

food for thought >>>

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

~Ephesians 6:4



Volume Six Issue Eight
June 2022



Proverbs 27:17 As Iron Sharpens Iron, So One Person Sharpens Another

The Growth Journal



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Children bring their broken toys in tears for us to mend
I took my broken dreams to God because He is my friend
Instead of leaving him in peace to work alone
I stood around and tried to help in ways that were my own
At last, I took them back, I cried how could you be so slow
He said my child, what could I do, you never let them go



Let go and let God!

Tim Busby,

Singer, Song Writer, Poet

Former Inmate Lansing Correctional Facility

The Doctrine of The Holy Spirit

by Alywin Mitchell



The Holy Spirit is the third person of the eternal Godhead, co-equal, co-eternal, and co-existent with the Father and the Son! The Holy Spirit, in all His glorious operations, is working through all who believe in the Father through the Son.

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit is one of the essential and one of the most important doctrines in the Word of God and is one of the foremost truths of redemption. We as believers should do our best to know all we can of the person, ministry, and work of the Holy Spirit as revealed and taught in Scripture.

The Holy Spirit should not just be seen as an inspiration or influence. When we look at Him in this way, we are robbed of a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in Scripture is revealed as a person. The Holy Spirit is an influence in the life of the believer, but it is a personal, intimate one.

The Holy Spirit is spoken of in scripture as having personal qualities. The three main qualities are Mind (Romans 8:27), Will (1Corinthians 12:11), and Emotions (Romans 8:26-27).

The Holy Spirit accomplishes personal functions for us.

1 Corinthians 12:11 says, *“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”*

1 Corinthians 2:10 says, *“But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”*

Romans 8:26 says, *“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”*

The Holy Spirit teaches, reproves, and convicts the hearts of men, as well as directs men in the service of and glorifies The Lord Jesus.

The Holy Spirit, though one with the Father and the Son is also distinguished from the Father and The Son. The same essential and moral attributes of the Father and the Son are also assigned to the Holy Spirit. This could not be possible if the Holy Spirit was not a Divine Person.

The Holy Spirit is called God, is eternal, is omnipotent, (all-powerful) is omniscient, (all-knowing) is omnipresent (everywhere-ever-present). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Love, and the Spirit of Holiness.

The whole life of Jesus as a perfect man was governed by the Holy Spirit. He was born of the Spirit, filled with the fullness of the Spirit, led by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit. He healed the sick by the Spirit. He was offered up on Calvary by the Spirit, and He was resurrected by the Holy Spirit.

The Doctrine of The Holy Spirit cont.

Once we respond to the conviction of our sin and accept Jesus as our Savior, the Holy Spirit becomes a permanent resident within us. When you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, you receive an immeasurable gift, the unlimited power, guidance, and wisdom of the Holy Spirit!

The Holy Spirit works in the lives of believers as our Intercessor and our Advocate, our Comforter, our Counselor, as well as a Helper who teaches us and convicts the world of sin.

The Holy Spirit dwells in believers and fills them, is a source of revelation, wisdom, and power. The Holy Spirit guides to all Truth, including the knowledge of what is to come, and also gives spiritual gifts to believers. The Holy Spirit is a seal or a stamp in the lives of believers and speaks to the hearts and minds of people to show them that they are sinners and need God's righteousness and that there will be a day of judgment.

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit comes selectively and temporarily when He wants to, does what He wants, with whomever He wants to use. It was not universal, and it was not permanent. In the Old Testament, He was with His people, and after Jesus dies and is resurrected for our sins, He is in His people.

God is so in love with who we are, that despite all of our faults, He sent Jesus to pay the ultimate price for our sins. He then went a step further by choosing to not just be available to us all the time, but to have His presence live in us!

The Holy Spirit in the New Testament is everything that He was in the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit is for all people, all believers, out of every kindred, tongue, tribe, and nation. The Holy Spirit lives in everyone who believes in Jesus Christ as long as they are alive. There are no exceptions to this wonderful promise that comes from the God of the Bible. This ministry of the Holy Spirit safeguards and guarantees the relationship of the believer with the Lord God. We can have confidence that God will be with us always through His Spirit who lives inside of us.

