

Hearth to Hearth

Woman to Woman



Vol. 5, No. 5

“And ye are complete in him.” Colossians 2:10

Sept./Oct. 2002

The Giving Jar

Rachel Paxton



Giving with a happy heart

If you teach a child to give with a happy heart you will raise a child who will never hesitate to lend a helping hand. Children enjoy helping others, especially if they see their parents doing the same. When a child's basic physical and emotional needs are met, they are willing to share

almost anything they have with someone in need.

My daughter wanted to help others from the time she was old enough to understand what it was she was doing. Before she was old enough for an allowance she helped me go through her outgrown clothes and toys to give away to charities. At Christmastime we would shop together for needy families (she looked forward to this as much as picking out her own gifts). And this doesn't mean we weren't needy ourselves. When my daughter was young I was a single mom working and going to college, and I was barely able to make ends meet. What little we had left over, however, we used to help others. I am convinced that this act of helping others took my daughter's focus off of our own circumstances and created a passion in her for helping others. She always had food to eat and clothes to wear—she did not sense a lack in her life and so was willing to freely give anything she had.

As my daughter got older and started getting an allowance, she started spending her own money. She spent her allowance on family Christmas and birthday presents (however small), started tithing, and started contributing to charities of her choice. My daughter's allowance is relatively small, compared to some of her

friends, but that doesn't keep her from making contributions, no matter how small, to people and organizations she wants to help. Now that she's old enough to babysit, she has even more money to decide what to do with. She decides what to spend on herself, what to save, and what to give to others.

Our family recently came up with an idea of how we could work together to save up some money to help others. I am forever picking up loose change around the house, on the floor, in the car, and in the bottom of my

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Editorial

DUPED!

Esther McDaniel

Have you ever believed in a thing wholeheartedly, to the point where you staked your resources and your reputation on it, only to discover later that you had been duped? Sometimes I think that we, as Christians, are more prone to this kind of deception than anyone else. We want to “esteem others better than self.” (Philippians 2:3) We want so much to believe in the good that we find it difficult to discern and label the evil.

The Bible records a story along this line, in the ninth chapter of the book of Joshua, that I have found to be very enlightening. It is recorded there that soon after the children of Israel had entered the land of Canaan and taken the cities of Jericho and Ai, they were faced with a test. Please read this interesting story in the book of Joshua, chapter 9.

Back in October George and I were faced with a similar test. (See Spotlight on Orphans page 4) On Friday, July the 12th, we, too, discovered that we had been duped. Before that time, we had received a few clues that all might not be well, but in keeping with our tradition of believing innocence until proven guilty, giving the benefit of a doubt, and doing unto others as we would have them do unto us, we prayed for more light on the subject while continuing in the direction we were going. Since learning the truth, we have asked ourselves many questions, among which are the following: “Where did we make our mistake?” “Why would God allow this to happen when He knows we only want to serve Him?” “What lessons are we supposed to learn from this?”

I believe we have found our answer to the first question in the story referred to above. In Joshua 9:14 it says, “And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.” We, too, though we prayed much, failed to ask counsel “at the mouth of the LORD.” We thought we knew how God would have us to receive one who came to us in His name, requesting help for hungry and destitute children. Why did we need to ask God if we should help with this project when His Word clearly tells us that we are to “give to him that asketh thee.” (Matthew 5:42) “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 John 3:17) Using the Internet, and sending friends for a visit to check out the story, we were convinced that this was a cause worthy of our efforts.

The answer to the next two questions seems to involve the gift of discernment that God wants each of us to receive from Him. He has told us to “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” (Proverbs 3:5, 6) “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8, 9)

God is a faithful Instructor. He knows what lessons we need to learn that will enable us to stand through the trials of these last days. He knows that we must learn to depend totally on Him and not on our own assessment of the way that seems right, but which leads to death. (Proverbs 16:25) In the Garden of Eden, Satan tempted Eve to believe that her own intellect and the evidences of her senses were a safer rule to follow than God’s Word. Will we, too, believe this lie?

There are many Bible passages that are designed to let us know that we must be diligent, watchful and informed because our “adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Peter 5:8) The Bible is clear that human beings are prone to various forms of deception propagated by Satan. We can be deceived by “men”: Matthew 24:4,5; we can be deceived by our leaders: Isaiah 9:6, Matthew 7:15-21; we can deceive ourselves: Matthew 7:21-23, 1 Corinthians 3:18-21; and if this is not enough to get us, Satan himself will step in to attempt to deceive us: 2 Corinthians 11:14; 1 Peter 5:8.

This issue of *Hearth to Hearth* is dedicated to helping us sort through this important and timely issue. I pray that you will be blessed as we review some of these principles together.



MAIL CALL:

I continue to enjoy *Hearth to Hearth* paper and share it with others. So sorry for the flooding in Kenya—hope progress of the building has continued. Just want to help as I can. Thanks for including updates.

Michigan

Thank you for the wonderful job you are doing. I will give you my two daughters’ addresses. *West Virginia*

I think it’s nice for women to have their own paper and pen pals. I do have a number of correspondents... Thanks for listening. I’m just an old granny.

Oregon

Here is the money for you to use as you see fit. I will pray that all the mess gets straightened out and the children get fed. I hate to see anyone go hungry. It breaks my heart. God bless you and *Hearth to Hearth*. *New Jersey*

[Several of the letters in this issue of *Hearth to Hearth* reflect a knowledge of information contained in a letter sent to the sponsors of the orphanage project, that went out the end of July. As you read this issue, many of your questions should be answered. *Editor*]

As long as we can try to help these kids in any way I will keep giving.

Michigan

I want to tell you that I love getting your newsletter. Thank you and please keep sending it. Here is a small donation. I hope it will help with postage and other things. *Tennessee*

The enclosed check is for Mercy’s sponsorship. Due to God’s blessings we are able to send extra to help repair the orphanage school. *Minnesota*

Thank you for your lovely magazine and its practical help articles for day to day life. *Australia*

A wise man once said, “You can go through life always doing your best and find out that all the good you think you are doing is all for naught because not all people have the same value system as you may have.” Not all of us give allegiance to God in our hearts. The Bible speaks of those that have a smooth tongue and those that appear as lambs but are really ravening wolves come to rob you of your soul and your kingdom.

God expects us to do good for others and not count the cost. To march ahead no matter what the world does to us. To know that the good you

have done in some way will be a blessing. We can not give up. We must go ahead with the assurance that God is in control and He always will be.

You did what you thought was right and followed what God prompted you to do. Don't worry about it as God always turns the bad to good and uses it in a better way. *Arizona*

I am supposing that you are still collecting for the Kenya orphans. Hope things will be straightened out soon as I have a package ready to send. *Ohio*

God was using you through *Hearth to Hearth* to discover this crime in Africa. Isn't that something. I'm really excited how God answers prayers. I know this is one of His thousand ways, and He has many more things that can come to good from this. *California*

One my brothers from Germany wants to send money to the orphanage in Kenya, so I ask you how he can do it, in the cheapest way. God bless you. *Poland*

Blessing today on all your needs and wants. Yes, I would like to continue to receive the issues of *Hearth to Hearth*. Thank you for your follow-up e-mail. May God continue to bless these issues. They have helped me so much. Thank you again.

Virgin Islands

I read in the last *Hearth to Hearth* that the orphanage in Kenya isn't doing well since all that flooding. My heart goes out to all these poor orphan children. I surely wish we could do more. May God's blessings be with you.

Tennessee

Please know that my thoughts and prayers are with you and all your efforts in His work. Will continue in prayer.

Ohio

I've been thinking a lot about you this week and wondering how your doing and how things have worked out about the orphanage. That is so sad and I feel so bad for everyone involved. Are the children still going to be taken care of or what will happen to them? I wish I could adopt one of them. *Michigan*

I do take this opportunity on behalf of the used to be distressed teachers to thank you abundantly for the mercy you accorded us to receive our pending salary balances. May God reward your efforts as you continue to clear defaulted debts.

The director, Mr. Lawrence Allosa, was picked up from his house in the morning yesterday the 8th August, 2002. He was driven severally back to his house for release of records and lastly his whereabouts is not known. His arrest is known locally as caused by his former sponsors and you... Please keep me informed of any latest development.

