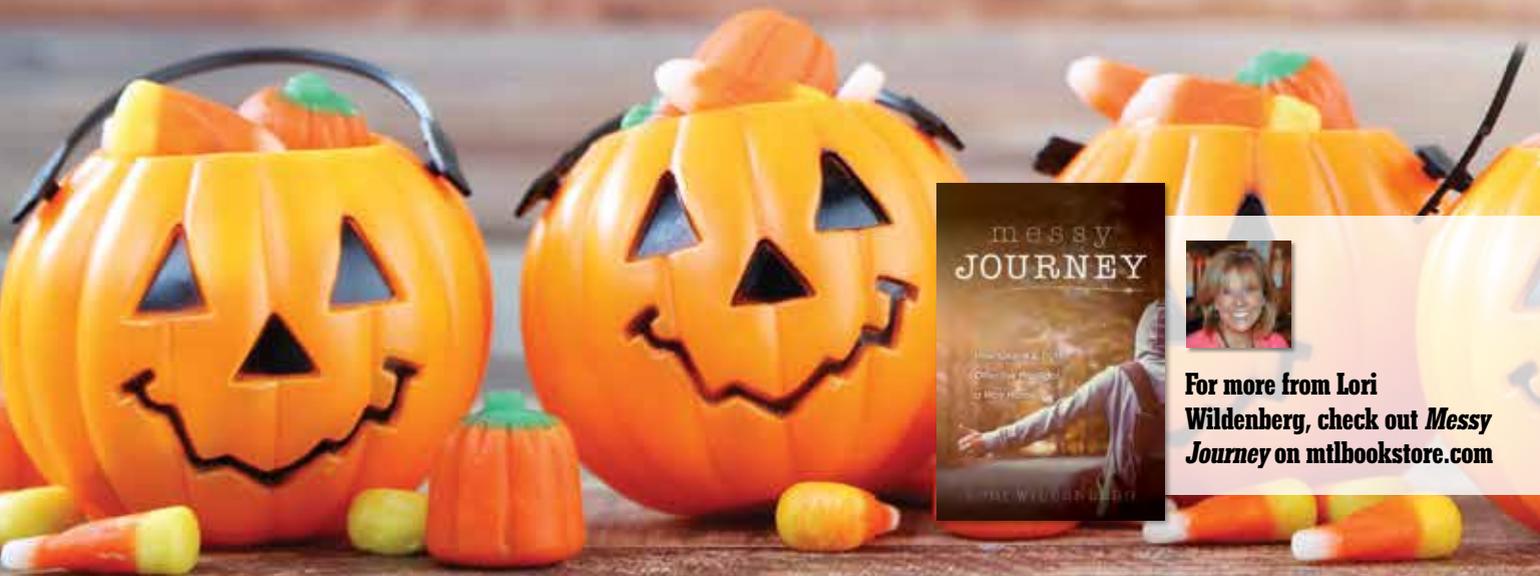
DON'T Fail to consider attending an alternative celebration or hosting a fall neighborhood party. There is nothing evil about candy, costumes or trick or treating. Identify what costumes glorify God and those that may not.

DON'T Forget to pray about this. Ask God how He wants your family to respond to Halloween (receive it, reject it or redeem it). Then discuss with your family why and how you will choose to participate in Halloween.

If celebrating Halloween puts you in conflict with your convictions, don’t do it. For those who do not feel spiritually compromised, celebrate in a way that honors God and loves people so you can be in the world but not of the world.

Halloween provides a unique opportunity to meet the neighbors, and to have some thought-provoking and faith-stretching dialogue with your kids

“Do not imitate what is evil but what is good.” 3 John 11



For more from Lori Wildenberg, check out *Messy Journey* on mtlbookstore.com



How to Have “The Talk” ...about God’s Design for Marriage

by Josh Mulvihill

Are you overlooking a critical component of parenting? While many parents spend enormous amounts of time preparing their kids for work and school, a five-year study by Harvard researchers determined that they do almost nothing to prepare them for mature relationships or healthy marriages.¹ Researchers concluded that

- Preparation for sex is not enough.
- Children want more guidance about relationships than most parents provide.
- Children enjoy talking about the meaning and purpose of love.
- Parents should focus on the bigger issues of mature love and lasting relationships.²

If there is one takeaway for Christian parents, it is this: we need to focus on God’s design for marriage and successful preparation for it.

Unfortunately, a previous generation of experts encouraged parents to focus on puberty and purity, unintentionally reducing marriage preparation to a “say no to sex” campaign while talking about anatomy and reproductive systems. Do parents need to talk with children about puberty and purity? Absolutely. But this should not be the extent of a child’s marriage preparation.

Children of all ages need to be taught the meaning of marriage, the role of husband and wife and what to look for in a future spouse. How children are taught will differ based on age, but God’s message does not change.

Here are three ways parents can talk with children about God’s design for marriage:

UNDERSTAND THE CULTURAL MESSAGES

Children receive a robust secular sex education and are taught society’s views about marriage. As a result, many children absorb a secular, self-indulgent, anti-biblical worldview. At best, many young people are confused about what is good, right, true and noble about marriage, dating and purity. At worst, they are set on a trajectory away from Christ.

Parents who spend most of their time talking about the body’s biological functions and changes in puberty are addressing helpful subjects but missing the most important topics. What cultural messages must parents be aware of? Three examples include the redefinition of marriage, rejection of gender differences and sexual exploration as a rite of passage.

Plenty of children—possibly your own—are in danger of embracing our culture’s powerful messages even as they seek to follow Christ. With proper training, our children can be Bible-believing Christians who are spiritual salmon, swimming against the current of culture.

*we need to focus on God’s
design for marriage and
successful preparation for it*

TEACH BIBLICAL TRUTH

What subjects should parents address with children? *Go where the Bible goes.* You can be confident and comfortable talking about subjects with your child that God addresses with children in the Bible.

The pattern of Scripture is to teach children God’s truths regarding marriage, sex and purity. In Joshua 8:35, children participate with the entire community of Israel as they hear the first five books of the Bible read out loud. That means they heard key passages about marriage, such as Genesis 2:24–25.