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.” John 16:13-14

When have you ever wished you could go back and undo what you didn't finish? There are no mulligans, as in golf, in real life. Unfortunately, you can't do that. I can make a commitment to setting my sights on getting closer to God in 2022. What do I have to do to make this a reality? This is an excellent question. Right on time, Paul tells us how to address this so it isn't an ongoing problem. If anyone is qualified to instruct us it certainly is Paul. For your consideration please turn in your Bible to Philippians 3:12 - 14 which says, *"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own."*

13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. "The first part of this scripture - "Not that I have already obtained or have already arrived at my goal..." will be submitted for your consideration. Please indulge me if you will. I want to do more than just scratch the surface of the scripture.

More importantly, is how do these words apply to us. I don't want to rush through these scriptures. Our future rests in the balance without clarity of thought and application.

"Not that", as offered with this syntax, in this sentence is an adverb used to form a negative to the auxiliary verb 'have'. Knowing this, Paul tells us that he has not obtained what he was reaching toward. He wasn't satisfied with where he was in his spiritual development. He was pursuing becoming Christlike in every way possible. What he had done in the past didn't matter in the moment. I might add that we shouldn't be satisfied either. His dissatisfaction compelled him to take the appropriate action to reach his goal. The ultimate goal of every confessing Christian should be to become more Christ-like.

Paul compares spiritual growth to a race. A runner trains to improve their performance (faster time). The time you ran in the 200 meters last week is long gone and forgotten. The runner's objective is to improve (growth) their time. Along the way, in their training, there will be setbacks. Thus, the need to have a daily training regimen. In light of this, the training is for the runner to get better (growth). The runner is dissatisfied with their past performance. They realize that if they are to improve (get faster), continuous training is required. They have to put in the work. They must challenge themselves. Do all runners do this? No, they don't. It's simple. The runners who do, improve. The runners who don't, don't improve. Moreover, a committed runner has a coach. The coach's responsibility is to help the runner improve their performance on the track. How does the coach achieve this? He, in collaboration with the runner, sets some realistic goals. He talks with the runner. He guides the runner, by establishing a regular training schedule. He instructs the runner. This develops over time as each person invests in one another.

Second, the runner has to believe in the coach's ability to help reach their goal. Third, the coach believes in the runner. He further believes that he, the runner, has the potential to reach set goals, if the training program is followed consistently.

It goes without saying that as believers we have only one coach. His name is Jesus Christ. As we commit our life to Him something miraculous happens - spiritual growth. James 4:8 says, *"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."* When you establish a set time to pray, study scripture, fellowship, and attend church, you begin to grow spiritually. Now you have a regular prayer life. It is imperative that you have a regular time to study the Word of God. Plan to fellowship regularly. When you attend church, you get blessed and you bless others. The things that used to be attractive to you no longer interest you. Your focus changes. Your thinking changes. Your ability, thanks to the Holy Spirit, empowers you to resist the devil's schemes. Others see the changes in you. You've been transformed by the Word of God!

In similar fashion, some Christians display the same attitude. Some are satisfied with their spiritual progress because they compare their spiritual growth (running), unfortunately with those Christians who are not making much progress. When you take on this attitude your spiritual growth is indeed delayed. Paul always compared himself with Christ alone! Christ was the bar for which he evaluated himself. Is it possible that we should do the same? Be honest with yourself.

Let me add a point of clarification which will illuminate Paul's perspective. If you go to verses 12 and 15, we discover Paul's perspective. Verse 12 declares he has not arrived at perfection, which will occur only when Jesus returns. Yet he, Paul, is perfect. Perfect here meaning he is mature. Mature in what he has learned and committed to. By him being aware that he isn't perfect, he demonstrates his maturity. The mature Christian always does an honest self-evaluation and strives to do better (spiritual growth).

"I have already obtained" says you have done something. Remember the "not that" informs us that Paul had not yet obtained complete Christ-likeness. This was going to be a continuous pursuit for the rest of his life. This is supported by the word "obtained" which means to gain or obtain usually by planned deliberate intentional action or effort. In our context, Paul pursued his goal (becoming more Christ-like) through a well thought out plan of action. This plan was long-term, requiring sincerity of purpose and an expectation to complete the plan. He was deliberate in his effort not to overlook anything. He had thoroughly counted the cost of not seeking Christ. The benefits exceeded the cost of not taking the necessary steps for spiritual growth.