I visited the school today in the morning. I found 68 children only. The children looked very hungry. In fact, very hungry and I was to buy a few some bananas. I learnt that the children had no supper the previous night and were so worried of their breakfast and lunch...

Mother, I do suggest as follows: Forgive the children. Send them food. They are blameless – innocent and should not suffer that much! *Kenya*

[It was our understanding that the children had been moved. They were, in fact, in the *process* of being moved. Appropriate places for them had to be found. We sent money for food immediately. *Editor*]

PRAYER CALL:

1) Please keep the orphaned children from OBREC in your prayers. They need some stability. They also need to understand the concept of a loving Father that they may understand their Heavenly Father's love for them. Don't forget the many other orphaned children throughout the world.

2) Please put my son and his family on your prayer list. My son and grandson drink all the time. It is breaking up their home. I have prayed and talked but it hasn't helped. I don't know what I am doing wrong but I do know that I can't give up on them. *Tennessee*

3) Please pray for my friend, Doris. She is a diabetic and already lost one lower leg and foot and now she has an infection in the other. *New Jersey*

4) Please continue to remember Onycha Holt as she struggles to regain productive use of her right arm.

EDITOR'S NOTES:

» **Staff Changes:** In recent months there have been some changes to our staff. Jennifer Priddy, who was helping with layout and design, no longer has the computer necessary for the job. She has been greatly missed.

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Our Method:

Hearth to Hearth is published bi-monthly and sent free upon request. Voluntary donations are appreciated.

Our Mission:

Believing that we can find completeness in all areas of our lives only "in him, who is the head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:10), it is the mission of *Hearth to Hearth* to provide a forum for Christian women to reach out to each other in friendship, joy and hope; and to encourage each other to find our completeness in Christ as we sojourn here on our way to the kingdom. By this completeness in Christ we become better wives, mothers, daughters, homemakers, neighbors and friends. As an outgrowth of this completeness, we will desire to share the love of God through our efforts to meet the needs of others and to relieve the suffering of those for whom Christ died.

Our Staff:

Editor:

Esther McDaniel

Associate Editors:

Sally Specht - Content

Kendra Beachy - Copy

George McDaniel - Copy

Contributing Editors:

Alice Frederick

Onycha Holt

Victoria Kritzell

Pat Kroeger

Dorothy Manning

Dee Stringfellow

Treasurer:

Kendra Beachy

Assistant Treasurer:

George McDaniel

Our Address:

All letters should be sent to *Hearth to Hearth*, P.O. Box 247, Pineville, WV 24874. (The return address printed on the newsletter is for mailing purposes only.)

Phone: 304-732-9204

Fax: 304-732-7322

E-Mail: esther@smyrna.org

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A Day of Reckoning

Vicki Kritzell & Esther McDaniel

This is not going to be an easy column to write, nor to read. We are asking for you to be your best self, to consider all put forth here and react, not out of anger or disappointment, but based on what is best for the children of OBREC.

The last issue of *Hearth to Hearth* was barely in the mail when we received a shocking, devastating revelation of the true conditions at OBREC. If you had sent a donation for this project in the past couple of months, you received a sponsor's letter around the end of July and have already learned that there have been some troubling developments.

Shortly before this time, we had received a few disturbing e-mails from individuals on the staff at King's Kids Academy—the school connected with OBREC. They were very polite, asking if we were in fact sending money, and if there was enough to pay their stipends. There were hints at misappropriation of funds. We were not, however, ready to doubt Lawrence; we felt there must be some explanation as to why he wasn't paying them and we were well aware that we were not meeting the budget he had given us.

Soon after the letters were received and answered, though, we discovered that the two people who had written had been fired. The staff was forbidden to communicate with us. We, who had invited and welcomed letters from them, knew that Lawrence, or someone, was intercepting our correspondence. This was not an acceptable situation and we informed him of such. About this time, however, we received word from Lawrence about the flooding at the school. We put our doubts on hold and responded to the needs he presented to us, worrying about the children trying to survive the mud and disease. (Only later did we learn that the pictures he sent had been faked and that although there was

flooding throughout the area, OBREC had been spared.)

Near the end of June we came in contact with Melissa Piper, a young woman who spent two-and-one-half months living in the Allosso home and teaching at King's Kids Academy. Melissa (Mel) was working as an intern for the African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF), as part of a study abroad program called MSID (Minnesota Studies in International Develop-



ment). This was all a part of her course work for a degree in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin. She returned from Kenya barely in time to graduate. It was not until the 12th of July, however, that we were able to communicate with her and to ask our questions and learn her story.

Mel shared with us several concerns she had regarding the orphanage. While there, she had helped to set up a committee to work toward bettering the lives of the children and staff and promoting better accountability regarding the funds received.

Soon after we heard from Mel, we also came in contact with a group from the United Kingdom who had been instrumental in helping Lawrence to begin this project. We learned that they had pulled out of the project in the year 2000, and moved the children who were there at that time out of the center, due to misappropriation of funds and other concerns. They had also done what they could to try to stop Lawrence from continuing his project, but due to corruption in local government—allegedly even to the highest levels—they were not able to succeed. We have also, since, been in contact with others who have at one time or another been funding this project.

We have learned from various sources that Lawrence apparently uses the children as a means to enrich himself while letting them remain destitute. In other words, no matter how much money we would send, their condition would never improve. Although Lawrence claims to be a minister of the gospel, and though he can share some beautiful lessons from the pages of Scripture and pray very moving prayers, his actions are not those of a Christian. It was difficult to come to this conclusion after having met him personally, living and working with him in our environment here for over two months.

We are sorry to have to report that many of the children whose photos and histories we have were in the group that was moved out of the center in the year 2000. Others are not even orphans. None of the children were aware that they had been sponsored. Some of the packages sent have been left at the Post Office and/or their contents have been taken for personal use or sold; the children receiving very little of what has been sent. The letters written to the sponsors from the children were contrived, as were most of the "legal" documents we have on file.

Be assured that much of the money that has been sent has gone for the care of the children who *were* at the orphanage or else they would not be surviving. But some of it has also gone for the personal enrichment of Lawrence Allosso and his family. We have also learned that he has a second wife, Susan, whom he keeps in another town.

Much has happened since the last issue of *Hearth to Hearth* was printed—so much, in fact, that our heads are spinning and it is difficult to foresee a direction for the future. Through the help of many, we have been working to get these criminal activities stopped. As one of the ladies from the UK told us, “God needed another witness.”

At the present time, Lawrence has been arrested and, at a court hearing, the orphanage was officially closed down and the children moved. The investigation is not finished and we believe that God is bringing to justice one who has perpetrated many crimes in His name. The children, 59 in number, (those who were true orphans), have been divided up among various other orphanages in the area, two of which are run by the group from the UK that was responsible for removing the last group of children from Lawrence’s control. These two orphanages (and possibly the others) were already struggling to provide for the children presently in their care, but could not turn the new arrivals away.

We know this is a tremendous shock for you as it was for us. There are many questions still unanswered. We have not sent funds to the orphanage through Lawrence’s wife, Sophie, since we have received the full picture of what is going on. (The last donation sent to Sophie, a reduced amount, was sent on July 5, in keeping with our pattern of sending money every 5th of the month.) However, we did want to stick with this program until we knew that the children were taken care of. We also felt it prudent to cover the staff’s back salaries, most of which have now been covered (lacking only \$300). Many of these staff

members are the ones who have worked to make life bearable for the children and stuck with the program, in spite of privation to their own families, because they felt the children needed them. We have, therefore, sent funds to the pastor, to be distributed by a committee of three, for these purposes.

Please continue to pray for the children. Pray also for the teachers who are left without employment. Pray especially for the pastor, Maurice Odhiambo Maina Anyango. Pastor is very concerned for the welfare of the



children to whom he had been ministering on physical and emotional levels as well as spiritually, and who have now been moved to various places—some, no doubt, out of his reach.

