

Strengthening Families Across The World

ABOVE RUBIES

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Issue: Eighty



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for a day or two or three, until she got wise and REFUSED TO GO TO SLEEP! I had to earn her trust after each trial.

Eventually we found a system that worked. I sat up or reclined in an easy chair with Elizabeth strapped to my chest in a sling. We slept like this for eight months. She would endure no other hold but chest to chest with her head and face buried in my neck. The sling kept her from the risk of slipping or suffocating. I worried about her constantly, sleeping in snatches and checking her throughout each night. She finally began to sleep with me in bed (though naps were a totally different story) if I held her until she eventually fell asleep. I would carefully unwrap myself from her, after which she slept smack-dab up against me all night.

High-need babies like Elizabeth may have great difficulty with bonding, change and separation from mom once they have bonded, but the intense effort it takes to persevere is worth it. While parents of such a little one might think in terms of "clingy," "sensitive" and "difficult," a child parented through these issues can become strong and independent in their own time, their own way and without losing the best of their God-given sensitivity.

At ten years of age, Elizabeth is a very loving and likeable young girl who feels deeply, loves sincerely, and is learning how to live for the Lord Jesus Christ.

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How much "me-time" do I Need?

I baby-sat my cousin from the time she was three months old. She was an easy baby. When my son, Isaac was born, I assumed he'd be easy, too. Boy, was I in for a surprise! He was born nearly four weeks early (but still at home!) and weighed 5 lbs. 7 oz.

It took two years to conceive him and because of his prematurity I held him constantly. He was only put down once in the first 2 1/2 weeks! From birth he nursed on demand and co-slept with us, but he still needed more of me than I could give!

Because he was born early, his nerves were underdeveloped. I put lotion on him

the day he was born and he screamed! He couldn't handle that kind of touch.

I learned to swaddle him tightly to avoid the startle reflex, which really frustrated him. Any time we left the house he got over-stimulated unless he was snuggled safely in a sling. It was impossible to play "pass the baby" with him because he would get over-stimulated after the second set of arms. He cried every time we put him in the car seat, and nursing him (leaning over the car seat) was the only way to pacify him. I felt like I was breaking all the "rules" about how to have a "good baby."

Isaac stayed needy for a long time...much longer than the "average" baby. He constantly wanted to be held, wanted me to sleep with him and nurse every 90 minutes or so. I received critical remarks from people who believed that I "made" him a needy baby, but I knew that his "higher than normal needs" were inborn. We were inundated with advice to let him "cry it out" in order to "train" him to our ways—definitely easier on adults but we never felt it was the answer for our baby.



Carlos and Janis with Isaac (3) and Isabel (10 months)

He is now three years old and although he sleeps great at night (still in our bed), he seldom napped for more than 45 minutes until he was nearly two years. When Isaac was 18 months old, my husband was listening to a baseball game on the radio. There was a lot of interference because of the weather and my son fussed in the back seat until the radio station was changed, just as he did when he was little.

He has taught me how much he needs me, rather than allowing me the indulgence of tending to my own needs. I've redefined how much "me-time" I need and what to-do list items are truly

important. I am grateful he is maturing and developing into a much less mommy-centered child, but there are times that I actually MISS how much he once needed me! I didn't think that day would come!

A wonderful "older woman" at my church who had two high needs babies told me, "If you need to hold him while he sleeps, hold him while he sleeps! Eventually he won't let you do it anymore. They always grow out of that need... and usually into another need... but you ALWAYS meet true needs for your babies." That advice has helped me to trust my God-given instincts to truly love my baby and meet his needs.

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Momentary Troubles

It was with great relief that we saw a little heartbeat at our 12-week scan. We had waited and prayed for this precious little life for a long time. Although the doctor confirmed that statistically very little would go wrong with the pregnancy from now on, in less than 24 hours, I was back at the doctor with heavy placental bleeding.

Ray and I knew there was little we could do to maintain a pregnancy other than rest as per the Doctor's orders. It was entirely God's domain, and for the most part, we were both at peace. The position of the placenta changed and the blood clots were absorbed in the ensuing weeks. Around 24 weeks, our doctor was happy to announce that ours was no longer a high-risk pregnancy and we could transfer to our midwives for their care.

At the end of what was a tough pregnancy, I was the blessed, yet completely overwhelmed mother, of a beautiful little boy, Jonathan Ray. I was scared of the awesome responsibility of caring for a new life. Wanting to do the right thing, I was tossed here and there by well-meaning health care professionals whose advice was all contradictory. I don't remember all the details of those first few days as a new mother, but there were many tears. I was a high achiever and have always excelled at everything I have done. Now, I felt unprepared and daunted by this new role.

In the days that followed, our baby Jonathan and I battled candida (thrush). Feeding him was very tough. Despite all the wonderful help we received from our lactation consultant, no medication helped. With our little one unable to feed well, he was a very unhappy sleeper and I soon became a very exhausted new mama. It all snowballed from there. Going out exacerbated the stress and so I seldom ventured out. Determined to not give up with the breast feeding, the only way I could feed him during the day was to lull him to sleep. He would then feed through the let-down-reflex without coming off and crying.