Be encouraged to apply this scripture to heart and press towards this mark in Christ Jesus.

In 1984 I began serving two consecutive life sentences in two states. The first is in Kansas, and then upon parole, the other in Rhode Island. The Kansas Prisoner Review Board has passed me three times for 23.3 years. Gaining freedom from parole is rather daunting, isn't it?

There was a moment in the beginning when I looked in the mirror and didn't like what I saw. I regretted the person in the reflection with shame and guilt. It's true that "hurting people hurt people," because the same level of indifference I had towards my own pain and behaviors, I inflicted that indifference on others.

I had questions concerning myself: How did I come to the point of committing horrendous crimes with disregard for human life and property? Who am I really? And how do I navigate this time? Life seemed hopeless, void of purpose or passion.

But one evening while awaiting trial in the county jail, I accepted Jesus as my Savior. For two months I was in isolation, allowed one blanket, one sheet, and one shower per week. The face of the cell was covered with iron mesh. I could barely see the guards who walked by. Then late one night a man stopped and asked me how I was doing. Silhouetted, speaking in a whisper, he said the only thing that would help me was a relationship with Jesus Christ. He asked me to get on my knees and pray, repent, and ask Jesus to save me. He told me to request a bible and read it. As quickly as he spoke, he was gone. Awkwardly, I did as he asked. In the months ahead I did occasionally read the bible and didn't give much thought to that night. But it was a decision that would change the direction of my life forever.

I came to learn that life is about relationships and choices. Placing faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross restores you to a new relationship with Him. I was no longer defined by my past. As I matured in my walk with Jesus He began to move in my life.

God is interested in persistence, not perfection. Surrendering to Him is the underlying difference, not self-will, or performance.

There is no exact script for doing time. We are individuals with unique personalities, differing talents, situational circumstances, issues to resolve, and needs to be addressed. However, you cannot 'Do Life' without God. I tried. I was four to five years into my incarceration when I was awakened by the fact God indeed heard my awkward prayer in the county jail. He began a good work in me, even though I was not fully aware how Job, the Old Testament character, was told, "the breath of the almighty gives me life". Job 33:4 At the moment of salvation God breathes his spirit into you, becoming a new creation, with the ability to love and serve Him. In essence we gain a new identity of power, peace, and victory. Read Galatians 2:20. This propels us toward a new legacy. We get another crack at 'Doin' Life,' because the promise of every covenant God initiates is one of second chances.

Next to me in the first cell I was assigned in prison population was an "old head" that started his sentence back in the 70's. He took me under his wing and gave me five directives to pursue: Education, Accountability, Correction, Reflection, and Discipline. His advice has served me well but it's critical to sift everything you do by the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12-13 is good to read for validation of these five directives.

The Apostle Paul says, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" Romans 12:2. Transformed minds always result in transformed lives because God speaks to us with his eternal insight. A mind dedicated to God's truth will produce a life that can stand the test of time. Thus, what you believe about God manifests itself in the way you live.

My thirty-eight-year journey in prison has provided me with many opportunities for growth. It began with business and printing trades by day and college classes at night. Over the years I reached out for a support group of mentors and pastors who visited me. I became involved with organizations learning communication and leadership skills. In spite of my lengthy sentence God recently opened the door for reentry programming.

Doin' Life in God's Redemptive Power cont.

In 1996 I was selected to participate in a victim offender reconciliation program. The curriculum consisted of guiding my desire to make amends, unpack the remorse I felt, and understand the ripple effects of my crimes. The written work included an apology letter, which was accepted by the victim's family. We each have the responsibility to reconcile in ways that we can towards the depth and duration of trauma we caused people.

My experiences have led to learning and teaching about belief and value systems that dictate what you believe about yourself and drive your behaviors. The Prophet Micah tells us, "And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" Micah 6:8. Everyone guilty of crimes and cruelty has a common thread of selfishness. In God's redefining process, selflessness is His greatest work. It is his will for us, as ambassadors, to reflect the image of Jesus in word and deed, Colossians 3:23-24.