This project, from the very beginning, was a gift to God. It was also a gift to us *from* God, giving us a chance to show His love through our actions. We belong to God; our possessions belong to God; Lawrence belongs to God and the children are also His. “And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:7, 8)

There is one thing in which we must all take heart. Although this mission is following a road that we never anticipated, the children have been served in a way that will benefit them far greater than merely nourishing their bodies. They have been saved from an evil that most likely would have destroyed them both spiritually and physically without our involvement. They have been betrayed by a spiritual leader, and if we desert them how will they ever trust in the love of God? With the removal of Lawrence Allosso, there is a chance we may be able to move forward and proceed with our original goal of securing a safe place for these children to grow and flourish in.

We are not yet sure of our direction. At this point there are many questions and few answers. We appreciate the trust you have placed in us and especially those who, after learning of the situation, have vowed to help us see it through to the end. We hope to benefit from the experience and wisdom of our readers in planning our future in this mission. Your input will be greatly valued as this is a project dependent on the combined efforts of all of us working towards a common goal. There may be those of you who would not have sent funds during the last two months had you understood the situation. We would like to invite any who feel this way to contact us. We welcome your feedback of any kind.

Please contact Vicki, at: PO Box 211, Clyde, OH 43410; Phone: (419) 547-8147; E-mail: kritz@nwonline.net and/or Esther, at the *Hearth to Hearth* office address listed in the box on page 3. We are here to entertain your concerns and we thank each of you for your involvement in this venture. May God grant you His blessing.



[The photos accompanying this article were provided by Melissa Piper. Opposite page: Akoth doing laundry. Top photo above: Children playing; lower photo, left to right: Benter Akinyi, Mel, Molly, Millicent Atieno, and Carolyn Auma in front of the girl’s dormitory.]

Some Hard Questions

In the few weeks since we began hearing disconcerting reports regarding the OBREC Orphanage (the bulk of which came just after our last issue of *Hearth to Hearth* was in the mail), we have been asking ourselves many hard questions. You may be asking yourself some of the same. Perhaps it will help to put some of these questions on paper and see if there are any answers.

From the Director's Perspective:

Question #1: Who is my leader?

Question #2: If God is my Leader, why would He allow me to get involved in something that turns out so badly?

Question #3: Must I decide that God is *not* leading me after all?

Question #4: When I gave money (and much of my heart) to the children of OBREC was the gift only for the children?

Question #5: To whom do these children belong?

Question #6: If they do, indeed, belong to God, why would He allow them to suffer so?

After much prayer and soul searching, I still do not know that I have all the answers, but God has given me enough answers in His Word that I can move forward confidently, knowing that my Father, who knows and sees all, is in control. I will try to share with you some of the answers that I have discovered for myself. Perhaps you will discover some of your own and be able to share them with me and with the rest of our readers.

Answer to Question #1: God is my Leader. He has promised to never leave me nor forsake me. (Hebrews 13:5) I have asked Him to lead me, and when I ask for something good He would never give me evil. (Matthew 7:8-11)

Answer to Question #2: His ways are “past finding out.” (Job 9:10; Romans 11:33) God knows what I can handle and what I need to learn from such experiences, whether negative or positive.

Answer to Question #3: This was a hard question for me. I have known many people who believe that God was leading them if everything turned out well, but if they hit a serious snag, they attributed it to Satan. This keeps them constantly unsure of who *is* leading them. I have no doubt that it is Satan who sets his snares for my feet in an effort to cause me to stumble, but it is my Heavenly Father who allows these things to come to me.

He has not promised to save me from embarrassment or difficulty—He has promised to see me through it. I cannot see the road ahead, but if I determine to follow my Leader, He will make the path safe for my feet to travel. I

must believe Him when He says, “...All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

Answer to Question #4: This, too, was a difficult question. If the gift was only for the children, then I would feel justified in being very upset about the misuse of my gift. But I decided that, truly, I was giving my gift to God. And more than that, I was giving it out of what was already His own. God did not need my money. “But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.” (1 Chronicles 29:14) I decided that God had a right to do with His own money whatever He chose.

Answer to Question #5: If God owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10), then surely these children belong to Him. In fact, every man, woman and child on this earth belongs to Him.

Answer to Question #6: This is, by far, the hardest question of all. Why does God allow innocent children to suffer? There are children in the world today who have suffered much more than these. Satan inspires his subjects to perpetrate unfathomable suffering upon innocent children (and others) everywhere. Why does God allow him to destroy God's own property? Many of you, reading these lines, know from personal experience exactly what I am talking about because you, too, have suffered untold abuse. Why? Why? Why?

There is only one answer that I can find for this question, and it can only be seen by looking long and hard at Calvary. I can discern it only by trying to view it through the eyes of my Heavenly Father as He witnesses the abuse heaped upon the person of His only-begotten Son. The very One who had once shared His glory and was daily His delight (John 17:5; Proverbs 8:30), is now hanging naked and bleeding upon a cruel cross. Mockery, derision and insults hang heavy in the air while the cries of “Crucify Him, crucify Him” shouted from the mindless voices of those He came to save—His own people—still ring hauntingly in His ears.

And the guilt—the sense of awful guilt associated with the sins of humanity, which He took upon Himself, is crushing the very life out of Him. The terrible feeling of separation from His Father, all of His senses witnessing to Him that the Father is no longer with Him, wrings from His lips the agonizing cry, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46)

And the Father, looking on, bleeds for the agony of His Son but He dares not come to His aid. If He had, there

would have been no hope for you or me or the children of OBREC. At last the Father thrills to the sound of triumph in the voice of His Son when, grasping His Father's promises by faith He declares, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46) Through faith in the word of His Father, Christ died a conqueror!

The Bible states very clearly: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

The way I see it is this: God created our first parents perfect and He gave them dominion over the earth. Satan caused them to sin, thereby usurping that dominion. The Father and the Son did not stand idly by watching their earthly children suffer in the hands of this tyrant. Just as you and I reached out in love and pity to help the children of OBREC, they also put into motion a plan to save us. But for many reasons known best to God Himself, it has taken much time to accomplish the work and His children have endured much suffering in the process. Still, the pledge of His love is what happened at Calvary. His suffering, earthly children need only look there to see that their Heavenly Father loves them just as much as He loved His only-begotten Son.

When God gave His Son for that OBREC child I sponsored, it showed that He valued that child just as much as He did His Son. He would not have made the exchange for anything that He valued less! When I question why God doesn't step in to save these innocent children from suffering, I must remember that He could have also stepped in to save His innocent Son from suffering shame, insult and death at the hands of the ungrateful people He came to save. God alone can see the whole picture! The Father and the Son both suffered to give us life and there is suffering for each of us, God's redeemed children, also, before the plan can be completed and the enemy put out of the way, leaving a sin-free and happy universe.

I cannot see the road ahead, but I have decided that each turn, each hill, each pitfall along the way is designed to teach me to follow more closely, hang on more tightly, and trust myself more fully to the One who knows all things. (John 16:30; 21:17)

Esther McDaniel

From a Sponsor's Perspective:

Question #1: Was there selfishness in my gift?

Question #2: Is God trying to show me what the ultimate end of selfishness is?

Question #3: What was it I wanted when I got involved in this project?

Question #4: Can I ever know the whole truth?

Question #5: How did I feel after putting energy and great JOY and money into packing the little boxes for my new son and then discovering he was not there? What was the lesson here?

These are the questions I asked myself as I tried to deal with the blow that my loving gifts to Samwel never reached him—in fact, Samwel was not there! I had sent him a collage picture of our family, placing his photo in the very center to let him know that he now *had* a family that cared for him. What happened to the picture that I so lovingly created? I had sent Samwel a Bible that had belonged to my father-in-law, writing his name and the birth date I had chosen for him inside. What happened to the Bible?

Here are some of the answers I have chosen for my questions:

Answer to Question #1: Because we are basically selfish people, perhaps there was some glory to be obtained from this venture. God help me not to covet any glory for myself.

Answer to Question #2: I can surely see from this whole experience a product of selfishness. I hope I see it clearly enough that I will allow God to eradicate every bit of selfishness from *my* life!

Answer to Question #3: I believe I wanted to help the helpless; I wanted to experience the joy and blessing that comes from giving of myself to help someone else, but my primary goal was to bless Samwel—to share what I had with him; to give him a family and a hope for the future.