It soon became clear that our precious son was no routine baby. Reading the secular books and magazines only stressed me further. I could not get Jonathan to do or be anything they said he should do. We visited a church when Jonathan was about eight weeks old and a dear stranger asked how mothering was going. I shared how tough it was and she asked if I had read a particular book. I

had, and said I was going to throw it away as Jonathan did nothing according to the book. It turned out that her sister was the authoress! All I could do was laugh!

It was in this season that I was blessed to receive an *Above Rubies* magazine. I wept as I read the pages with my little one asleep on my lap. I was not the only mother who breastfed on demand, day and night, walked our baby to sleep for every nap and did the bohemian thing of having the baby share the bed at night. Let it be said though, I had not planned to do things this way. It was my dear husband who suggested we let Jonathan sleep with us in the early days and the rest was simply because nothing else seemed to work. Ray and I just could not leave Jonathan to cry. At last, I discovered other moms whose babies did not “sleep through” the night.

As I look back over those days, a number of things stand out. I always thought I had my life all together until I became a Mom. The Lord took me on a very humbling journey. I can do nothing good apart from the Lord. This is a lesson I am still in the process of learning. The Lord continues to bring me to the end of myself, but it began with the birth of our first child.

I have cried out to the Lord more since then than I ever had before. Ray wrote out particular verses of Scripture and pinned them up around the house for me. I took solace in the fact that, though intense, all the little niggles we faced were simply light and momentary troubles in the light of eternity. In fact, many have been forgotten about already. Jonathan is now a contented sleeper who can settle himself to sleep.

It took about 18 months to resolve the Candida gut hassles, which Jonathan and I both experienced. When our second blessing, Sarah arrived and revealed similar symptoms in the first week of her life, I followed a very strict anti-fungal diet which, praise God, sorted her white

High-Need Babies



Ray and Debbie with Jonathan Ray (3) and Sarah Joy (1).

tongue out within about a month and we were spared much anguish. We still stick mostly to an anti-fungal diet and are doing very well.

Our marriage did take strain through this season. I wanted more and more of Ray’s help and time and although he was doing the best he could, it was never enough. “I never got enough sleep. I never got enough sympathy. I never got enough help around the home...” and so on. Mothers of many would laugh at this and quickly identify the log in my eye! Ray helped me see that no matter how much he did, it would never satisfy. He asked the tough questions that hurt but helped to expose my sinfulness and neediness. I am still very much a work in progress, but I think Ray would say I am a better wife than I was. So I have to say, despite the tears, thank you Lord!

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Inspiration for Women

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CONFIRM.**

“Your encouragement
is like water
to one about
to die of thirst.”

*“Apart from God’s Word there is no basis
or power for obedience in the child.”*

~ Norman V. Williams

Talking After Lights Out!



I was angrily packing my bags, ready to leave, when all of a sudden I just had to stop. I sat on the edge of the bed, seething. How could I have made the same mistake twice? I stormed downstairs past my husband, barely noticing his tears and sat rocking on the swing outside. How had I ended up here?

I had been brought up a Christian, after all. As a child, I had dreamed of an idyllic marriage, with lots of children running around in the garden, while I made homemade bread and jam in the kitchen. My husband would adore me and be absolutely faithful to me. My dad had been unfaithful to my mum and left us for another woman, breaking her heart and mine, and I was determined this wouldn't happen to me.

I had been very close to God, but allowed myself to drift away in my teens. I rebelled against God and my mother and became wild and unruly. A series of unpleasant and risky relationships ended in my getting pregnant with a man I barely knew. We had a son and eventually we married and had another child together. Not surprisingly, the relationship broke down with violence and a messy and

unpleasant divorce ensued.

I came back to the Lord and met my husband, James. We got married, even though James was not a Christian. Looking back, I know I should have waited until he became a Christian as I was counselled at the time, but I ignored the advice.

Why hadn't I followed that wise counsel? Here I was again, married to a non-Christian, for just over a year, and once again my marriage was on the rocks. I had just had a huge row and decided this was enough!

So here I was, swinging aimlessly in the garden and in life. James came and found me sitting in the garden and began to share with me an amazing revelation. For a while, James had been seeking God, but not with any seriousness. When I had stormed upstairs to pack and leave, James literally got on his knees, in tears, and begged that if there was a God, to please stop Michaela from leaving. Imagine his surprise when I stormed down the stairs past him into the garden! That day, he gave in to God's chasing, and on his knees, gave his life to Jesus.

From that point forward, our marriage has gone from strength to strength.

The more we include God and follow the Bible's instructions on how to build our relationship, the better it gets. I have to confess, it was very hard for me to submit to James. The Holy Spirit had His work cut out taming my old, wild, rebellious spirit. However, my learning to submit has proved to be the biggest enrichment to our marriage. Since I chose to submit to James, I also find it easier to submit to God.

Another revelation God gave me that changed our marriage, was that I had to stop trying to change James and concentrate on changing myself instead. I found that when I changed my attitude, my behaviour and chose to hold my tongue, the situation resolved. What a humbling experience.