I have also come to learn that service becomes the most rewarding vocation. When Jesus expresses himself through us, we freely give our time, talent, and treasure to His redemptive cause.

Living for God doesn't mean you won't experience contention. The enemy will attack your body, wage war against your mind, and encircle you with negativity. Prison life can be lonely, vile, and dangerous. Being reduced to a number, and stripped of humanity, we are often reminded of how rotten we are within the system and by segments of society.

Those who walk with us spin the prison mentality of holding you back from rising up and overcoming so they can stay justified in their comfort zone of defeat. They try to "breath" their identity and agenda into you if you allow them.

You may be serving thirty days or thirty years in jail, or some other type of prison, stuck in a dark place of brokenness and self-condemnation asking yourself: "What's the point of my life?" Don't miss this ... His grace is sufficient for the uncertainty that surrounds you, 2 Corinthians 2:9-10.

Before Paul became God's apostle, he put Christians in prison and had them beaten, even killed. He was full of venom. I figured this was the last guy God would ever save. But God chose Paul to show how merciful He is so that anybody coming after Him would be encouraged. God showed He is willing to reach the lowest and that Jesus Christ will forgive the worst.

The reality is that God embraces you with tremendous value. Read Psalm 139. He has gone to the greatest of lengths to provide our "second chance". Paul wrote, "But God who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ-it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" Ephesians 2:4-6. The moment I read this all my searching ended with Him. Don't miss this point either, God has the ultimate agenda, to give you a glorious future and a hope, Jeremiah 29: 11-14a. He'll strengthen you to overcome the self-reliance that seems to always wreck you, break the stronghold of abuse, anger, and addiction, and heal the wounds that cause heartache for others and yourself.

We won't receive any free passes because we are in a relationship with Jesus. I still deal with fragments of a life gone wrong, but because of who I am in Christ, I come to Him with confidence and experience His immeasurable love, forgiveness, and transforming power, so can you.

The last few years God has given me favor by blessing me with opportunities to work for a multi-million-dollar embroidery company. I served as a peer leader and co-facilitator for victim impact classes. I write prison-based devotional messages of truth and inspiration for publication. I share this message because, with God all things are truly possible, Matthew 19:26.

Destiny is being made in this moment. A well-known author writes, "The words and ways of Jesus are better than all this world has to offer." Understanding the value of this is 'Doin' Life' in God's Redemptive Power. Praises to Him!

Have you ever wondered what Jesus thought about the two prisoners shackled on two wooden crosses probably not even 500 ft apart from him? After all, these two men probably lived such wretched lives and were up to no good, that they found themselves in a place where their eventual doom and death would come at the hands of the very people they had harmed. You would think that a man of Jesus' stature, one who could heal anyone of any illness or disease, a man who could turn water into wine, a man who was tested so many times by the devil - whether it was the devil himself or the devil working in man (Pharisees), the Disciples (Judas), and yet refused to give in to sin. And a man who defied what the world and it's human race said about those people who "had crossed the line" of what was right and what was wrong, would actually look at them in disgust as he too hung on a wooden cross, about ready to lose His life for someone he didn't know (the two criminals) or for simply doing no wrong.

So many times I wondered why Jesus didn't rebuke both criminals hanging on their respective crosses. After all, getting the death penalty of crucifixion was the worst possible way one could die. I'm sure their crimes were so horrific that no one could forgive them for it.

And some would even fathom to say, not GOD!!!

You may wonder and I'm sure those watching the men being put to death, "was it murder, was it robbery, was it a sexual offense, was it a crime so horrific, just the thought of it would cause one's body, to shake all over?"

Sometimes I even wonder why Jesus would even give a second thought to the one prisoner who knew he had messed up and screwed up his life, for him to have the courage to address a holy man like Jesus and say, "remember me in Paradise". Sometimes I wonder what Jesus thought when he was hanging on that cross in between those two men. But the more I think about it, the more I can only say that it is because of his incredible love and incredible grace for these men, outcasts as far as the world would shout and totally unacceptable because of their crimes as far as the human race is concerned, have a second and third and so on, chance to make things right.