Answer to Question #4: I probably will never know the whole truth of this situation. I must be content with what God sees fit to reveal to me.

Answer to Question #5: I felt cheated. My bubble had burst. My joy had vanished. My disappointment was intense. The lesson? Perhaps I needed to feel a taste of the disappointment my Heavenly Father will feel if my place at His table is empty when He has, at such great expense to Himself, joyfully, and with much energy and enthusiasm, prepared a place for me.

And what happened to my gifts? It does not matter. I like to think that they have served a useful purpose for someone but, if not, I must rest in the knowledge that my Heavenly Father appreciated and cherished the gifts I sent from my heart.

Sally Specht

CAN YOU PLANT?

Rick Kornmeier

As I dropped that first piece of sod in our new Florida home, circa 1960, Dad yelled across the yard, “green side up!” I really didn’t know which side went up, I guess it was obvious to Dad that I wasn’t really born with the proverbial green thumb. Twenty plus years later, I was getting ready to plant a vegetable garden at our new south Florida home and the local garden shop owner asked me, “Can you plant?” Well, I was starting to wonder about that myself but I’d also figured that the shop’s owner had just sold me some bad seeds!

I’d already dug up the sod, built a fence, ran some string lines and was starting to plant some tomato seeds in my brand new home garden. I eagerly tore open the seed package and poured 20 to 30 tomato seeds into my hand. As I gazed upon these mysterious little flecks, I became convinced that nothing so dried up, shriveled up and dead looking could grow a tomato plant! No way could these seeds produce an abundant crop! Why, those seeds looked useless to me, so I drove back to the garden shop and told the owner that the seeds weren’t any good.

The owner, trying not to laugh at me, assured me that the seeds were fine and that all tomato seeds looked dead and that all I needed was a little faith in the promise of

the abundant crop that those seeds held. Faith! Promise of an abundant life! I was starting to wonder if the store owner was a bi-vocational preacher. So, not really believing him but thinking about his mention of faith, I went back home and planted those seeds.

Skeptical, cynical, yes! I was sure that I had just wasted my time. Yet, a week or so later I noticed

some thin scraggly growth coming from the ground. “Probably weeds” I figured.

Weeks later, those thoughts came back to me as I stood in the garden amongst the tall to-

matato vines and an abundant crop of tomatoes. HEY! THOSE SEEDS REALLY DID WORK! My patience, preparation, dedication and perseverance was about to be rewarded!

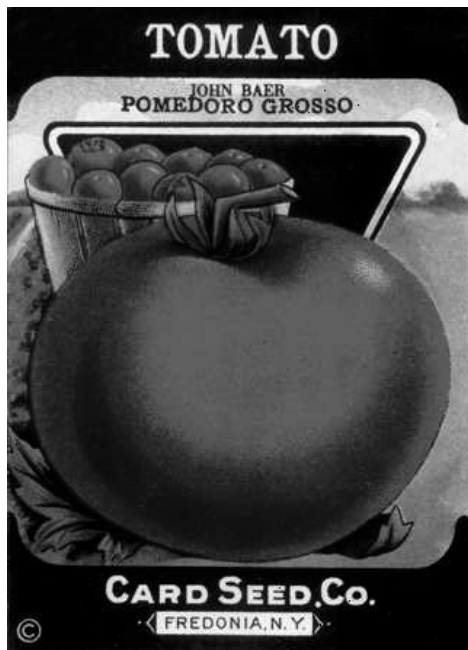
As I approached the six foot tall tomato plants, I was amazed by all those tomatoes! To think that about three months ago those plants were but a tiny seed! From such a tiny seed came tall majestic plants, some were six feet in height. All were full and bushy with maybe 40 or 50 tomatoes on each plant! The fruits were in various stages of growth. Some were ripe, some were green

and some were just starting to grow from the flower. Little yellow flowers signified that more tomatoes were coming. What a bountiful harvest from such tiny seeds. How is such a miracle possible?

As I thought about this question and those tomato seeds I realized that was exactly how I had planted many of God’s promises into the garden of my life. At first, I didn’t really believe in some of those Biblical promises but, in FAITH, I had planted them and God had made them grow in my life’s garden. HE watered them, nurtured them and made them bear fruit. Why, even some of those Biblical seeds that I was sure were dead, dried up and not relevant to my life, had grown in the garden of my life, but only after I had planted them! Biblical promises are like tomato seeds in a package; useless until believed in and taken out of their “packages”!

I don’t really understand how a seed works—DO YOU? I don’t know how it is that those GODLY SEEDS AND GODLY PROMISES work, but I know they work! I planted that old tomato seed, I tested it’s ability to produce and I doubted. I wondered about it’s capacity to produce an abundant crop. Why, even when the seed started to grow I still questioned and doubted; I figured it was just another weed.

As I stood there in the garden, I thought once again of the Bible lessons on sowing and reaping. I had reaped many tomatoes because I had sown many tomato seeds. This principle will work in life’s garden. I could sow the seeds of life and expect to harvest the gifts of life! I soon determined that the seeds of



life are very similar to the seeds of the tomato. I recalled the sowing of seeds such as: love, friendship, enthusiasm, kindness, patience, desire, persistence, optimism, trust, good deeds, joy, faith, tithes, loyalty, gifts, offerings, wisdom, and honesty. What had I harvested from these seeds? Why, just like I had reaped tomatoes from the tomato seeds, I had reaped exactly what I had sown. When I had loved, I had received love. When I had been friendly and caring I had reaped friends.

Just as the tomato seed had produced, my seeds of life had also produced. When I planted the tomatoes, I expected and knew that I would reap tomatoes. Can I expect and know that if I sow trust I will reap trust? Yes! Oh, sometimes I may run across some dishonesty, when I expected honesty. However, just as the tomato plant may pro-



duce a few bad tomatoes, so will life sometimes produce a few bad fruits. The total harvest, however, will still produce exactly what I have sown. It is a law of God that cannot be broken.

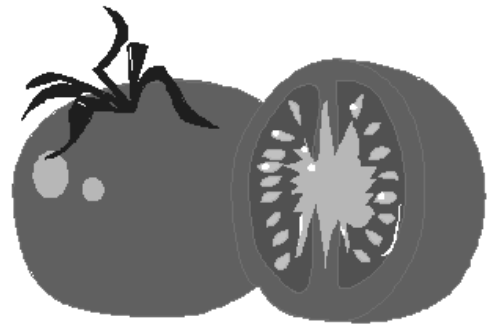
For over 15 years I've been involved in a ministry of Christian Money Management and Biblical Stewardship and each seminar starts with me passing out a package of tomato seeds. I've given away thousands of tomato seed packages because I've come to realize that when it comes to our God you can't OUT PLANT HIM! But, you will never grow an abundant crop in life's garden until you learn to plant "seeds" of faith!

Have you planted any of God's Biblical promises in the garden of your life? Try some seeds of promise that you may even doubt. Give God a chance to grow an abundant crop in your life. Read John 10:10. Well, don't just sit there, go read it.

Can you plant a tithe? Absolutely! Now, I know that many will not or cannot initially believe that this SEED will produce an abundant crop, but let me, and thousands of other tithing gardeners, assure you that the tithing seed produces an abundant crop. Oh, the crop may not be monetary, but it may be peace, joy, contentment and free-

dom from financial worry.

I'm a CPA and one day I decided to count the number of seeds in one of my huge tomatoes. I cut that tomato up and was counting the seeds when the thought struck me—man can count the number of



seeds in a tomato but can anyone count the number of tomatoes in a seed?

No! Absolutely not. Only God can tell us how many tomatoes are in that seed. Can you tell me how many promises are in your gifts, tithes and offerings? I know you don't understand all of this, and neither do I, but we don't really need to know it all; we just need to plant and believe. God will take care of the growing. Plant what you need in life and watch the abundant crop.

"So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow." (1 Corinthians 3:7 N.I.V.)