Since we made God the centre of our marriage and seek to follow His instructions, He has made my childhood dream of marriage come true. I have an amazing husband who adores me and is absolutely faithful, both to me and the Lord. It is so great to be able to pray, read the Bible and seek the Lord together. It is like having a sleepover with a best friend every night, as we chat, pray, laugh and stay up too late talking after lights out!

We have recently been through two miscarriages and the arrival of our fifth child, who was very ill after she was first born, but the Lord has blessed us by bringing us even closer together. James and I have been married for seven years now. He is everything I dreamed of in a husband and more. We have a vision for a large family that will impact the world for God's glory. It is hard to believe that my marriage is now like a little taste of heaven.

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James and Michaela's blessings are Daniel (13), Esme (10), Grace (5) Naomi (3), Hannah (6 months) and Baby Pip and Baby Turpin in glory.



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I was musing today about the different seasons of the year. Each one is a welcome change. They say a change is as good as a holiday and the contrasting seasons bring movement to the dance of life. Instead of same old...same old, new and fresh winds blow. It is a marvelous plan, a beautiful design. We can never get bored.

Feasting on watermelon... barefoot on the green lawn...bountiful garden harvest...fireflies dancing in the warm night air—happy long days of summer.

A kaleidoscope of orange and yellow... pure topaz sky... crisp air on red cheeks... wafting scent of mulled cider and pumpkin pie— invigorating days of fall.

Blankets of sparkling white... warming hands by crackling fire... fuzzy socks... hot chocolate... laughter and carols—cozy days of winter.

Basking in a sunny window... yellow chicks and daffodils... bleak turned to bright... open windows... working the soil—fresh days of spring.

As I thought on the changes of each season I thought of the seasons of my body. As women, we have a built-in cycle, a natural rhythm. This cycle serves as a door to a more exquisitely beautiful cycle of seasons. Instead of being stagnant or sitting limbo, we have opportunity for exciting winds of change to blow. I look forward to these seasons of change within my body and my husband enjoys them too. He could never get bored. Each phase has something different to embrace. I'm talking literally!

When a wife is pregnant, her husband gets to see the beautiful glow of pregnancy—hormones giving her that youthful shine. We can't forget about the blossoming voluptuous curves—and sometimes a stronger libido to boot.

When she enters the breastfeeding season, two curves get even fuller while others start to cinch back in. It's quite lovely. Then there is the season where she maybe neither nursing nor pregnant. She may have more

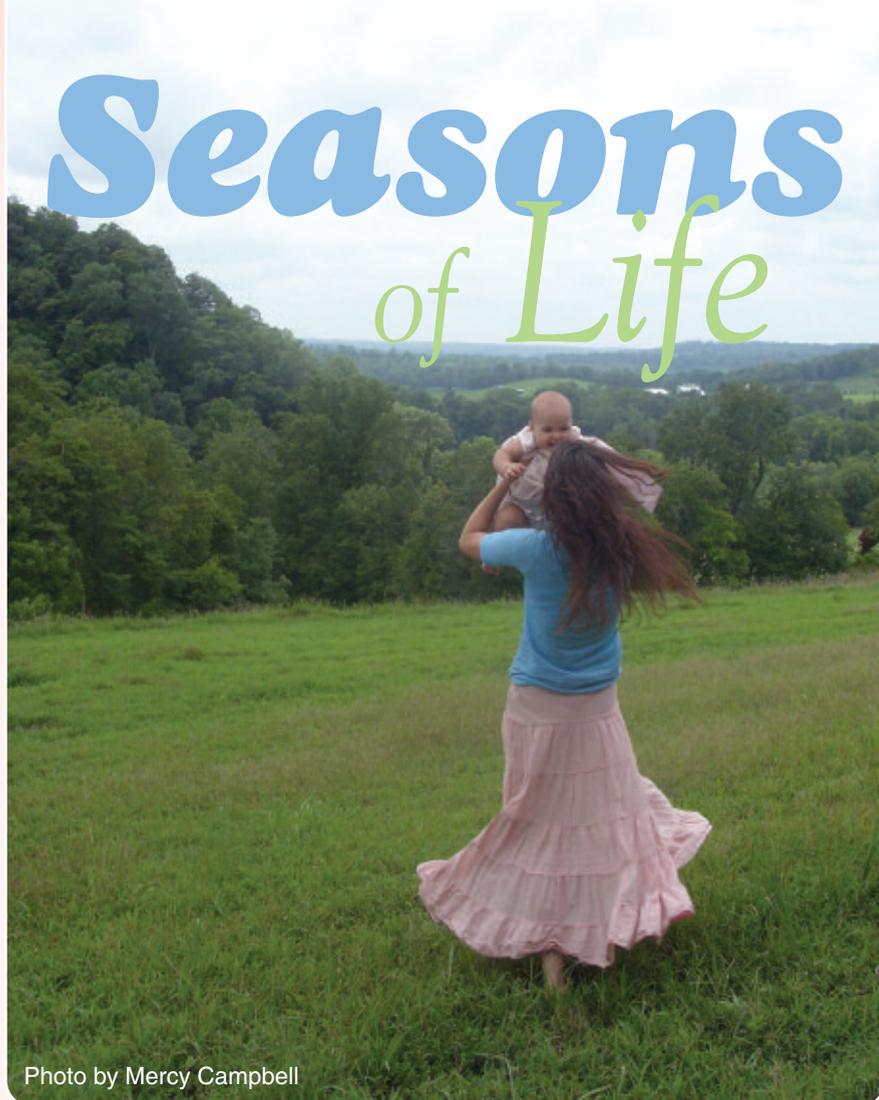


Photo by Mercy Campbell

time to spend with her husband and more time to tighten her body and become super fit.