In Ephesians 6:4, children are directly commanded to obey their parents. To hear “Children, obey your parents,” a child had to be sitting with the rest of the congregation as the entirety of Ephesians was read. That means children were taught the biblical role of husband and wife as well as the meaning and purpose of marriage (Ephesians 5:22–33).

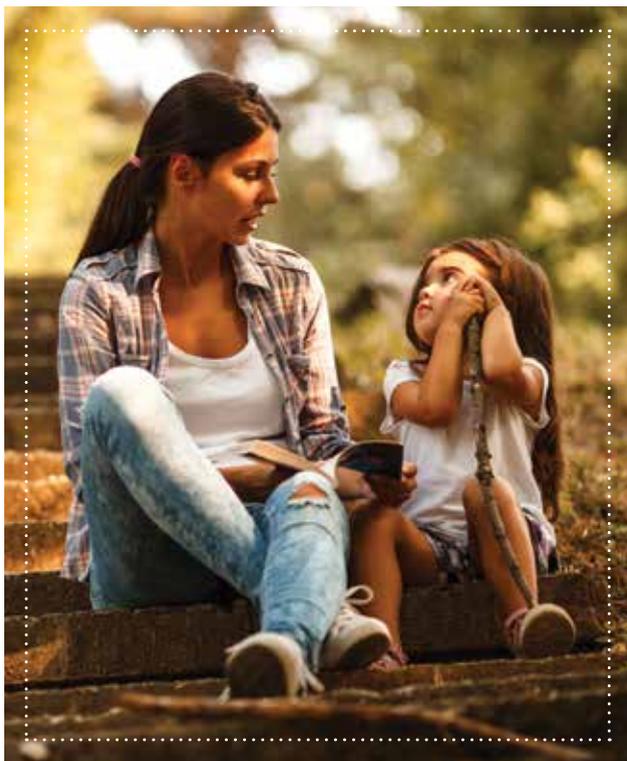
continued on page 88 >>

Space limits my ability to explain the full range of topics parents need to address with children, but a short list includes these crucial truths:

- **MARRIAGE IS CREATED BY GOD.**
God designed marriage; therefore, God gets to define marriage. Marriage is for one man and one woman for life.
- **MARRIAGE IS FOR GOD'S GLORY.**
God created marriage with a purpose.
- **MARRIAGE IS GOOD.**
We can enthusiastically champion marriage.
- **MARRIAGE IS THE EXPECTED NORM.**
It is not good for man to be alone, unless gifted for singleness.
- **MARRIAGE IS A COVENANT.**
It is a make-it and never-break-it promise.

We've become timid about addressing hard topics with children. The pattern of Scripture is for parents and spiritual leaders to talk with children, sometimes very young children, about the meaning of marriage, the purpose of sex, sexual purity and the biblical roles of husband and wife, as well as adultery, homosexuality and divorce.

You don't need to wonder what you should talk about with your children. Just follow God's lead. Cover the topics He covers with children. You have the critical job of articulating and embodying a biblical vision of marriage to your children.



BEGIN TRAINING EARLY

Our sex-saturated culture has 24/7 access to our children through technology, as well as a public school system that teaches unbiblical views about marriage and gender. This necessitates early and regular conversations with our children on subjects that previous generations could postpone. Major exposure to sexual content and erroneous views of marriage occur for many children in the early grade school years.

don't wait to address marriage in the teen or early adult years.

While the Bible does not dictate a specific age to begin talking about these topics, it does provide a pattern: *early and often*. Paul says to Timothy, “From childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 3:15).

What can parents use to talk about this subject with children? Here are five suggestions:

- **SHARED EXPERIENCES**
My wife and I purposefully take our children to weddings, creating an opportunity to talk about God's design for marriage.
- **TELEVISION SHOWS**
What do your kids see on TV or movies that requires discussion or can be used intentionally? Disney movies provide plenty of opportunities to talk about marriage.
- **BOOKS**
We had great discussions with our children when we read the Little House on the Prairie series and Laura married Almanzo.
- **TOYS**
Barbies and dolls are great discussion starters for girls.
- **SCRIPTURE**
As you read through the Bible with children, discuss the passages that address marriage, dating and purity.

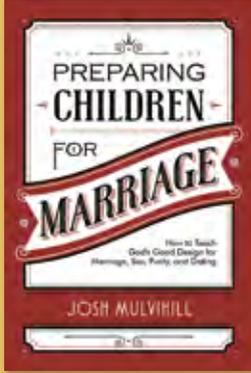
Don't wait to address marriage in the teen or early adult years. The teen years are the time to put the finishing touches on a conversation that started when your children were young.



Opportunities to talk about marriage, dating and purity occur often. Your job is to recognize them and capitalize on them. Preparation for marriage can begin today as you teach your child biblical principles about marriage, pray for your child's future spouse and help your child protect his or her heart from sexual immorality. [mtl](#)

¹Making Caring Common, "New Report Finds Young People Troubled by Romantic Relationships and Widespread Sexual Harassment," May 17, 2017, accessed May 26, 2017, https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/files/gse-mcc/files/mcc_the_talk_pr_final_0.pdf.

²Ibid.



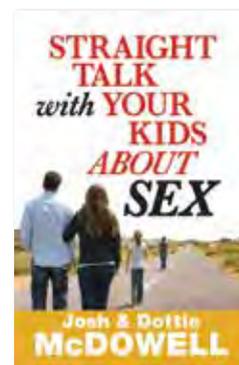
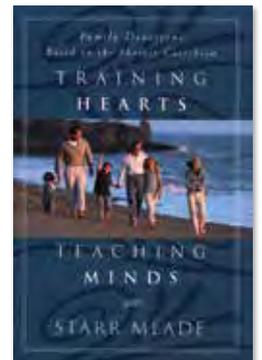

For more from Josh Mulvihill, check out *Preparing Children for Marriage* on mtlbookstore.com

Related Products:



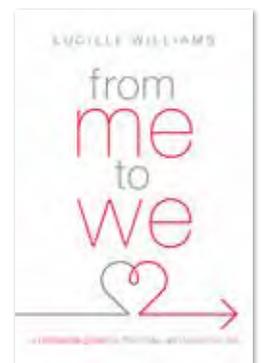
5 Things Every Parent Needs to Know about Their Kids & Sex
Anne Marie Miller, \$15.99

Training Hearts, Teaching Minds
Starr Meade, \$14.99



Straight Talk with Your Kids about Sex
Josh & Dottie McDowell, \$12.99

From Me to We
Lucille Williams, \$14.99



A close-up photograph of a young girl with long, light brown hair and blue eyes. She has a sad, pouting expression and is resting her head on her hands, which are propped up on a desk. She is wearing a white short-sleeved shirt. In front of her is a spiral-bound notebook with a blue cover and a red highlighter pen lying on it. The background is dark.