[Mr. Rick Kornmeier, CPA CFP, does not sell any financial or accounting services, books or tapes. His involvement with Consumer and Biblical Stewardship is a ministry that was started in the early 1980's strictly as a means of sharing his abilities with churches and Christians in need of his expertise. You can access his website at: www.biblicalstewardship.com. You can also contact him at 377 SW 14th Ave, Pompano Beach, FL 33069, Telephone: 954-785-0520 days.]

Two Prayers - One Kitten

Dwight Nelson tells this true story about a Romanian Seventh-day Adventist pastor:

He had a kitten that climbed up a tree in his backyard and then was afraid to come down. The pastor pleaded, got warm milk, etc. The kitty wouldn't come down. So he decided that if he tied a rope to his car and

drove away so that the tree bent down, he could then reach the kitten. He did all this, kept getting out to check, then figured if he went just a little bit farther, the tree would be bent sufficiently to reach the kitten. But as he did so, the rope broke. Of course, the tree went Boing! and the kitten sailed through the air out of sight.

The pastor felt very bad. He walked all over the neighborhood, asking people if they'd seen a little kitten. No. So he prayed, "Lord, I just commit this kitten to Your keeping," and went on about his business.

A few days later he was at the grocery store, and he met a church member and happened to

look into her shopping cart. He was amazed to see cat food, knowing she hated cats. He asked her, "Why are you buying cat food when you hate cats?"

She replied, "You won't believe this," and told him how her little girl had been begging her for a cat, but she kept refusing.

Then a few days before, the girl had begged again, and she finally told her, "Well, if God gives you a cat, I'll let you keep it." You can guess the rest.

She told the pastor, "I watched my little girl go out in the yard, and get on her knees, and ask God for a cat. And really, you won't believe this, but I saw it with my own eyes.

A cat suddenly came flying out of the blue sky, with its paws spread out, and landed in front of her."

Author Unknown



A little girl walked daily to and from school. Though the weather that morning was questionable and clouds were forming, she made her daily trek to the elementary school.

As the afternoon progressed, the winds whipped up, along with thunder and lightning. The mother of the little girl felt concerned that her daughter would be frightened as she walked home from school, and she herself feared that the electrical storm might harm her child.

Lightning, like a flaming sword, would cut through the sky, followed by the roar of thun-

Smile!



der. Full of concern, the mother quickly got into her car and drove along the route to her child's school.

As she did so, she saw her little girl walking along, but at each flash of lightning, the child would stop, look and smile. Another and another were to follow quickly, each with the little girl stopping, looking at the streak of light and smiling.

Finally, the mother called her over to the car and asked, "What are you doing?"

The child answered, "God just keeps taking pictures of me."

Author Unknown

I Can't?

You can fool the general public
You can be a subtle fraud
You can hide your little meanness
But you can't fool God

You can advertise your virtues
You can self achievement laud
You can load yourself with riches
But you can't fool God

You can criticize the Bible
You can be a selfish clod
You can lie, cheat, drink and gamble
But you can't fool God.

You can multiply your talent
You can hear the world applaud
You can boast to be somebody
But you can't fool God.

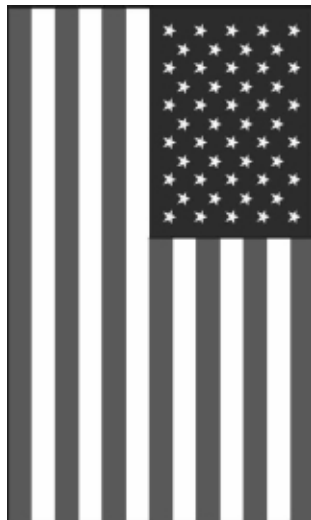
Author Unknown

To Hide the Dirt!

One day a school inspector was visiting a school, and he arose to give a talk to the boys and girls. He chose the subject of "Patriotism" and, as he proceeded, he pointed to the American flag that was draped on the wall and asked impressively, "What is that flag hanging there for?" A boy replied, "To hide the dirt."

So many people wear the badge and emblem of Christian discipleship just to cover up some blemish, weakness, or fault in their lives. The real work of the cross is to blot out sin, not to cover it up.

[*Signs of the Times*, February 19, 1935]



Recipe for Friendship

1 Cup Courtesy 2 Cups Understanding
½ Cup Patience 1 Cup Friendly Words
¼ Cup Forgiveness A pinch of praise
A dash of wit and humor

No Baking, Steaming or Stewing needed.
Season with the spice of life.

Serve in generous portions.

Top with Kindness and Love.

Selected

Don't Judge Too Hard

Pray don't find fault with the man who limps
Or stumbles along the road;
Unless you have worn the shoes he wears,
Or struggled beneath his load.
There may be tacks in his shoes that hurt,
Though hidden away from view,
Or the burden he bears placed on your back
Might cause you to stumble, too.

Don't sneer at the man who's down today,
Unless you have felt the blow
That caused his fall, or felt the shame
That only the fallen know.
You may be strong, but still the blows
That were his, if dealt to you
In the self-same way at the self-same time,
Might cause you to stagger, too.

Don't be too harsh with the man who sins,
Or pelt him with words or stones,
Unless you are sure, yes double sure,
That you have not sins of your own.
For you know, perhaps, if the tempter's voice
Should whisper as soft to you
As it did to him when he went astray,
'Twould cause you to falter, too.

Author Unknown

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made (Part 2)

George McDaniel

In the previous article we looked at the cell, the basic unit of all living organisms, and saw how amazingly complex it is. The human body is even more amazing. It is made up of trillions of cells, organized into tissues, organs, and systems under the control of the brain. If damaged, it can repair itself. In fact, it is continuously replacing worn-out cells by the millions every day. If it comes under attack by disease-causing micro-organisms, it can defend itself. It cleanses itself of toxic by-products of cellular metabolism as well as poisons that are inhaled or ingested.

Yet, as amazing as the physical body is, that is only one aspect of the human being. If man were only a living body, he would be no different from the other animals in the world. There is also a spiritual aspect of humanity. These two aspects are intimately connected. One can't exist without the other. What affects one affects the other. In 3 John verse 2, John writes to his friend, Gaius, saying, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

Some people say there are three aspects to humans: body, soul and spirit, but actually there are only the two. Genesis 2:7, telling of the creation of man by God, says: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Here we see that the soul is the combination of physical body and breath of life from God, which is the spirit. The body, without the spirit, is dead. (See James 2:26) The spirit, without the body, has no conscious existence. The brain is the organ

through which man has a conscious existence. Ecclesiastes 12:7 tells us that when a person dies, the dust returns to the earth, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Ecclesiastes 3:19-21 says that animals also have a spirit. They are, after all, living beings. But when they die, their spirit goes downward to the earth

while the spirit of man goes upward. Another way to say this is that man's spirit is given by God and returns to Him, while the animal's spirit perishes with the body.

When God created man, He never intended that he should die. God wanted man to live forever, in constant communion with Him; Spirit to spirit. Sin interrupted this communion, but it was restored by the plan of salvation.

In Genesis 3:15, when God gave the promise of a Redeemer to Adam and Eve, He gave them back the ability to decide who they would choose to lead them; whether the Spirit of God or the rebellious spirit of the enemy of God.

I believe an understanding of the dual nature of mankind, along with an understanding of the conflict going on between God and Satan for the loyalty of humans, is helpful in knowing why it is important to keep the physical body in as good a condition of health as possible because of the close relationship that exists between the body and the spirit. What affects one can't help but affect the other. To be Continued...



[George is a retired registered nurse who enjoys doing research into how the body functions and how to keep it in optimum health. He also enjoys gardening and the science of languages. He makes his home in West Virginia with his wife, Esther.]

Prescription for Health

A simple diet with a merry mind,
Two helpful hands, a tongue that's always kind;
Deep breathing of pure air—still free from tax;
While eating meals and after work, *relax!*

Two smiling eyes to prove you still can laugh;
Live simpler lives and cut your bills in half.
A task you love, a conscience crystal clear;
A heart at rest, a mind that's free from fear.

Use water freely, more within, without;
Have faith in God and give no place to doubt.
Then exercise your body, mind, and soul;
Look up and keep your eyes upon life's goal.