I know it is a strange set of musings but I'm glad I can give my husband the change of these feminine and exciting seasons. It keeps our bedroom fresh and always surprising.

The question I pose is, apart from medical conditions, do we choose to live in only one season? Always winter... always barren! Boring for you... boring for him! Maybe it's time for the fragrant south winds of spices to blow upon your garden. (Song of Songs 4:16)

Another thought: it takes planning and extra work to prepare and bring out the best of each season in our gardens. In the same way, if we take time to eat healthy, exercise and take care of our bodies, the beauty of our bodily seasons will be more enhanced.

SERENE ALLISON

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Sam and Serene's blessings are Arden (12), Chalice (10), Cherish (10), Cedar (7), Engedi (6), Vision (5), Shepherd (3) and Breeze (1).

“It is the home that gives us our men and women... When God Himself would start a nation, He made the home life the deciding factor, and selected Abraham as the foundation. God knew him that he would command his children and his household after him.”

~ Gerry Stuart



Ever since I was a little girl, I wanted to be a mommy. I dreamed of having lots of children and living in the country. I was so happy when I married my sweetheart, Justin at 19 years in June 1987. We were excited to be expecting our first child in June 1988.

My due date came and went. My doctor decided to induce labor when I was eleven days overdue. After 14 hours of back labor, dilating only to 3 cm, I was sent home. A failed induction. I went back to the hospital two days and dilated to 4 cm, but no further. I was hooked up to monitors and machines, and put to bed like a sick woman. There was no encouragement to walk around, no herbs to help, and no midwife to assist me. My doctor suggested a c-section, based on failure to progress in labor. Our beautiful daughter, Emilee was born that evening by c-section, weighing 9 lbs. She was perfectly healthy with a 9-10 Apgar score. I recovered well and fell totally in love with my daughter, being a mother, and breastfeeding.

I was excited to learn I was pregnant again when Emilee was a year old, but that pregnancy was cut short when I found out it was a molar pregnancy. I was devastated to learn that I should not get pregnant again for one year to reduce the chances of it reoccurring. One year later, I got pregnant again and

planned to have a VBAC. My hopes were dashed by my doctor who gave me all of the negative reasons why NOT to try for a vaginal birth. I reluctantly gave in, giving birth by c-section in August 1991 to another beautiful healthy girl, Kailee, weighing 8 lbs. 3 oz.

When I became pregnant again, I was really concerned about having multiple c-sections. I thought to myself, "This time I will do it! I will have a natural birth." I went past my due date, hoping to go into labor on my own. However, my doctor predicted a large baby again and was so concerned that I gave in to another c-section! Our first son was born in January 1994. Colt was 10 lbs. 5 oz. and I thought I had broken a record, at least in our large church! I found out the following week that my friend gave birth to an 11 lbs. son the day before mine!

The pattern continued although I was still determined to change the course. After all, Justin and I were catching a vision to allow God to determine our family size. I'd conceived easily so far, so we could end up with a lot of children! How many c-sections could a woman have? I was determined to have a VBAC with the next one!

As my fourth pregnancy progressed in 1996, they discovered the baby was breech. Ugh. I allowed the doctor to schedule a c-sec-

tion for November 1st, but went into labor the night before that date. I was excited. I vividly remember praying on my knees in our living room while my husband was getting ready to go to the hospital with me. I prayed that the baby would turn! While on my knees, she DID turn from breech to a head down position! It was the most awesome experience to have God answer prayer in the midst of asking Him!

I labored all night, and, as usual, did not dilate past 3 cm. My husband and I decided that the Lord was leading me to another c-section. Rebekah was 9 lbs. She had meconium staining and needed extensive suctioning to remove all traces from her airways. With a few extra days in NICU she recovered and was able to come home.

I still longed for a natural birth, even a home birth, but I began to understand that "God's ways are higher than my ways. And His thoughts are higher than my thoughts." (Isaiah 55:9) I looked for ways to minister to those I met at the hospital and opportunities fell into my lap. One sweet nurse had lost a baby in miscarriage and was discouraged and grieving. I encouraged her to not be afraid to try again. A cleaning lady told me she was a single mom and was trying to raise two teenage sons alone. My heart went out to her

and I encouraged her to lean on God for strength. Both of these women remembered me when I came to the hospital for future births.

I began seeing a new doctor and he did not discourage me from having more children. He dutifully gave me the medical warnings regarding multiple cesareans but told me that my uterus was as strong as he could expect after four c-sections.