The Road to Success is Paved with Failure

— BY JIM DALY —

BY EVERY MEASURE, Sara Blakely is a successful businesswoman. She's the founder of Spanx, a women's apparel company she started when she was 27 years old. Just a few years later, she was named in *Time* magazine's annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world.

How did she do it?

Well, according to Sara, her wild success is rooted in failure. When she was younger, her father asked her the same question every day after school: "What did you fail at today?" If she said, "Nothing," he would challenge her to do something, anything, the next day that was unfamiliar or scary to her. Not only did Sara's father not protect her from failure, he encouraged it.

That approach to life got Sara on a pathway to success. She learned not to fear her mistakes or to allow setbacks to paralyze her from moving forward. It taught her that life's journey isn't about perfection, but progress. Those lessons gave her the confidence to try new things and to stretch beyond her comfort zone.

Sara's dad understood one of the most pivotal roles for a parent in the lives of their children: preparing them for the challenges they'll face in adulthood. Parenting isn't about raising children, it's about raising adults. For that to happen, children must learn not only how to work hard to achieve success but how to handle themselves when life doesn't go the way they'd hoped.

Adversity can be a great teacher . . . if we'll allow it to be.

parenting isn't about raising children, it's about raising adults

When children take aim and miss their target, that's when the real work of developing important life skills begins. Their failure can become a new opportunity to succeed if we'll help them discover why their efforts fell short, guide them in making important adjustments and encourage them to step forward with confidence and try again.

Unfortunately, many parents rescue their children from that struggle by drawing a new target wherever their child's errant shot lands. In some communities, league sports have even stopped keeping score, so there's no official winner and, therefore, no first place trophy. Everyone who competes gets an award, a ribbon or a certificate.

Ironic, isn't it? Nobody wins, but every child goes home "a winner." Advocates tell us that it instills self-confidence in kids.

But does it really?

Too many false wins produce a skewed self-confidence that eventually crumbles when the realities of the adult world rear their head. Life doesn't coddle grown-ups. So why train kids from an early age to behave as if it will? Losing is heartbreaking, sure, but the solution is not to obliterate the distinction between winning and losing. It's to teach kids how to handle failure in a productive manner that propels them forward.

When parents allow their children to struggle through their mistakes, failure can become what James Joyce called "a portal to discovery."

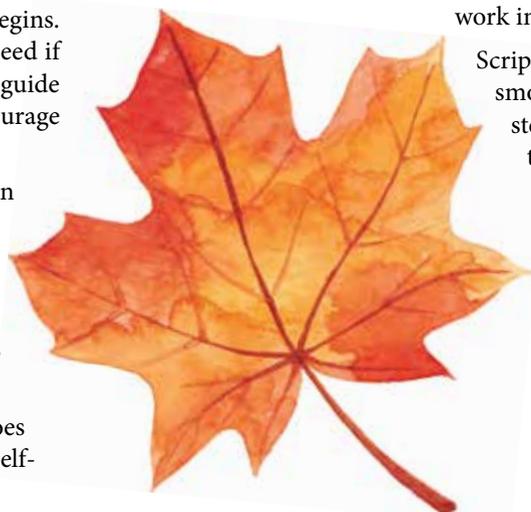
A colleague once told me the story of a mother who set the course for her son's life simply in the way she reacted to his mistakes. When he was a little boy, he accidentally dropped a plastic jug of milk in the kitchen. It broke open and spilled across the floor.

His mom came into the kitchen and saw him standing there in a large puddle of milk. She could have yelled or pointed a stern finger and berated him. Instead, she smiled and reassured him that mistakes were all a part of life. After helping him clean up the mess, she filled another jug with water and cheered him on as he practiced carrying it across the kitchen.

Years later, that little boy became a scientist and attributed much of his success to his mother's attitude. She taught him that mistakes were nothing to be afraid of because they were opportunities to learn something new.

That's the way God sees it too.

The Apostle Paul said, "For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10, ESV). According to Paul, we don't have to be ashamed of our weakness. We can embrace our failures because it's in the places where we stumble that we're most likely to find God at work in our lives.



Scripture never assures us a smooth path where every step is certain. In fact, Jesus tells us plainly that we *will* "face tribulation" (John 16:33). Life is inherently beyond our control. We can only control the choices we make and rely on God's grace to help us do it well.

continued on page 92 >>

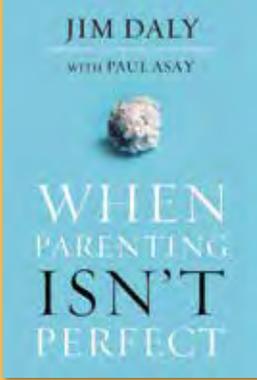


It's in the fires of our adversity that God sharpens and strengthens our character. James 1:3-4 says, "The testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." When things don't go our way, we'll find God somewhere in that disappointment, motivating us to improve our attitude, to work harder and to allow Him to continue the work He began in us (Philippians 1:6).

*it's in the places where
we stumble that we're
most likely to find God
at work in our lives*

Children develop genuine self-confidence when they know that mom and dad still cherish and love them—even when they fail. As they grow and that message sinks into their hearts and minds, they'll learn how to channel their disappointment from failure into hard work and the courage to try, try again. That's a life skill that will serve your children for the rest of their lives, because that process is how you get successful at anything.