Adlai A. Esteb

The Fall and Restoration of Eve

Part V

Esther McDaniel

Adam and Eve have sinned; the fruit of the forbidden tree has been eaten; the initial excitement has worn off. Now they are left with the consequences of their actions. The Biblical record states: “And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: *and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.* And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?” (Genesis 3:7-11)

Nakedness. Adam and Eve had always been naked: “And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” (Genesis 2:25) Shame. Fig leaves. What has happened to Adam and Eve? Why is it that now they are ashamed of their nakedness? Guilt. A new element has entered the picture. Guilt! And it has changed everything! What must be done with guilt? How does one relate to that awful realization that something terrible has taken place; something that cannot be undone? That they have made a terrible blunder and now there is “music” to be faced?

Adam and Eve hear God walking in the garden and they run to hide! Formerly they have welcomed His approach; now they fear to meet up with Him. Sin has caused an awful separation between God and man—a gulf that man, in his fallen condition, cannot bridge. Adam and Eve now experience a nakedness of soul that they cannot understand and they attempt to cover themselves with fig leaves.

Since that time, man has used many means to try to cover this nakedness; to hide it from God and man. Some of us put on happy faces and laugh and joke—we’re the life of the party—while inside we are hurting and lonely and empty. Others retreat into our own little world and try to shut the rest of the world out. We curl up in a ball of pain and self-pity and convince ourselves that no one cares. Many of us turn to addictions to mask the emptiness or the fear we feel inside. Some become ad-



dicted to drugs or alcohol, party going or sex, but I am convinced that far more of us are addicted to things like busyness, noise, TV—anything that will drown out that still small voice calling us to take a long close look at our sin condition and allow God to come in and make changes in our lives.

God did not leave Adam and Eve to their fate. He searched them out. What amazing love! Can you hear God walking through the garden calling, “Adam, Eve, where are you?” Is He calling you today? Is He searching for you? Wanting you to come out of your hiding place to spend time with Him? He is doing everything He can to bridge the chasm that sin has created between Him and us. God sent His only-begotten Son to bridge that chasm. We have a choice. We can step onto the Bridge and make our way across to God or we can con-

tinue to hide. God has sent us warnings: “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13) Did you note that along with the warning is an entreaty? Mercy! “The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.” (Psalms 147:11)

The choice is ours. We can continue to hide, or we can, hoping in His mercy, crawl out of our hiding places and reach out to take the hand He offers us—the one that will lift us up out of our sin and out of ourselves and into the circle of His love and His will.

The day is coming soon when “The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, [will hide] themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And [say] to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” But there will be another group who will “lift up [their] heads; for [their] redemption draweth nigh.” (Luke 21:28) And they will say, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” (Isaiah 25:9)

The choice is ours as to which of these groups we will belong. We must come out of hiding now or we will never be among those who meet the Lord in peace in that day!

LESSON #5: If we are to regain the ground that Eve lost, we must believe and hope in God’s mercy. We must take hold of the outstretched hand that is offered us and *never try to hide from God.*



A Page From My Experience

The Cost of Counterfeiting

Sally Specht

I have worked in the banking industry for fourteen years. I have also handled money many more years than that. I'm sure you have too. Have you ever held a counterfeit bill? Maybe you have, maybe I have, I really don't know. I do know one day I was handed a roll of old bills by a lady who hadn't always used banks (maybe from an old box hidden away somewhere) and discovered she had given me about ten silver certificates. They looked a bit different, that's why I noticed them.

The problem with counterfeit money is that it looks like the real thing. If it didn't, it probably wouldn't do what it was meant to do, deceive! What are the marks of counterfeit money? The problem is, there aren't any. You see, a counterfeit is made to look so much like the real thing that it will fool the majority of people. With some of the new bills, if you hold them to the light you can see a little picture of the man on the bill. Maybe that helps.

Let us think about the negatives of counterfeits. Funny money, as it is called, is harmful to the economy. When someone makes, let's say, "Levis" that are counterfeit, the person who buys them thinks they are getting a bargain, when in fact it is hurting the company that produces the genuine Levis. This type of fraud takes place in many areas of life and the consequences are harmful.

But think of the consequences that result from having a counterfeit religion. This is devastating and far reaching. The eternal destiny of our soul is at stake. Whether we spend eternity in heaven or suffer the Lake of Fire which results in the second death (see Revelation 20:6, 14; 21:8), rests totally on whether we have a counterfeit or the genuine. How can I tell if I have the real or a counterfeit? The only way to tell the genuine from the counterfeit is to place what we have up against the real. It must match exactly in order for it to not be counterfeit. The Bible is our only rule for distinguishing truth from error. And this takes a real "Berean" attitude.

I attended a seminar once, given by a crime investigator. The subject of the seminar was on counterfeit money and embezzlement. As we were sitting quietly waiting for him to begin, he went to the blackboard and began writing a figure on the board. The figure was \$1,000,000,000. Then

he turned and asked us if there was anyone in the room who had never stolen anything? A few hands went up. He continued, "a paper clip, a pencil, a pen or a pad of paper?" The hands came down. We discovered we were all thieves. Then he said, "the amount on the board is the amount of money it would take to get me to embezzle from my employer." (Being an auditor and investigator, he knew most of the ways to do it.) "Because," he said "the cost is too high. The cost is fear, lack of sleep, worrying about getting caught, covering up one act with another, looking over your shoulder; fear of embarrassing your family and friends. Then comes sickness and finally suicide. Yes," he said, "suicide. Most all embezzlers end their own lives."

Here are a few statistics on the cost of counterfeiting:

» 1. In 1981, the FBI investigated 1,825 cases in which counterfeit checks for more than \$100,000 each were passed. In 1991, only 10 years later, that number escalated to 26,931 (an increase of 1,300%).

» 2. According to New York Daily News, the FBI estimates that as much as 70% of all sports autographs are fraudulent, and that this percentage could even be higher for popular athletes such as Michael Jordan and Mickey Mantle.

» 3. In 1992, banks lost \$63.4 million from armed robberies, but fraud losses were in the \$4.2 billion range.

» 4. The US Government Accounting Office reports it has paid \$28 billion in benefits to defrauders using counterfeit identification, birth certificates, social security cards and drivers licenses.

» 5. The Counterfeit Intelligence Bureau calculates that "designer" fakes (Levis, Ray Ban, Chanel, Rolex, Gucci, Cartier, etc.) have cost the industry over 100,000 jobs in recent years.

» 6. Officials from the US Census Bureau estimate the number of illegal aliens residing in the US at over five million. Many of these individuals are found to be carrying counterfeit Green Cards.

» 7. US Customs estimated 750,000 jobs were lost due to foreign counterfeiting of US products.

Matt: 13: 22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.



Mark 4:19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

Who is this Father of Deceitfulness? The Bible teaches us that it is the Devil.

Rev. 12: 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

All counterfeit is certainly of the Devil and no good can ever come from this deceit. He is preparing the whole world for a place with him in the Lake of Fire.

Please be not deceived or overcome by counterfeits and do not practice deceit on others.



[Sally Specht is our new Content Editor (see editor's note on page 3). She is praying that God will save her and her family and friends from deception in every area of their lives, but especially when it comes to knowing the true God of the Bible.]

(Continued from page 1)

purse. We decided to start a "Giving Jar" where we could deposit our spare change, and then as the occasion arose, we would use it to help others. We all pooled together our spare change and we already had more than \$15. I placed the jar on the kitchen counter and put a big label on it that says "Giving Jar." It has motivated us all to save more and is also a great conversational piece!

Don't think you have to have a lot of money to give others a helping hand. Any amount, no matter how small, develops in your child the gift of a giving heart.



[Rachel Paxton is a freelance writer and mom who is the author of *What's for Dinner?*, an e-cookbook containing more than 250 quick easy dinner ideas.

For recipes, tips to organize your home, home decorating, crafts, and frugal family fun, visit Creative Homemaking at <http://www.creativehomemaking.com> and Suite 101 at http://www.suite101.com/welcome.cfm/creative_homemaking.]

To subscribe to their monthly newsletter send a blank e-mail message to FreeRecipes-subscribe@egroups.com.]