I had four boys in the next seven years, all by c-section. Bret weighed 9 lbs. 5 oz (September 1998), Titus, 9 lbs. 2 oz. (April 2001), Seth, 11 lbs. 11 oz. (January 2003), and Levi, 10 lbs.15 oz (April 2005). During these years, I learned about homeopathic medicine, essential oils, and herbs. My favorite discovery was red raspberry leaf, which is very beneficial to pregnant and nursing moms. It strengthens the womb, and I drank gallons of it in tea form. All of this fascinated me! My family's life and health changed. I studied every spare moment, and always practiced what I learned on myself and my family. We stayed away from the doctor's offices, and I was thrilled to learn that I could treat nearly everything my family needed with inexpensive herbs that God created for our healing! We'd already been eating

whole foods, our own honey, and of course planted a large garden every year.

When our eighth child, Levi was a year old, my life was busy with home schooling and running a household of ten people. But, can you believe it? I found myself longing for another baby! I began specifically asking God for a girl. My three daughters were growing up and the house was busy and loud with all of the little boys. I told God that if He would bless me with just one more baby I would be so thankful.

I found out I was pregnant just after Mother's Day, 2007 when Levi was two years old. I rolled over in bed one morning and sleepily declared to my husband I was going to have twins. I do not know why I said that! God had given me two beautiful girl names but I never really thought I would use them both. Although I was armed with this "head's up" from God, I still couldn't believe my eyes when I had an ultrasound a week later and saw my twins! I knew that I was looking at the precious girls that God had already named (even though it was too early to tell the sex on the ultrasound).

This pregnancy was truly a journey of faith as my uterus eventually held 15 pounds of babies. I remained healthy, although by

about 28 weeks, my older daughters were running the house while I drank my red raspberry leaf tea and shuffled around. Lilliana Joy Krista and Shoshana Faith Anne Elizabeth were born January 16, 2008, weighing 7 lbs. 11 oz. and 7 lbs. 4 oz., my ninth c-section. They were perfectly healthy, my uterus held up to the weight of over 15 pounds of babies and placentas, and I have not stopped praising God for my little treasures!

My heart and arms are full. God answered my prayers to have a lot of children, no matter how they came into this world. I love to be home and I still don't like to be in the hospital, but I have allowed God to move me out of my comfort zone and hopefully use me for His glory. "I will praise Thee, Oh Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify Thy Name for evermore." (Psalm 86:12).

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Justin and Krista's children are Emilee (22), Kailee (19) married to Jared, Colt (16), Rebekah (14), Bret (12), Titus (9), Seth (7), Levi (5), Lilliana and Shoshana (2).



Training World Changers

“As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” John 17:18

Our children grow so quickly, don't they? It seems like one blink of my eye since our eldest son (nearing 47 years old) was born. Where have the years flown? I experienced beautiful moments with my little ones, and I thought I would remember the moments forever. But now they are fading from my memory. My little babies grew up to be teenagers, marry their sweethearts and now they are raising their own children. My oldest grand-daughter will soon be 24 years! But our greatest joy is to see our children and children's children all following after the Lord.

It's the Friends that Count

Deuteronomy 30:2 says, “Return to the Lord your God and obey his voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children...” Our walk with the Lord must include our children. How is it then that some children grow up in a godly home and yet turn to a rebellious lifestyle? I believe that it is not only our parental guidance but our children's friends who influence their lives. When children get to their teens, peer pressure becomes very influential. It can even overpower parental pressure! When I talk to young people who have gone astray, I usually find it is because of ungodly peer pressure.

I recently talked with a girl who was homeschooled in a lovely Christian home. She became rebellious and got into smoking, drinking and illicit sex. How on earth did this happen? She said she fell into bad company in her homeschool and church youth group! Help! Yes, bad company can be found anywhere. We cannot assume our children will be in good company just

because they are in a church youth group or even a homeschool group. We need to constantly check out their friends. We must always know where they are and with whom they spend their time.

Practice Hospitality

I believe it is important to establish good friendships for your children. If they establish solid friendships with those who are a good influence before they are teens, they will be off to a good start. How can you facilitate this? One of the greatest blessings for Colin and me and our family was to practice loads of hospitality. Apart from ministering to many needy people, we invited families to our home with children of similar ages to our children. We encouraged good influences. We allowed the sons of our kindred friends to stay the night with our sons and the same with our daughters. We did not allow this carelessly, but only

**I'm taking my family
with me as we journey
for the Lord - every day,
every month and every year!**

with the children and teens of families we knew and trusted inside out. We knew what went on in their homes because we were in and out of their homes ourselves.

It is a fact that the more functions and gatherings you have in your home that

includes young people of good influence, the more blessed your teens will be. Teens love fun and loads of people around.

This was one of the complaints of the girl I talked with recently. She said her parents didn't like to have visitors in their home and therefore she missed out on the company of good young people. She says that when she raises her family she will freely show hospitality in order to provide friendships for her children.

When our boys were young they started making go-carts and racing them. They then got into Moto-cross riding. In their mid-forties our sons still enjoy burning off some speed on their bikes! When they were young, they did this with their friends who we trusted. They enjoyed doing the “real guy” stuff, but they did it in good company. That was the secret.