Each year I have a word that the Lord has given me to focus on in my own life. Love. Trust. And this year:

Grace.

I too have faced a time in life when I needed Grace of unbelievable proportions. No, I did not experience the excruciating death that Jesus or these two criminals or any others faced when it came to the most horrible way of death. But I have personally experienced what it is like being held accountable for my sins and my mistake.

Facing a judge.

Being sentenced in a courtroom.

Doing a short jail sentence.

And yes, facing a couple of years of probation and trying to put my life back together after a mistake.

I felt similar to what these two criminals must have felt hanging on crosses, next to Jesus.

Scared.

Embarrassed and Humbled.

Hopeless.

Wondering what the world thinks of me now that I screwed up.

Uncertain of what's next.

But the one good thing is that word, Grace. Just like that criminal who asked Jesus, "remember me in Paradise,"

I too at one point in my life ask Jesus the same thing after I made a horrible decision. And just like that criminal, all I could think about was, Grace. That someone who did nothing wrong, Jesus, was actually going to grant me the Grace that I didn't deserve and was willing to die for that very mistake that I made, in order to have my dignity and life put back together.

In Western culture theology Grace is defined as courteous Goodwill. It is not asked for nor deserved but is freely given. Sometimes we think that Grace is only for those who haven't messed up really bad. Sometimes we think Grace isn't deserved by those who commit some of the most heinous crimes our culture says MUST never be forgiven. P.S.-the only sin that will never be forgiven are those who refuse to accept Jesus in their life and refuse to believe in and accept God.

While we don't know the exact crimes of the two men that hung on wooden crosses next to Jesus, we do know one thing: the man who asked Jesus to "remember him in Paradise" understood that Jesus had a power unexplainable to any human. Jesus could go to his Father in heaven and plead on behalf of this criminal for God to give him a second chance.

Grace is all about Love. To have Grace to forgive yourself of your mistakes and foolish ways of living. Grace that can only come from Jesus and his father in heaven, God. And Grace to give to others regardless of how bad they have been or how bad their crime is.

Grace to forgive yourself it's so important. There's nothing you can do to change what you've already done. But to accept what you have done and to be willing to choose another path that leads to wholeness, is key for you to have Grace for yourself. Especially when you make more mistakes.

Romans 8:1 says there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, and that includes anyone who has committed a sin that is also criminal. In the New Living Translation, it states in Titus 2:11, "For the grace of God has been revealed bringing salvation to all people." No sin, no crime is so bad, that Grace can't redeem it. It also states in the NLT in Titus 3:7, "Because of his grace he made us right in his sight and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life."

In short, even if you have made some of the biggest mistakes in life, give yourself some Grace because God has given you Grace to believe and to know that you're loved.

Grace also involves accepting what Jesus did for you, no matter how bad your sins or even crime may have been.

But more importantly, Grace also needs to be extended to those who may have hurt you in your past or even those who look down upon you because you didn't live up at one point to the standards of what the world says you should have. In short you made a mistake or better yet committed a crime.

God's love, God's grace is there for the taking. And I'm so glad that that prisoner hanging on that cross next to Jesus knew that without that Grace, he too would not have had a better ending following one of the most excruciating deaths either man could experience.

Yes, Grace is for everyone; even for the worst of man, even for you my brother and sister, who may be having a hard time accepting and giving yourself Grace. But most importantly, accepting the grace of someone that will love you no matter what.

Jesus is Grace - God's Richest At Christ's Expense. As Acts 15:11 says, "We believe that we are ALL saved the same way by the undeserved Grace of the Lord Jesus."

Different Fabrics, Slices, & Parts Of Life Fit Intricately Together Piece By Piece Through Poetry!"

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Let the transformation begin. What is a man? Is it the way he flexes his muscles? Is it the way he makes money? His hustle? It must be the way he will cuss you out and bust you in the mouth when he feels threatened or talked about. Is he in the shouts from the entertainers and sports fans? You the man! Is it in his voice? The deepness that saturates the atmosphere and makes the room shake when he enunciates his passionate choice. Is it in his swagger? His piercing eyes that send daggers into the heart of anyone who locks gazes with this gladiator who amazes us with a propensity to be filled with smoke, dope, and hard liquor like no other? This doesn't faze him, but it makes far too many people praise him...the player...The quicker pick "her" upper.