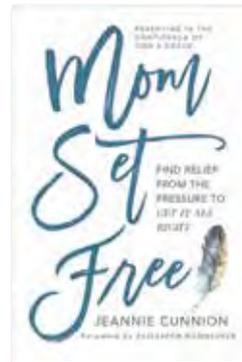
So, Mom, encourage your children to do well in school and to get involved in activities where they'll develop strong character and learn important life skills. But don't over-protect them from adversity. Help them to discover that the road to success is paved with failure. 



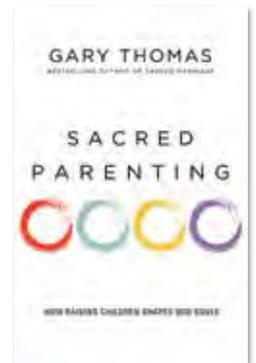
For more from Jim Daly, check out *When Parenting Isn't Perfect* on mtlbookstore.com

Jim Daly is the president and CEO of Focus on the Family. He has appeared on such television programs as ABC "World News Tonight" and PBS' "Religion & Ethics"; and been featured in *Time*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today* and *Newsweek*, which named him one of the top 10 next-generation evangelical leaders of influence.

Related Products:



Mom Set Free
Jeannie Cunnion, \$15.99



Sacred Parenting
Gary Thomas, \$16.99



Parenting
Paul David Tripp, \$22.99





Now & Next

Making the Most of the Moments You Have

by Nichole Nordeman

The last two weeks of the school year are a slow army crawl for me. I'm spent.

I'm completely over packing lunches and co-cramming for middle school finals and waking up in the dark, before God and the angels, to hustle my littles out the door. For the entire month of May, I am usually the last car squealing up to the school curb to push them out before the tardy bell. I am almost always still wearing slippers and sloshing coffee on one of them while giving awkward side hugs from the driver's seat. The end of the year school parties and teacher presents and school projects are dizzying. I am straight up mailing it in at this point. I am digging so deep. I am committed to giving it my some. The other parents trade weary looks knowingly. So do the teachers. One more month. One more week. One more day. The prospect of late summer nights in a pool or on a patio or jumping in the car for a last-minute road trip . . . these are the summer fantasies that sustain and bolster me. These are the daydreams that help me summon the strength to survive hearing one more read aloud chapter of *Magic Tree House*. Hurry. Hurry. Hurry up, summer. Please, merciful Savior.

And then, just like that, summer vacation is finally here. We stay up so late to celebrate. We sleep in so late to celebrate. There are so many pancakes and movies and cases of microwave popcorn. For the first several days, my kids stop brushing their teeth for some reason, which is gross, but seriously, whatever. We have black belts in summer. We crush it. I do a lot of whistling. There is space and grace for all the things we can't cram into the school year.

Somewhere around late July, I start to feel a strange feeling. I shrug it off at first, because it seems like a ridiculous feeling to be feeling, since here we are in the throes of the wonderful unscheduled, spontaneous summer months we longed for. I can't possibly be feeling this feeling.

Wait.

Sigh.

No, this is definitely a feeling that's getting felt.

I'm reluctant, dear reader, to admit to it or even put words around this feeling.

But here goes.

It's kind of like: "WHY IS SUMMER SO UNBEARABLY LONG AND WHEN DO THESE CERTIFIABLY INSANE SMALL PEOPLE GO BACK TO SCHOOL????"

I would feel worse about this confession, if I didn't have the nagging suspicion that I'm not alone. My girlfriends and I start sending each other articles about countries that have year-round school. We say yes to every single sleepover offer at someone else's house. We curse the inventor of the s'more. We change all the clocks back several hours so that bedtime is roughly around 6 p.m. We shrug when our teenage son protests this. We decide we do not really like spontaneity. We like *structure*. We need a *schedule*. I can't buy new backpacks

continued on page 96 >>

fast enough. I am sharpening pencils six weeks early.

I've been doing this for so many years—so many summer months and so many back-to-school nights—to recognize that the pattern is a fairly predictable one. The most challenging season for me to really practice being present in is every single one.

What is this about? What does it say about me or my life? Or about modern parenting, culturally? Is this just classic “grass is always greener” syndrome? Will I ever be able to gratefully settle into what is now and not what is next?

I think this is a life-long challenge for a lot of us. Not just parents. Not just about summer or school.

Just for a second, take inventory of any area in your life where you might be doing the same thing. The next relationship milestone. The next promotion. The next season of rest. The next big break. The next step your toddler takes. The next, next, next.

Take a minute and ask God to silence that internal chatter that's always prodding us to peer around the corner at what's next. Ask God to slow you down. To sit with a lap full of gratitude for what you're holding now and nothing more . . . even if what you're holding is hard.

The Apostle Paul writes to the Philippians from a prison cell about learning to be content in whatever situation he finds himself in. There is a Hasidic proverb that states, “While we pursue happiness, we flee from contentment.”

So often in Scripture and in studying the great philosophers, we are confronted with the futility of grasping for more and “other” versus the deep rich life of gratitude that we cultivate when we learn to love who we are, where we are, what we have, what's right in front us, in every messy moment we are standing in. Yes, God holds my future with great care, but He holds my present with great joy.

What if on Christmas morning, your kids opened their presents (the ones you've spent months selecting and shopping for, staying up all night wrapping), and they are so happy and thankful, and there are bows and boxes flying around in a flurry of Christmas joy. Then, about five seconds later, they breathlessly exclaim, “Thank you, Mom/Dad/Santa!!! But I bet next Christmas will be even better!!”

Thud.

As parents, we would be crushed. The anticipation of watching the joy on our children's face would deflate miserably as we watched them entirely miss the joy of *this* moment. Trading the now for the next.

We would want to tell them exactly what our Heavenly Father longs to tell us in our moments of similar response to His gifts.

Slow down.

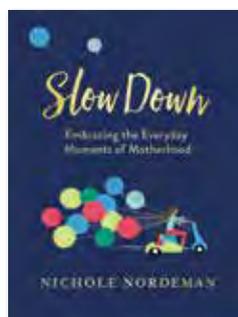
Stay in the now.