(Continued from page 3)

Alice Frederick's circumstances have also changed, leaving her without ready access to the Internet, which is imperative to the position she held. We are thankful, however, that she is still able to help in the capacity of a Contributing Editor. Her position as Content Editor has been filled by Sally Specht of Angwin, California. We welcome Sally to our staff.

» **The photo** on our front cover is of four-year-old Michael Anthony Specht, son of Kirk and Vicki Specht of Arroyo Grande, California and grandson of Wally and Sally Specht of Angwin.

» **After you have read** and digested the articles in this issue, please take a few minutes and write us your comments, either pro or con, regarding what has impressed you. Has a particular article, or a particular idea touched you, or even hit a sore spot? Tell us! We look forward to hearing from you

» **Please share** your experiences with us by sending items for "A Page From My Experience," "Wee Wit & Wisdom," or just your personal testimony. We welcome articles and poetry from our readers and will print as many as we can. Don't worry if you are not a writer. We will be happy to work with you to edit your material.

Encounters With Jesus

FEASTING ON CRUMBS

Heartbroken and helpless
She came to the Master:
Her daughter was sick
And she knew He was able.

But Jesus informed her
That only children,
Not dogs, were to share
In the food at the table!

Though Syrophenician
And absolute stranger,
She pled—like a dog—
For the unwanted crumb.

And Jesus was moved
By her humble confession,
He honored her faith
And the work was all done.

Lost and in darkness
I cried out for mercy:
No child of the promise
I stood there alone.

But Jesus was moved
With compassion and love,
Forgave me and cleansed me
With only a "crumb."

A crumb—just a crumb—
Is all that I need.
A crumb—only crumbs—
From His table I feed.

Unworthy, unworthy,
Like the woman I stand
And "feast" on the crumbs
From His bountiful Hand

Evangelist L. B. Brunk

[This poem was submitted by Daisy Albertson of Joliet, Montana.]

Surviving and Learning from Life's Hard Lessons

Carolyn C. Waterbury-Tieman

Suffering is not a subject we like to think about. We go out of our way to avoid suffering. As parents we do everything in our power to protect our children from suffering. But suffering may be the result of anything from disappointment or embarrassment to the loss of a loved one. Suffering comes in many forms and intensities, and can strike at any level of our existence—physical, social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual. Suffering from a single event may be experienced on multiple levels at the same time. And suffering is not limited by race, culture, socioeconomic status, or religious orientation.

Suffering is a reality of being human. Thus our efforts to avoid or deny suffering often leave us and our children unprepared to deal with the inevitable. Now you may be wondering if I am suggesting that we stop protecting our children, or even that we should intentionally inflict hardship.

Our children need to know not only how to survive life's hard lessons, but how to learn from them.

Absolutely not! What I am suggesting is that we give our children the tools they will need to deal with the suffering life itself will inflict upon them. Our children

need to know not only how to survive life's hard lessons, but how to learn from them.

There are those who believe that the way to deal with suffering is to toughen themselves and their children against it. The process is comparable to the development of a callous. If you have ever had a callous then you know that it protects you from feeling the friction from a tool rubbing against your skin. However, it also makes it virtually impossible to feel a gentle caress. Therefore, the danger of becoming toughened or calloused against suffering is that you lose the ability to experience pleasure as well as pain. As Alfred Lord Tennyson said, "'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

So how do we prepare our children to deal with suffering? What tools will they need to help them emerge from pain and suffering as even stronger individuals? Here are a few suggestions:

1. Be reassuring, but be realistic. Avoid giving your children the impression that bad things will never happen or that bad things only happen to bad people. The fact is things, both good and bad, happen to everyone. Therefore,

the issue is not whether or not bad things will happen or who they will happen to, but how well prepared you are to deal with them.

When children express fears or concerns about things that might happen, avoid telling them that they won't happen so there is nothing to worry about. They rarely find this type of response satisfactory anyway. Instead, tell them what you are doing or would do if faced with that particular situation. For example, if your child is concerned about the house catching fire, show him/her the smoke detectors in your home, explain the precautions you take when cooking or using electrical appliances, and have an escape plan that every family member is familiar with. Let them know that there is nothing wrong with being afraid so long as you let your fear guide you to take appropriate precautions rather than letting it immobilize you from taking action at all. Convey your confidence in your ability, and theirs, to deal with whatever the situation, as long as you stick together.

2. Encourage your children to exercise all their muscles. By now, we all know the benefits of physical exercise. But what about emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual exercise? Our children will not be able to escape disappointment, embarrassment, sorrow, loss, pain, and doubt. The only way they will learn to manage these experiences as adults is if we allow them to practice during childhood.

Whenever we see our children suffering, our first reaction is usually to try to remove it, fix it, make it go away. We tell them not to cry or be upset because their suffering makes us feel uncomfortable. We get anxious when they are unhappy because we think we are failing at our job. The fact is we cannot make our children happy, nor can we insure that they will be happy all the time.

Our children must be allowed to flex their emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual muscles. They don't need us to take the suffering away. They need us to be with them in their suffering. For instance, our children can learn to comfort themselves through crying—a very important skill. Our job is not to make them cry or keep them from crying, but to hold them while they cry.

When our children are disappointed or embarrassed, our job is not to take those feelings away. Our job is to respect their feelings, give them appropriate ways for expressing the feelings, and encourage them to explore what they might do differently in the future to prevent the same kind of thing from happening.

3. Give them words and ways to express their feelings. We have no trouble expressing our more pleasant feelings—joy, love, happiness, excitement. But we tend to have tremendous difficulty expressing, or allowing others (especially those we love) to express more painful emotions. The result is that these feelings often get pushed down until they become anger. Unfortunately, many of us can accept anger more readily than sorrow.

When a child has been hurt by the actions of a friend, (perhaps they have been teased, weren't picked to play on the friend's team at recess, or weren't invited to a birthday party), he/she needs to know that it is not O.K. to retaliate verbally or physically, or come home and scream at you or siblings, or kick the dog. This child needs to learn that while what they are feeling may seem like anger, what they are really feeling deep down is hurt, disappointed, left out, even sad. Then the child needs to be given ways to express these feelings, such as spending some quiet time drawing a picture that illustrates how they feel about the experience, writing about it in a journal, talking about the experience with a parent, or sharing their feelings in a respectful way with their friend either verbally or in a note, i.e. "When you didn't pick me for the team, I felt really left out. I was afraid I wasn't your friend anymore." Sometimes a combination of these is necessary to satisfactorily address the situation.

Our children need us to give them the words to accurately identify their feelings and ways for them to appropriately express these feelings once named. They also need to see us practicing what we teach.

4. Teach them what to ask. When confronted with suffering our first response is often to ask why—why me, why now, why this? These questions have no answer and suggest that suffering is somehow a punishment. They

Our job is not to make them cry or keep them from crying, but to hold them while they cry.

reflect an attitude that life is something that just happens to us, about which we have no choice. A more informative line of questioning is, "What lesson can I learn from this? How can I use this experience to become a stronger, better person? How can I use this experience to help others?" These questions reflect an awareness that we have choices about how we will live the life we've been given. I am reminded of an expression printed on a bookmark my sister gave me—"If life gives you lemons, make lemonade." We must teach our children how to make lemonade. I am not suggesting that this is easy. I am suggesting that it is beneficial.

5. Teach them to look for the lessons in mistakes. Sometimes we are the source of our own suffering. Through our words or actions, (or our failure to speak or act), we create situations that cause pain to ourselves and/or others. In short, we make mistakes. However, we live in a culture that does not like mistakes. This is fairly obvious when you look at how anxious we are to find somebody else to blame when anything goes wrong. But you can't learn from mistakes if you are never allowed to make them or to admit you have made them.

Children who are not held accountable for their mistakes, and are not given the opportunity to explore what their options were and how to make better decisions in the future, are likely to continue making mistakes. And unfortunately, as they get older their mistakes tend to become more serious.

One of my favorite scenes from *The Lion King* is the one where Rafiki is challenging Simba to learn from his suffering. Rafiki takes his stick and raps Simba over the head with it. Simba asks, "What was that for?" Rafiki replies, "It doesn't matter, it's in the past." "But it still hurts," Simba complains. "Ah yes, the past can hurt. But the way I look at it, you can either run from it or learn from it," Rafiki explains. The next time Rafiki swings his stick, Simba ducks.