A Man!

His women are numerous. He has them in different categories to humor us. Love...Lust.. and Lead on... This corrupt seed has grown into the arsenal of young males, these adolescents are not hesitant to be just like this man. A man with a following of disciples who are not disciplined to prosper. His audience....his roster is full of little impressionable eyes watching. They begin to imitate and emulate a man who leaves his kids unprotected and abandoned. These boys and girls weren't in his plans and he can't possibly make adjustments and pass this test. So he doesn't change his stubborn stance on life and alter his behavior. No changed mind. No repenting. No going to the altar to pray and be a better father because he has his own plans because he is a man. As he goes through life's different stages he is full of rage because he can't produce the way he used to. Panic moves through his veins and his pain is acted out in his actions, the manifestation of strange things that has many people scratching their heads and asking...What happened to the man?

A Man...?

A Man? Amen! Pg. 2

Can I get a witness to fit this description of a male? A male, a man who listens well when he is young and he applies the remedies that have begun to blossom into his daily choices. His voice is firm. His turns are steady treading on the path that is straight and heady. He is full of wise ways. Amen! He lives his days producing living letters because he understands that you can't have success without successors. He raises little go-getters. He earns his living with integrity, living a life in front of you and me that is to be commended. He is splendid in all his dealings. He is meek, not weak, able to contain his God given strength as he paints a picture that will hit your conscious with strokes from a masterpiece. The Master pieced him together to lead. To love without deceit. His feet are swift to meet the needs of his family. Look up in the sky! It's a bird. It's a plane...Can it be...? Amen! He battles like any other guy. However, he gets his directions and orders from on high. Amen! You can try and persuade him to fail, but understand that God made him very well and is molding him daily while he is holding his hand and there are days he pulls away and falls...Amen! However, he has enough sense to come back to his senses and call on the Lord to help him get back up again and stand tall because he understands that his call will outlive his life. Amen! So he fights for his sons, his daughters, and his wife. He ages well. His following swells to people outside his bloodline just like heat climbs...Amen! He attracts others to his plan of generational goldmines. He rises to the apex reaching a crescendo. He leaves a legacy that will send those who pursue him to new heights. Amen! He has stuff, but stuff doesn't have him. His future is bright, not dim because he understands that the materials are temporary. He is more concerned about who will carry a godly dynasty. Amen! He has the key and he has no problem making duplicates so you and I can get the heaven-sent blueprint of his life. This man is the real deal and understands how to really fight. So...Can I get a witness? Who will fit this description of a male? Who listens well? Who agrees? Who will apply? Who understands? And let the people say... AMEN!!!

Words to Grow By
By Linda Lewis

From: Mothers
To: Their Sons

They say there is a reason,
They say that time will heal,
But neither time nor reason,
Will change the way we feel.
For no one knows the heartache,
That lies behind our smile.
No one knows how many times,
We have broken down and cried.
But we want to tell you something,
So there won't be any doubt,
You're so wonderful to think of,
But so hard to be without.
Know, beyond the shadow of a doubt,
That no matter what...
WE WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU!

May the Lord Bless you
And protect you.
May the Lord smile on you
And be gracious to you.
May the Lord show you His Favor
And give you His Peace.
Numbers 6:24-26

Forever,
Mom

Women Encouraging Women
By Linda Lewis

Be That Woman

Be that Woman
that wakes up with Purpose.
Be that Woman
who is Patient and Kind.
Be that Woman that shows up
And never gives up.
Be that Woman
that believes anything is possible
and is willing to work for it.
Be that Woman
Who is clothed in Strength & Dignity,
And who laughs without fear of the future.
Be that Woman who knows
She is Blessed way beyond her worth.
Be that Woman
That God says and knows you are.
Proverbs 31:10-31

“ Dream with ambition, lead with conviction, and see yourself in a way that others might not see you, simply because they've never seen it before.

- VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS



Relationships, human to human interactions, are an integral part of our lives. This could be a relationship with our spouse, relative, friend, Doctor, Lawyer, acquaintance, someone you just met, someone you dislike, or someone you downright hate. We relate to other people every day in a million ways, but it is important to do it right. In Genesis 2, God reveals to us his intent for mankind; on why we need to constantly work on our relationships in our life.

Mankind was created to have a relationship with God. In Genesis 2:7 God created Adam from the dust of the Earth and God breathed his own spirit into Adam, giving him his attributes (love, kindness, righteousness, justice (sense of right and wrong), faithfulness, desirability, freedom, knowledge, goodness, truthfulness, and sovereign power). Adam was eternal and complete, made in Gods image.

In Genesis 2:15-17 God gave Adam a focus and a job to work in a perfect Garden (the thorns and thistles came after the fall in Genesis 3). Adam was able to have a direct relationship with the creator of the entire universe (how cool is that?).

The key to a relationship is having a common thread so you can relate. To create a new relationship, we typically share details of our life, like our story, interests, occupation, and struggles to find common themes to build on. The implication is that Adam struggled with knowing how to have a relationship with God (creator of the entire universe), Adam was made complete, sovereign, and self-sufficient. He didn't need to rely on anyone. Many souls were saved during times of struggles when we needed help and God was there for us. If you don't need help (being made complete) the process of relating is harder.

God helped Adam find a helper (Genesis 2:18) by at first making all the animals (Genesis 2:19). God was helping Adam find someone he could relate to and perhaps fully understand how to relate to God. Our pets do help us understand our relationship to God (provider of our every need) in our dominion over the animals (Genesis 2:20).

God intentionally needed us to be incomplete to help us understand how to build relationships with others to make us complete. He didn't make Eve the same way he made Adam. He took away a piece of Adam to create Eve, thus showing we need someone to make us complete. We need to rely on others. We learn about our relationship with God by having our relationships (to complete us and work on oneness) with other people in our lives. We learn key things like how to trust or be trustworthy, the Church (Ephesians 5:21-27), Grace (Ephesians 2:1-10), Mercy (Hebrews 4:16, James 5:11), Wrath (Romans 1:18), and Jealousy (Exodus 20:5). To have a full relationship, we need to relate in many ways. God gave us others to help us learn and workout our ability and willingness to relate to others on Earth, so we can fully relate to God.

Embrace every relationship opportunity as a way to build a better relationship with God.

Our Apology

Last month we had a problem with the distribution of our magazine. Many of you did not receive it. We apologize for the disruption in service. We are always working hard to ensure that we make good on our promises.

We also promised to send out a reading plan that will guide you through reading the bible in a year's time. Many of you have signed up for that. The material is ready to be published but we are still working on that with our printing company. If anyone would like to be added to that waiting list, please send us your name and number.

Sincerely,



Executive Director



Growth Ministries

P.O. Box 4375
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Fathers Day Word Search

Find the hidden words.

S S D S S R L G Z T X K R L B
T E F L W E A L H I I A G N A
R K U O E T X O A S P H U G S
O O N O E H U U S B T R A E H
P J N T T G D E V O T E D G V
S T Y O H U S L S U M O N M G
F V C T H A W E R O Z O O N W
V I F E G L I E H Q R L I F H
D U S I P R T C E T O R P L O
L A F H O S F N S V A J G A L
E T D M I U E A E C G U I I I
S I E D J N Z R T R W N V C D
A M T L Y Z G O I H A E I E A
F A M I L Y B R A V E P N P Y
N E R D L I H C Q B B R G S O

BBQ	FATHER	HOLIDAY	LAUGHTER	SPECIAL
BRAVE	FISHING	HOME	LOVE	SPORTS
CARING	FOOTBALL	HONOR	MEMORIES	STRONG
CHILDREN	FUNNY	HUGS	NURTURE	SWEET
DADDY	GIFTS	JOKES	PARENT	THOUGHTFUL
DEVOTED	GIVING	JUNE	PROTECT	TIE
FAMILY	HEART	KISSES	RESPECT	TOOLS

Just for Laughs

Teacher (on phone): You say Michael has a cold and can't come to school today? To whom am I speaking?