Don't miss the gifts you're actually opening, in lieu of the ones you're planning to. [mtl](#)



For more from Nichole Nordeman, check out *Every Mile Mattered* on mtlbookstore.com

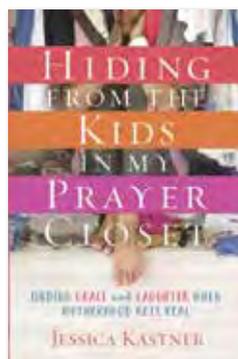
Related Products:



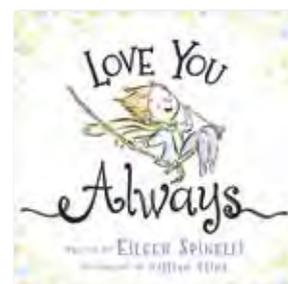
Slow Down
Nichole Nordeman, \$15.99



The Unmaking
Nichole Nordeman, \$7.99



Hiding from the Kids in My Prayer Closet
Jessica Kastner, \$16.99



Love You Always
Eileen Spinelli, \$15.99

Autumn Apples

SWEET & FRUITY FUN



Candy Apple

In a medium saucepan, combine 2 cups sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup light corn syrup and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-high until candy thermometer reaches 300 to 310 degrees. Remove from heat and stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon red food coloring. Dip apples and add favorite topping. Makes 6 apples.

TIP: To remove wax on the outside of the apples, wash the apples in water with a little bit of white vinegar.

Caramel Apple

In a medium saucepan, melt 2 cups sugar, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup light corn syrup and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Swirl pan until candy thermometer reaches 320 degrees. Remove from heat and whisk in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream, 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, 1 teaspoon vanilla and a dash of salt. Return to low heat and whisk until smooth. Remove from heat. Dip apples and add favorite topping. Makes 6 apples.



It's okay to double dip!

TIP: Leftover takeout chopsticks can be used as the stick in the apple.

Chocolate Apple

In a double boiler over hot water, slowly melt 16 ounces semisweet chocolate or microwave on high for 2 minutes, stirring halfway through the heating time. Remove from heat and stir until completely melted. Dip apples and add favorite topping. Makes 6 apples.



TOPPINGS



Chopped Nuts



Coconut



Sprinkles



Chocolate Chips



Chopped Candy Bar



Crushed Cookies (or Pretzels)



Candy Corn



UNFORGIVENESS IS A PRISON YOU CHOOSE TO LIVE IN

BY JOHN FINCH

When Stephanie was four, her parents divorced and her father moved out of state. She only saw him during the summer, but those visits ended when she turned 12. She never saw him again.

At 16, she dropped out of school and left home. To earn a living, she became a dancer in a strip club. For the next few years, she lived in a haze of drugs, dancing and darkness.

Then God led her to pick up a Bible, and verse by verse, day by day, her life was changed. She left her job and all her friends to follow Christ's call on her life.

This isn't a Hallmark story. It's a true story that Stephanie tells in my documentary, *The Father Effect*.

WHY WOMEN NEED THEIR FATHERS

As age and hindsight provided her with insight, Stephanie saw the connection between her dad's disappearance from her life and her first career choice: "When there's not that male influence there . . . there's this void and there's this hunger for that male attention. And I definitely needed that and wanted that in my life."

When I asked her to guess the percentage of women she'd worked with who she thought did not have an engaged, involved father in their lives, she answered, "Ninety-plus percent."

When I asked her what women with her kind of background most struggle with, she said, "Self-worth . . . Their father is a huge part of that, and when it's missing, they fill that void with attention."

I'm willing to bet you don't share her professional background, but if you've read this far, I'm guessing that you do share the history of a pained, strained or nonexistent relationship with your dad.

You're not alone.

When I was 11, my dad left my family by committing suicide. For the longest time—well into my thirties and after I'd started a family of my own—I didn't want to forgive him for leaving me.

Plus, why did I need to forgive a dead man?

continued on page 100 >>



THE FATHER EFFECT ON WOMEN

I'm a salesman, not a filmmaker, but that didn't prevent me from writing, directing and producing *The Father Effect*, a documentary that's now been seen hundreds of thousands of times. I don't share that number to impress you, but rather to impress upon you the breadth and severity of the problem of fatherlessness across the globe.

People are watching because they're connecting to what's being discussed. They're seeing and hearing experts and average people candidly open their father wounds for the world to see. And they're nodding their heads in agreement or crying tears of empathy.

While my documentary was initially birthed out of God's desire for me to forgive my father, the timing of that journey was certainly providential. At the time, my wife and I were raising three young daughters. In conducting interview after interview, I was challenged by the fact that my fathering would inevitably and irrevocably impact my daughters.

In other words, I began to see how the father effect affected women just as deeply as men. I didn't want to do to my daughters what my father had done to me. Even though I knew I would never leave them, I didn't want to be the physically-present-yet-emotionally-absent dad I had heard about in the stories of the people I interviewed.

So when people like Dr. Meg Meeker began talking, I listened, and then I applied.

HOW TO FIND FATHER FORGIVENESS

Dr. Meeker aptly summarizes the father effect on women: "If a daughter knows that she has her dad's love, life makes sense." If a woman doesn't know and feel that to her core, chaos ensues, both internal and external. That chaos can assume many forms, but its origin can often be traced back to the same beginning: a father's inability to speak and show his love.

So, as a woman who's been hurt by her father, why in the world should you be the one to forgive him?

Why should the hurt one forgive the hurtier?

Why should the otherwise innocent forgive the undoubtedly guilty?

The simple Christian answer is that's what Christ would have us do, because that's what He did for us. As Paul wrote, "Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Colossians 3:13b).

But I know that reading the Word and doing the Word are different. So, briefly, here's how I did my best to follow Paul's advice in choosing to forgive my father. I go into more detail about this process in my forthcoming book, *The Father Effect: Hope and Healing from a Dad's Absence*.

1. Admit you have a wound. The Healer won't get to work until you realize you need healing. Maybe this article is nudging you to admit your hurt.

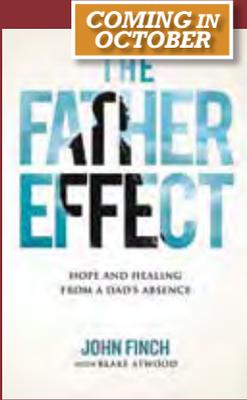
2. Invite God to help you. In other words, don't try heart surgery on yourself. You'll just bleed out. And God longs to help heal relationships.