Our children need the wisdom to know when to duck and the courage to stand strong when it's not possible to duck.



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Wee Wit & Wisdom

I recall a time when my son was about 18 months old. I had him strapped in a backpack and was rushing to catch the bus. Apparently I misstepped and fell down an entire flight of stairs. (13 to be exact.)

I was bruised, bleeding and I had torn my clothes, but my main concern was, naturally, for my child. My fears were alleviated though when from behind me I heard a gleeful giggle followed by, "Again!"

Author Unknown

From the Internet

Pedal

I used to think of God as my observer, my judge, keeping track of the things I did wrong, so as to know whether I merited heaven or hell. He was out there, sort of like a president. I recognized His picture when I saw it, but I didn't really know Him.

But later on when I met Christ, it seemed as though life were rather like a bike, but it was a tandem bike, and I noticed that Christ was in the back helping me pedal. I don't know just when it was He suggested we change places, but life has not been the same since I took the back seat to Jesus, My Lord. Christ makes life exciting. When I had control, I thought I knew the way, but it was rather boring, but predictable. It was the shortest distance between two points.

But when He took the lead, He knew delightful long cuts, up mountains, and through rocky places and at break-neck speeds; it was all I could do to hang on! Even though it often looked like madness, He said, "Pedal!" I was worried and anxious and asked, "Where are you taking me?" He laughed and didn't answer, and I started to learn to trust. I forgot my boring life and entered the adventure. And when I'd say, "I'm scared," He'd lean back and touch my hand.



He took me to people with gifts that I needed, gifts of healing, acceptance and joy. They gave me their gifts to take on my journey, our journey, my Lord's and mine. And we were off again. He said, "Give the gifts away; they're extra baggage, too much weight." So I did, to the people we met, and I found that in giving I received, and still our burden was light.

I did not trust Him, at first, in control of my life. I thought He'd wreck it, but He knows bike secrets, knows how to make it bend to take sharp corners, jump to clear high rocks, fly to shorten scary passages. And I am learning to shut up and pedal in the strangest places, and I'm beginning to enjoy the view and the cool breeze on my face with my delightful constant companion, Christ.

And when I'm sure I just can't do any more, He just smiles and says... "Pedal."

Author Unknown

I Refuse

I refuse to be discouraged,
To be sad, or to cry;
I refuse to be downhearted,
and here's the reason why:

I have a God who's mighty,
Who's sovereign and supreme;
I have a God who loves me,
and by grace I'm on His team.

He is all-wise and powerful.
Jehovah is His name;
Though everything is changeable,
My God remains the same.

My God knows all that's happening;
Beginning to the end;
His presence is my comfort;
He is my dearest Friend.

When sickness comes to weaken me,
To bring my head down low,
I call upon my mighty God;
Into His arms I go.

When circumstances threaten
to rob me of my peace;
He draws me close unto His breast,
Where all my strivings cease.

When my heart melts within me,
and weakness takes control;
He gathers me into His arms,
He soothes my heart and soul.

The great "I AM" is with me.
My life is in His hand.
The "Son of the Lord" is my hope.
It's in His strength I stand.

I refuse to be defeated.
My eyes are on my God;
He has promised to be with me,
As through this life I trod.

I'm looking past all my circumstances,
To Heaven's throne above;
My prayers have reached the heart of God
I'm resting in His love.

I give God thanks in everything.
My eyes are on His face;
The battle's His, the victory mine; He'll
help me win the race.

Author Unknown

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13)

[The items on this page were submitted by Patty Osborne of Melvern, Ohio. Thanks for the encouragement, Patty!]

Scripture Study

“A TREE TO BE DESIRED”

Part III

A Temcat Study

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
John 8:32

Yes, the TRUTH of God and freedom are synonymous. God created us free and He wants us free; if we obey Him we will be free!

Just as Adam and Eve, at the *beginning* of time, were given a test by which to show their loyalty to God, so God’s people at the *end* of time

**God created us free
and He wants us free; if
we obey Him we will be
free!**

will have a test as well. In the final test there are two days: one set up and honored by God, the Creator, for all time, as His sign for His people to observe to show that they accept His covenant: “I am God and you are my people.” He promises us again that if we obey Him, we will receive all the good. We are not perfect like Adam and Eve were, fresh from their Creator’s hands, but that is no problem, for the Creator can recreate. If we just decide that He IS God around here, and we ARE His people, and we surrender to Him and accept the atoning blood of our Saviour to redeem us, then He will work in our surrendered hearts and lives, creating good and removing evil, until every trace of evil is eradicated. God’s people, every one of them who will ever be saved, will have it very clear in their minds about “Who is God around here?”

But there is another day—a day set up by man under the direction of Satan, the great rebel. Most of the

world now gives homage to that day. It is the first day of the week. The day of “light” or the sun-day. (We often use “light” as a synonym for “knowledge.”) It is the one day of the week that could not possibly have been the Sabbath, because it was the first working day. God could have created in one day and rested the second, or any of the others, but not the first; that is impossible. Satan chose the day of “light” to be his “sabbath.” Friends, these things have not happened by accident! It is not just some people, or even God Himself, being nit-picky and making a “big deal” over something insignificant!

Are you beginning to see the parallels? Two trees; one of LIFE and one of KNOWLEDGE. Two days; one says, “God is my Creator and my God!” The other says, “Well, God is all very well in His place, but I will decide how I am going to serve Him. I am ‘enlightened,’ I am my own god.”

I have noticed that people today are mostly all crowded under the “Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.” Sure they want “good,” but they will decide what IS good. Also, they want good, but don’t want anyone to forbid them to have evil, too, if they want it.

The escalating popularity of Halloween is a good example of this. Are ugliness, death, evil doing, torture, and cruelty really desirable to most people? Of course not, but look at them parading these things as if they were “fun” and “cute” and “innocent” on that day.

We see people dressed up as every kind of evil, ugly thing. If they stayed as ugly as they do themselves

up to be, wouldn’t they be upset? We see woman at work with spiders dangling from their ears. These same women would go into a screaming fit if a tiny, real spider ventured onto their desks! And a spider isn’t really evil. What about some of the “things” they dress up like? What a twisted message we give to our poor children! Most of the year we would punish them for dark, evil behaviors but on Halloween we tell them it is cute?!

Look at the subject of health: People want the “good” of health, and they will go to great lengths to have it-if they can have it in their own way, and if they don’t have to give up anything to have it. They will join clubs and sports; they will buy vitamins and herbs and take all kinds of treatments, many even painful, but don’t show them the simple Eight Laws of Health! Oh, No! They would have to give up their indulgences and change their habits. No, just give them “something to take” and assure them that they can keep

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right on with their unhealthy, evil habits, and they will pay any price to have it.

What is the main reason why we have so much darkness around us everywhere today? Let’s let the Bible tell us:

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” (John 3:19)

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” (2 Timothy 3, 4)

“That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.” (Isaiah 30:9-11)

What is at the bottom of it all? Rebellion and love of sin! that’s it in a nutshell. And it applies to you and me, as well as all “those other people” out there. We all naturally love our own

We must decide, “Who is God around here anyway?”

ways. We go astray from the womb, the Bible says (Psalm 58:3), and anyone who has cared for children knows how they love their own way.

But we all have rebellious hearts, and unless we fall on the Rock and are broken, and surrender to our Saviour to be remade and cleansed and set free of sin totally, we will just get more and more determined to follow our own path right into perdition. Why are things falling apart around us in the world today? Because man

has set himself to go his own way no matter how much evidence is there that shows him to be wrong.

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20)

It isn’t more facts we need, friends; it isn’t more light. We need to surrender to what we already know; we cannot be our own god. We must decide, “Who is God around here anyway?”

Next time: What is the final test?



[This article was written by the editor of the Beside Still Waters website: <http://www.temcat.com>. She states: “No one will be helped by knowing who I am but they can be blessed by browsing the website. The old Irish missionaries used to tell people who asked them who they were that, ‘It matters not who we are but it matters who we serve.’”]

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HC 64 Box 128-B

Welch, West Virginia 24801

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