Voice: This is my father.

Johnny's father: Let me see your report card.

Johnny: I don't have it.

Johnny's father: Why not?

Johnny: My friend just borrowed it. He wants to scare his parents.

"Dad, are bugs good to eat?" asked the boy.

"Let's not talk about such things at the dinner table, son," his father replied.

After dinner, the father inquired, "Now, son, what did you want to ask me?"

"Oh, nothing," the boy said. "There was a bug in your soup, but now it's gone."

A small boy was at the zoo with his father. They were looking at the tigers, and his father was telling him how ferocious they were.

"Daddy, if the tigers got out and ate you up..."

"Yes, son?" the father asked, ready to console him.

"...Which bus would I take home?"

Erin: What did the mother bullet say to the daddy bullet?

Fran: What?

Erin: "We're gonna have a BB!"

Four men are in the hospital waiting room because their wives are having babies. A nurse goes up to the first guy and says, "Congratulations! You're the father of twins."

"That's odd," answers the man. "I work for the Minnesota Twins!"

A nurse says to the second guy, "Congratulations! You're the father of triplets!"

"That's weird," answers the second man. "I work for the 3M company!"

A nurse tells the third man, "Congratulations! You're the father of quadruplets!"

"That's strange," he answers. "I work for the Four Seasons hotel!"

The last man is groaning and banging his head against the wall. "What's wrong?" the others ask.

"I work for 7 Up!"

Q: What treat do dads like for Father's Day?

A: POPsicles.

Q: What did the golfer dad want for Father's Day?

A: A Tee Shirt

Q: Why did the daddy cat want to go bowling on Father's Day?

A: He was an alley cat.

Q: What did Daddy pig put on his Father's Day pancakes?

A: Hog cabin syrup

Q: What did the Panda give his daddy on Father's Day?

A: A bear hug.

closing words...

The Ultimate Confidence

Matthew 7:7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.



Lonnie Johnson
GMI Executive Director

My mother and father didn't always see things eye to eye. Mostly because my dad was sort of a "free spirit" at times. Don't get me wrong, there were many happy moments. We went on many road trips across the country. Me and Dad went to several Royals games. We had family picnics, and so on. But there were moments where I would not see Dad for a couple of months. My parents never got married so he didn't live with us. When one of them was mad at the other one, he just stayed away for a while.

Despite that huge gap in the family structure, I loved my parents. Neither one of them mistreated me. I had everything I needed that they could afford, and the one thing they always seemed to agree on was taking care of the kids.

Having parents that cared and provided for me gave me a certain level of confidence. If I needed something I knew one of them would get it for me. As far back as I can remember, they were always like that. If there was something going on at school, I never worried if I would have the money to participate, and we were NOT rich by any means.

That's the kind of confidence we should have in God. He is our Heavenly Father. He has more resources than my Mom and Dad could ever imagine.

When we are born again into God's family as sons and daughters, we are co-heirs with Christ. (**Romans 8:17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.**) When we need something in life, we should never hesitate to not only ask, but to expect to receive it according to God's Word. (**1 John 5:14-15 14 Here is what we can be sure of when we come to God in prayer. If we ask anything in keeping with what he wants, he hears us. 15 If we know that God hears what we ask for, we know that we have it.**)

Anything in life that we need and even want can be ours, by faith, according to one of the steps in Matthew 7:7.

1. **Ask and it will be given to you:** If you are saved and filled with the Holy Ghost, then you can ask for anything you need. And if you are wondering if the things you may ask for are not in line with God's will, well that's what the Holy Spirit is for. If you ask him to line your heart up with His, then you are on your way to getting what you ask for.
2. **Seek and you shall find:** Looking for a wife or husband, need a job, need a place to live? Start looking. God will line you up with that which he has put aside just for you. Sometimes you just can't ask and wait, you have to get up and start looking. You have to put in some work. That is an exercise of your faith. Getting off the couch and setting out looking for what you know is yours shows God that you believe it is out there.
3. **Knock and the door will be opened to you.** Finally, what you need may be in possession of someone else. You may have to knock on their door, introduce yourself with bold confidence and ask for that thing. That may be


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Changing the World One Life at a Time