3. Seek counsel or accountability. Find a trustworthy person with whom you can discuss your father wound. Professional Christian counselors are an excellent resource, as are pastors or close friends who've exercised forgiveness for their fathers' shortcomings.

4. Forgive your father. Ask yourself, "What would it mean if I truly forgave my father?" Consider writing out how that might make you feel, how that might make your father feel and how that might impact the other areas of your life.

Forgiveness may come like a tsunami and wash away your pain in one enormous wave, or it may arrive in small wave after small wave, slowly eroding your bitterness like a rough stone worn smooth over time. The point isn't how fast the forgiveness comes. The point is to choose to forgive your father for as long as it takes for that forgiveness to free you.

I believe I'm much more the kind of parent God wants me to be, and that my daughters need me to be, because I was able to forgive my father. With God's help, the father effect on my daughters will be much different than my father's effect on me. 



For more from John Finch, check out *The Father Effect* on mtlbookstore.com

John Finch is the author of *The Father Effect: Hope and Healing from a Dad's Absence*, available October 24, 2017 from FaithWords Publishing wherever books are sold. Learn more about the book and the documentary at TheFatherEffect.com, or follow John on Twitter @johnpfinch and on Facebook at The Father Effect Movie.

Related Product:



Play the Man
Mark Batterson, \$19.99

How to Show Your Pastor Appreciation

by David Ferguson & Terri Snead

Pray for your pastor. It can change your church, your pastor and . . . you!

You may not realize it, but there's an occupational hazard for pastors: Someone *always* needs them. We know this pressure is real because we've seen it play out in our own family.

My father is a pastor, and we've watched my dad try to do the impossible: juggle the needs of church members with the needs of family. Miraculous changes happened when we stopped juggling. Now, we prioritize a close relationship with God, family and then ministry—in that order. Because of what the Lord has done, we dedicate ourselves to pastoring pastors.

We Need Pastors

Our world is changing, and while we may not always know what to do, we know the One who does. We can call upon the Lord to equip confident, committed pastors who will champion the name of Jesus and help us navigate the complexities of this world. At every chance we get, our family invites others to be part of praying for pastors. We even wrote a resource that will help Jesus-followers know how to pray. We call it *31 Days of Prayer for My Pastor*.

What Should We Pray?

There are many ways we can pray for pastors. For instance, the Barna Research Group revealed that pastors often struggle to find time to deepen their love of the Lord. In fact, almost half (47 percent) of pastors surveyed indicate they find it difficult to invest in their own spiritual development.

From a Pastor's Heart

Listen as my dad recounts a story that confirms this trend in pastors.

I had been in ministry for more than 20 years, but I struggled to prioritize my own spiritual growth. On one particular evening, I had a new kind of encounter with Jesus.

I was studying the story of the ten lepers in Luke 17, when I read Jesus' words, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?" (Luke 17:17 NIV). And that's when the Spirit revealed: This wasn't a Savior

who needed to know the location of ten lepers; this was a Savior whose heart was acquainted with sorrow and grief (Isaiah 53:3). This was my Savior who felt sadness that there had been only one leper return to give thanks. More personally, the Spirit showed me that I had been like one of those nine. I had saddened the heart of my Savior because I rarely took time to express my gratitude. I wept with Jesus. I shared moments of repentance and compassion for Him. It was a personal moment of deep connectedness between Jesus and me.

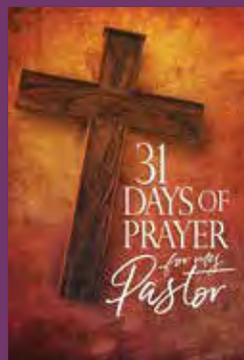
This very personal encounter with Jesus brought change in me. I now begin most mornings alone with the Lord. I imagine myself kneeling beside that one leper, giving Jesus thanks.

Now, we invite you to have your own encounter with Jesus.

Our lives can be changed when we read God's Word and then actually do what it says. Give thanks to God for the glorious things He has done for you, as Psalm 103:2 says, and then pray for your pastor.

God, I am so grateful for the glorious way you have . . .

I pray my pastor would be empowered to prioritize a deeply personal relationship with You and would enjoy more moments of thanksgiving.



For more from David Ferguson & Terri Snead, check out *31 Days of Prayer for My Pastor* on mtlbookstore.com



Seasons of Life



by Cynthia Ruchti

Living in an area with far more barns than skyscrapers, and in a climate with four distinct seasons—two days of spring, four days of summer, a week of fall and the rest devoted to winter either coming, going or frozen in time—a natural part of the rhythm of our family life is preparation for the next season.

The crispness of fall and the bite of winter don't catch us by surprise. If they do, it's because we weren't paying attention to the signs. Ignoring the inevitable won't stop its approach. Procrastinating about preparations because they're uncomfortable, hard and unpleasant only makes the new season more uncomfortable, harder and unnecessarily complicated.

Parents age. It's inevitable. Unless our parents are absent or their lives are cut short, we will all enter a season as predictable as maple leaves turning from green to yellow and flame orange. But many of us find ourselves standing in the middle of a season for which we—and our parents—are unprepared.

"In the back of my mind," a friend said, "I knew it was coming. But ignoring the signs was easier than facing the truth. Now, it's a mess. Dad isn't communicating like he once could, so the family doesn't know how he would want us to handle the decisions we're having to make on his behalf. We should have been prepared for this. The conversations would have been so much simpler before his illness took over."

*ignoring the inevitable
won't stop its approach*

Those who trust heaven awaits them at the end of life because of their faith in Jesus have an extreme advantage in conversations about the approach of aging and its natural conclusion—death. "I don't want to talk about aging and end-of-life issues, Mom and Dad. It's morbid. And sad," changes to "Let's talk about what we can do to help make the autumn of aging memorable, peace-hemmed and a celebration of its beauty."

"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart." Ecclesiastes 7:2 ESV

It may not be natural for us to think the way Solomon did when writing that wisdom. A house of mourning is better than a house of feasting? Eugene Peterson's *The Message* version adds perspective: "You learn more at a funeral than at a feast—After all, that's where we'll end up. We might discover something from it."