Young people love to hang out with friends. Therefore they need to hang out with the right friends—the wise ones! I raised our children on Proverbs 13:20, “He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.” And also Proverbs 14:7, “Go from the presence of a foolish man, when you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge.” And one more: “Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character.” (1 Corinthians 15:33 NIV) Our children will be steered by the company they keep.

Recently the young people in our home (our youngest daughter, Mercy and *Above Rubies* helpers) spent the evening with another family in our fellowship who also has young people. They thought they may watch a movie but didn't get to it. The mother of the home asked a question and the young people got talking—and kept talking until well after midnight. They were still asking and answering questions on the way home! They talked about real things such as the qualities they desire in a husband and wife and the principles of marriage. They didn't do this on their own but in the company of the parents of the home. They couldn't stop talking about how they enjoyed the evening and how they learned so much. As they hung out together with “wise” people, they became wiser. We love to talk about “life” subjects around our dinner table in the evenings. The more young people who surround the table, the more fun it is.

“But where can I find godly friends for my children?” you may be thinking.

May be you are in a church or community where there are no other suitable friends for your teens. If this is your situation, make it a matter of serious prayer. Pray together with your husband daily that God will provide godly friends for your children. Pray that He will provide godly husbands and wives for your children. God is a prayer-answering God. It is not always easy to find likeminded people, but you can always reach out to other families to share your beliefs. As they observe your godly lifestyle, they too may become like-minded people.

Train your Teens to Serve

In the meantime, go on the offensive. There is a difference between “hanging out with friends” and ministering to those in need. Your teens need to have a part of changing the world. Young people, along with everyone else, need vision or they will perish. They need higher purpose. They need to lift up their eyes and look on the fields that are white and ready to harvest. (Matthew 9:37-38 and John 4:35) If all young people can think about is being entertained, they’ll actually end up bored. True happiness only comes from serving others. The “me” generation ends in illicit sex, drugs and ultimately, destruction.

Talk and pray about it together with your children and ask God to give you creative ideas on how you can reach out to people in need, to bless them and minister to them. There are so many people in society who need to receive the practical love of God. The following are a few ideas but I know God can give you many more that will suit your family.

Soup Kitchens

Check out what is near you and see how you can get involved. There are many opportunities for ministering to the poor and needy in your community.

Widows or Older People

Why not prepare a wonderful meal for all the widows that you know? Your children and teens can help to prepare a beautifully set table and to cook a lovely meal. They can be involved in waiting on the guests at the meal table. After the meal they could entertain the guests with musical items, recitations or with whatever gifts they have.

This is a wonderful way for them to exercise their gifts and at the same time bless older people. The children can also pray for their needs.

You could do this at different times, reaching out to two or three widows at a time. One time I decided to put on a luncheon for older people living on their own. I had so many people on my heart that I couldn’t do it on my own and I roped in other families to help me. We ended up doing it in a church hall and gathered about 100 older people. Together we provided a wonderful feast. There was so much food we thought they wouldn’t eat a quarter of it. We were amazed. They scoffed the lot! The children and teens sang songs and gave special numbers that blessed the older people abundantly. My sister-in-law in New Zealand reaches out to older people in this way every month.

Nursing Homes

Are your teens gifted musically? Organize them to take their gifts of music to your local nursing homes and show love to older people.

James 1:27 says, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” A good way to keep our teens unspotted from the world is to get them involved in reaching out to the needy, such as orphans and widows!

**I am not raising
selfish-takers but
servant givers!**

Single Mothers

It is difficult to raise children on your own. If you know a single mother, you could find out any urgent projects that need doing around her home. You could go with your teens to fix these up and also help with her children. Or you could invite a single mother and her children to your home, feeding them and ministering to them in whatever way God reveals to you. Remember, this is

not something you do on your own, but together with your teens and children. Give them a passion for helping others. They will become excited and fulfilled as they forget about themselves and start ministering to others. This is a habit that should become the pattern of their lives. Philippians 2:4 says, “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Missions

There are many missions, locally and overseas, in which young people can be involved. This is a wonderful way for them to get a burden for needy countries and people. I continually need mission helpers to come to Tennessee to help me in this great ministry of *Above Rubies*.

Moral Issues

Concern your young people with the state of the moral issues in the nation. Encourage them to stand up against abortion and homosexuality by writing letters as well as other practical ways. Give them a hate for evil so they will want to stand up against it. Rather than being sucked into evil, teach them how to stand against it and expose it. Find local and national organizations they can be involved with to learn how to be a voice for God in the nation. Ephesians 5:11 says, “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”

As you brainstorm with your teens regarding ways to help needy people, you’ll be amazed at their ideas. They’ll never have time to miss friends when they begin to minister to people’s needs, find purposeful ways to stand against evil and stand up for truth in the nation.

How Can I Afford it?

One mother asked, “What advice can you give to families struggling financially to put food on their own table, let alone feed throngs of company! Gatherings mean food. When we had more money we had people over all the time for dinner. Now, finances are so tight we don’t have much company at all. My children miss having company over but I am not sure what to do.” I know it is becoming more difficult as we experience an economic downturn in

our nation. However, you can still get together with company. There is always a way.

When you gather with a few families with young people, ask them all to bring a dish and have a potluck meal together. When everyone brings something, there is plenty to eat. We do this every Sunday after our church fellowship, but we do it at other times also.

Recently our granddaughter, Meadow complained that we weren't having enough barbecues this summer. "You're welcome to go ahead and organize one," I replied. She called up friends and family and asked them all to bring barbecue meat or a dish and we had a wonderful evening together on our front lawn—including the young people. They thrive on company!

On occasions when your teens want to get together for a meal with other young people, get them to take the responsibility for the meal. Teens need to realize that food has to be paid for! They could pool their resources together for a PIZZA NIGHT. Or what about a DESSERT EVENING where they each make a dessert themselves—or whatever food they like to eat.

We now do this at Christmas time. We ask the grandchildren who are old enough to make a dessert. We have Christmas Dinner at mid-day and dessert in the early evening. Can you imagine what it is like when thirty plus children come for dessert at once? Help! It's all gone before you can say "Jack Robinson." Now, we adults make our own low-carb desserts and the children make their own delights. I give a First, Second and Third Prize to the children for the best desserts which inspires great creativity.

Hospitality is a Biblical doctrine that starts in Genesis and weaves through the pages of the Bible until the last book of Revelation. Hospitality is not an option, but the lifestyle of the kingdom of God. It is an extension of our mothering and homemaking ministry. And amazingly, it is not dependent on our finances or lack of them!

What's in their Heart?

Another mother wrote to me, "Do you think that a teen's "rebellion" is a mark of where their heart was initially? When they "fall away from faith" and leave the home, I wonder if it was THEIR faith at all or just

their mom and dad's." It is true that if there is a seed of rebellion in your teens' hearts, they will be easy prey for the enemy and for wrong company. That is why it is so important to watch out for any seeds of rebellion when they are very young. Rebellion must be dealt with immediately and not left to grow. We don't wait until our children are teens to train them. We start at the first sign of disobedience.

I am not raising children for hibernation, but to reveal God's salvation to the world!

Raised to Reveal God's Love

Our highest aim is to raise children whose hearts are so dedicated to the Lord and so completely delivered from the power of this world system that they can go into any situation or evil company and not be tempted by it. We are not raising children for hibernation, but for the revelation of God's heart to the world. We are not raising children to just survive in this world, but to invade this world with God's love. They were born to bring light into the darkness. They were born to be truth-bearers in this deceived world. We are preparing them to bring God's love to the hurting and His salvation to those who are bruised and devastated by sin. When the scribes and Pharisees complained about Jesus eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, Jesus replied, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Mark 2:17)

You have to know your children. If you know they are not ready to go into the world you must continue to strengthen them in their convictions and guard their company. There are young people who are strong in their faith, ready to conquer evil and untouched by the spirit of this humanistic world. They will not be interested in "hanging out" with ungodly friends. They will only be interested in advancing the kingdom of God.

Above everything else, pray that your

children and teens will have a born again experience and a real encounter with God; that they will be rooted in Christ and His Word; that they will love righteousness and hate evil; that they will hate the spirit of this world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, and will only want to do the will of God. Call upon God for them that they will love to pray, love to read God's life-giving Word, love the fellowship of the saints and that they will have a vision to impact the world for Christ.

NANCY CAMPBELL

Unless otherwise stated, Scripture references are from the *Revised Authorised Version*.

For further Inspiration:

- Go to www.aboverubies.org and do a search for the article, *Excuses for Hospitality*.
- Go to page 29 of this magazine or www.aboverubies.org to purchase:
- MOTHERS WITH A MISSION (What kind of children does God want us to train for His end time army and how do we do it?) Available in a six CD set, MP3 version, or for immediate download from www.aboverubies.org
- THE FAMILY MEAL TABLE AND HOSPITALITY (Study Manual)
- THE FAMILY MEAL TABLE IN ACTION (DVD) This DVD will inspire you and your family to a greater vision for your family meal table.

A Good Idea!

At each camp or seminar in Australia, before I got up to speak, Val Stares would get up to share the vision of *Above Rubies*. She has shared this vision with me for 33 years!

"Hands up those who are praying for godly sons for your daughters to marry?" she would ask. Hands went up everywhere.

"Here's your answer! Take plenty of *Above Rubies*. Give them to families who have sons so they will raise them to be wise, loving and committed husbands," she exhorted.

"Who wants godly daughters for your sons?" she continued. Hands went up again. "Then take out the *Above Rubies* and give them to families with daughters."

I agree with Val. The more we spread the vision of *Above Rubies*, the more godly sons and daughters there will be for our young people to marry. Nancy



What about my Neighbors?

“Rejecting things because they are old-fashioned would rule out the sun and the moon—and a mother’s love.”

The neighbors are moving. They mentioned something about greener pastures for their horses. I’ll miss their friendly hellos over the fence and my gelding—who-thinks-he’s-a-stud is totally gonna miss those mares. I really liked the new neighbors too, and wish I’d taken the time to bake them a pie when they moved in just a few short months ago.