Whether our parents' aging process is a seven-day autumn or a long, long winter, discussing hopes, desires and details at or before the first frost is the kind of "laying it to heart"

that enables a family to enter the season equipped to endure its hardships, prepared for its unique demands and at peace about what lies ahead.

Where do we start?

- Give each other permission to talk about the aging process and what it may mean. Parents and children who allow the discussion offer a priceless gift to one another.
- Choose an unhurried time to begin the discussion, one unaffected by a current medical or aging crisis.
- Pray together. Ask God to set the table for the discussion so that He is honored, parents are respected and relationships are strengthened.
- Approach preparation conversations selflessly, with the others' interests at heart.
- Consider each other's spiritual, physical, emotional and practical needs.

What do we talk about as aging's autumn approaches?

- Ask aging parents how important it is for them to remain in their current home. And how often they're willing to be asked that question as time and infirmities progress. Find ways to prepare their home to accommodate their physical needs, if necessary.
- Discuss financial arrangements, including financial power of attorney decisions and oversight.
- Openly discuss parents' first and second choices for long-term care, should it become necessary.
- Talk about eventual division of assets. Families that iron out differences of opinion when parents can be involved in the process often find workable answers when grief isn't skewing the picture.
- What are the parents' wishes concerning end-of-life medical decisions? Are they expressed in writing? Filed with the parents' primary care physicians? Are all family members clear about those decisions to prevent bedside battles?
- How do aging parents want their funeral or memorial service handled when the time comes? What matters to them? What will matter to the family members?

My youngest son and his wife treated me to lunch the other day. I told them about my interest in the topic of being prepared for both the harsh and heartwarming season as our parents age. My son popped into the conversation with, "So, what do you want done with all the stuff none of your kids will want when you and Dad are gone?"

continued on page 104 >>

I did a quick mental inventory of our belongings and realized that might be a very large pile of “unspoken-for stuff.” My daughter-in-law said to my son, “See? This is why you can never have nice things—so your kids won’t fight over them when you die.”

And the conversation begins. 



RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

When facing hard discussions about aging and end-of-life issues, applying these biblical principles smooths tensions and paves the way for win-win conversations:

1. “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:17 ESV).
2. “Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt” (Colossians 4:6 NIV).
3. “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32 NIV).
4. “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves” (Philippians 2:3 NIV).
5. “‘Honor your father and mother’—which is the first commandment with a promise” (Ephesians 6:2 NIV).
6. “Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony” (Colossians 3:14 NLT).



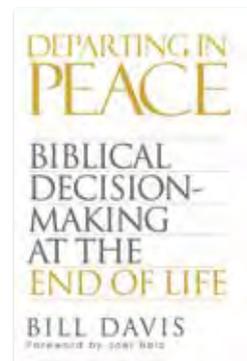
For more from Cynthia Ruchti, check out *As My Parents Age* on mtlbookstore.com

Cynthia Ruchti tells stories hemmed-in-hope through her award-winning novels, novellas, devotions, nonfiction and through speaking events for women. She and her husband live in the heart of Wisconsin, not far from their three children and five grandchildren.

Related Products:



The Caregiving Season
Jane Daly, \$14.99



Departing in Peace
Bill Davis, \$19.99



Caring for Our Aging Parents
Michele Howe, \$14.95



A Special Way to Celebrate Grandparents' Day

by Janet Perez Eckles

I held up a short string of tiny gold bells in the air. "C'mon, sweet baby," I called to my two-year-old granddaughter.

With quick steps, she came. And as she stood with her back toward me, I carefully pinned the bells to her blouse, which she told me was pink.

The sound of the bells told me where she was. She might not have understood her Nana was blind. Or maybe she did. What's important is she knew a grandmother doesn't need eyes to love, to learn and share.

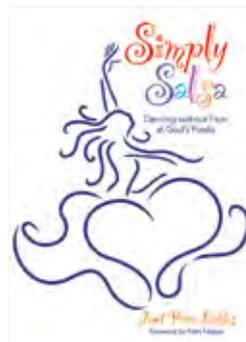
Time swept by way too fast. She's nine years old now and her brother seven. They both run to me for hugs. But neither needs bells anymore as they answer when I call.

But the call for grandparents is to enrich their grandchildren's lives no matter what we have or what we lack.

Grandkids learn from what we do, what we say and how we love.

Here are a few tips for grandchildren (of any age) to honor their grandparents:

1. A phone call from a grandchild adds sunshine to a grandparent's day.
2. Asking for their advice makes their heart smile.
3. A visit from grandkids puts delight into their days.
4. Each "I love you, Grandma" enriches their years here on earth.
5. Special moments with grandparents are the best gifts we could give them.



For more from Janet Perez Eckles, check out *Simply Salsa* on mtlbookstore.com

10 WAYS FOR GRANDPARENTS TO CREATE A SPECIAL BOND WITH THEIR GRANDCHILDREN:

1. The stories we tell about Jesus emphasize the power of His love.
2. The embrace we offer carries the warmth and comfort in a cruel world.
3. The comfort we impart can soothe their soul when disappointment barges in.
4. The wisdom drawn from God's Word fills their mind as they make decisions for life.
5. The example to persevere, to endure and to give teaches them to do the same.
6. The guidance we provide keeps them from the pitfalls of life.
7. The acceptance with love unconditional mends the rejection of the world.
8. The time we spend with them multiplies the love.
9. The patience we display brings security to their soul.
10. The praise we express deepens their confidence and worth.

Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Lives



Shelley Giglio

January 2017 marked the 20-year anniversary of Passion Conferences. Even if you've never been to one of these gatherings for college students, you've likely heard of worship leaders Chris Tomlin and Matt Redman and speaker Louie Giglio. But one name you may not be familiar with is the conferences' co-founder, Shelley Giglio.

Shelley Giglio and her husband Louie began the Passion Conferences because of their heart for college students.

"I watched my friends struggle while in college," Shelley says. "It was really the first time they had the opportunity to choose faith for themselves, and many walked away. It was so difficult to watch. It became so apparent that this was the season of crossroads, a place where what we say is true is either enough or ditched."

Shelley and Louie first met after her freshman year of college, while he was the summer intern at her home church in Houston. During Shelley's senior year at Baylor University, a fellow student named Kay saw the calling God had placed on Shelley and Louie's life and encouraged them to help lead students to Jesus. That year, they began CHOICE Bible Study on their campus, which grew into a ministry that lasted over 10 years.

After Shelley graduated, she and Louie were married. Then in 1995, they prepared to move to Atlanta to help care for Louie's father. During the transition process, Louie's father passed away suddenly.

"We were shocked," Shelley recalls. "How did we miss the timing? What could we have done better or sooner? This very season became the birthplace for Passion. As we moved without a real clear direction of why, and into

the grief and confusion, God spoke. The silence ended up being LOUD!"

Shelley and Louie define the word passion as "the degree of difficulty you're willing to endure to accomplish the goal."

During this time of loss and unexpected change, the Giglios continued to follow God and what He was calling them to do.

The first Passion Conference began in 1997 as a small gathering of 2,500 and has grown into sold-out venues of over 50,000.

"God is so faithful," Shelley adds. "He uses every moment for His glory."

Then in 2008, Louie began talking to Shelley about planting a church in Atlanta.

"At this point, Louie was 50 years old. We had a beautiful life of serving others around the globe, and the thought of becoming a pastor in that season was daunting," she admits. "However, the Spirit of God wouldn't relent. God had made it clear to Louie, and I, as his wife, had committed to follow. I didn't have any of the plans, but my heart was clear. We would follow Jesus and plant a church in our city. That was the beginning of some beautiful new seasons."

While Shelley serves as the chief strategist for Passion Ministries and for the music label sixstepsrecords, she is involved in many other ministries at their church, Passion City Church, including leading a women's ministry called The Grove and a mentorship program called Flourish with over 600 women.

"Coming alongside people's vision and calling are my greatest joy," Shelley says. "I pray I get to live all of my days helping dreams become reality, some of those my own, and some others' whom I have the privilege to serve."

In all these things, Shelley says this is what matters most: "Loving God and loving people. Hands down. I don't want to really be known for anything else."

As a young college graduate and newly-wed 30 years ago, Shelley could have never imagined she would be where she is today.

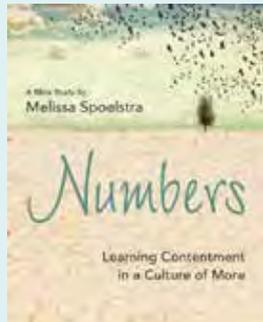
"I knew I was called to be God's servant and Louie's wife," she shares. "Beyond that, all has been a 'learn as you go' process. The only thing I know for sure is I Thessalonians 5:24 says, 'Faithful is He who called you, he also will do it.' That verse was given to Louie and me by God long long ago, and every syllable of it is true. God is faithful. He will come through. He does the doing. . . . Some days I can hardly believe all we have gotten to see Him do, and every day I have the hope and assurance that what's to come is even greater still."

Bible Study Dicks

Say no to the desire for bigger, better, faster

Numbers: Learning Contentment in a Culture of More

by Melissa Spoelstra



In this six-week Bible study of the Book of Numbers, we find a group of people that wandered in the desert for forty years, unable to enter the Promised Land because of their complaining, grumbling, and lack of faith. The New Testament tells us that their story was written to warn us so that we would not make the same mistakes and suffer the same consequences.

By exploring Numbers we can come to identify the reasons for our complaining, learn contentment while being authentic about the difficulties of life, accept short-term hardship in light of the greater good of God's ultimate deliverance, recognize the relationship between complaining and worry, and discover how to realign with God's character and promises. Together we will learn contentment and focus on his provision and purpose as we discover more of our incredible God who truly is more than enough. Available components include a participant workbook, leader guide, DVD, and kit.

Invite God to work powerfully in your life



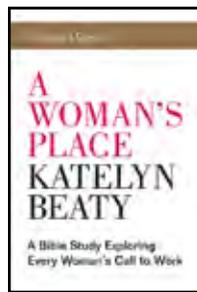
The Miracles of Jesus: Finding God in Desperate Moments

by Jessica LaGrone

Jesus demonstrated the presence and power of God by performing miracles. He turned water into wine, healed the sick, calmed the storm, opened blind eyes, and raised the dead. While these beloved stories draw our attention to divine power, they also have something else in common: human desperation. Every time we see Jesus performing a miracle, we also get a glimpse into the gift of desperation, a gift that opens us to the dramatic power of God through our desperate need for him.

In this six-week Bible study—featuring video, study of Scripture, and personal application—LaGrone leads us in a captivating exploration of the miracles of Jesus, helping us to see that our weakness is an invitation for God to work powerfully in our lives and reminding us that we need God on our best days just as much as we do on our worst. Available components include a participant workbook, leader guide, DVD, and kit.

Take a biblical look at vocation



A Woman's Place: A Bible Study Exploring Every Woman's Call to Work

by Katelyn Beaty

When it comes to women and work, there is often an “us-versus-them” mentality, dividing women according to the choices they make. Yet all women have a shared calling to work in a way that glorifies God—whether it be in the office, home, ministry, or beyond.

This eight-week study built around Katelyn Beaty's *A Woman's Place* book explores the idea of a woman's work by digging into Scripture and the meaning of work. It provides video segments featuring Beaty and interviewees, Bible study resources, journal prompts, and questions for reflection with an emphasis on Scripture and prayer. Through authentic discussion, women will be encouraged to affirm one another in their calling to engage in the holy act of work, regardless of their specific choices. Available components include a participant guide, leader guide, and DVD.



Visit AbingdonWomen.com to Download Sample Chapters and Videos.

INSPIRE. CHALLENGE. FUEL.

New Daily Devotional for

Teens from Josh McDowell

Josh McDowell

#truth

365 Devotions for Teens
Connecting **LIFE** and **FAITH**



**AVAILABLE AT YOUR FAVORITE
CHRISTIAN BOOKSTORE**

Learn More at Josh.org

This brand-new daily devotional from bestselling author Josh McDowell unpacks spiritual truths that inspire, challenge, and fuel young people every day of the year—from January 1 to December 31.