I don’t have much of an excuse really. Every new neighbor deserves a pie or something. My excuses get even weaker when you take into account that I live in one of those hobby farm developments where, even though I can’t shoot a varmint, I get to shovel manure and wake up to a rooster’s crow like the big boys (the “big boys” being the cattle and hay ranchers that surround us but don’t seem to mind our rabbit hutches all that much). After all, they can count on my goats and two horses to generate a steady one-and-a-half ton hay sale each year! Cha-Ching!

My country neighborhood even has an Annual Meeting where folks can connect and discuss important things like barking dogs and yard art. For those of us who don’t own forty or a hundred or a thousand acres, this is important stuff! My favorite part of the meetings, however, is getting to know the new people—well that, and the platter of brownies.

Now, more than ever, seems like a really good time to actually know one’s neighbors, don’t you think? People are hurting and worried and some are unemployed. But any setback has the potential of turning into a comeback and kindheartedness from a neighbor can make all the difference in the world.

The naysayers would have you believe that the gesture of a pie means you have to take on another person’s problems, but don’t you believe it! A handshake over the fence or an offer to help unload a car-full of Costco is how communities form. And when someone feels like they’re part of a community, they tend to want to stay, even when times are tough.

In her new book *“I Love A Man In Uniform,”* Lilly Burana says: “What intimidates us also instructs us and shows us, in part, who we’d like to be...” So, call me old-fashioned. Call me a total nerd if you want to and I won’t deny it. I wore that blue and gold FFA jacket in high school with confidence and pride. I lived through the teasing to reap the benefits of travel and speech writing, scholarships, trade missions and a Future Farmer husband to boot. I also believe in another great saying; “Rejecting things because they are old-fashioned would rule out the sun and the moon—and a mother’s love.”



Mike and Holly with their children Ben (16), Jacob (13) and Mary (11)

So, the neighbors are moving and I hope they find what they’re looking for. But, as for me, I’m resolving to take a pie to whoever moves into the neighborhood next.

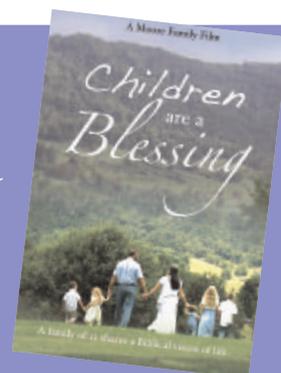
Proverbs 25:21 says, “If you see your enemy hungry, go buy him lunch; if he’s thirsty, bring him a drink. Your generosity will surprise him with goodness, and GOD will look after you.”

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(New)
DVD

Children are a Blessing

Watch this family of 12 enjoy family life together. See them in action as they anticipate, give birth to and welcome their 10th child into the home. You will hear them expose the history of the birth control movement on the 50th anniversary of the Pill and how God opened their eyes to the blessing of children, in spite of their different ideals at the beginning. It is a delightful documentary. Not only will you be inspired, but you can show it to other families or lend out to promote the blessings of embracing children. (29 minutes long, and also includes 60 minutes of bonus features)



From Our Home to Yours

I have just finished four weekends of *Above Rubies* retreats in a row. It was a wonderful time of sharing God's heart for families and meeting with families and mothers at our San Diego Annual Family Retreat and then in four states of Australia. We started in the state of Tasmania at a Ladies retreat in Hobart. We then traveled by 10-seater bus to the rest of our destinations, driving on to a



We're together again! Heather Jones—Director of Above Rubies in New Zealand, Nancy and Val Stares—Director of Above Rubies in Australia. Val has been serving with me in Above Rubies for 33 years, since its very inception.

ship to cross the Bass Strait from Tasmania to the mainland of Australia. We slept through the night as we crossed the strait and woke up in the morning to



Chellie Tetava and Tania Kiwi leading us in worship.

find ourselves in Melbourne, driving off to take a Day Seminar in a suburb of Melbourne.

A team of nine of us traveled together. Val and Bill Stares and their granddaughter, Anais. Val is the Director of

Above Rubies in Australia and Bill was our driver, driving us patiently with all our "needed stops" and fellowship and laughter.

Heather and Evan Jones and their grand-daughter, Alyssa. Heather is the Director of *Above Rubies* in New Zealand.

Our worship leaders, Tania Kiwi and Chellie Tetava. Tania is our *Above Rubies* worship leader in New Zealand and Chellie in Australia. We were so blessed by their anointed worship in their beautiful Maori style. I guess because I grew up with it, I love the beat of Maori music. I am sure you know that all New Zealanders are called "kiwis" because the kiwi is our native bird—a flightless, nocturnal bird. But Tania actually has the privilege of having the last name of Kiwi!

The teens, Anais and Alyssa, were an amazing blessing on our trip, serving constantly in every way they could—carrying loads of heavy boxes of books, looking after the book table, doing power point and sound and always looking out for a baby to cuddle and love in order to relieve the mothers.

I was also able to have some quick visits with family on the tour. The Campbell family has now spread to three countries—62 in New Zealand where we all began, 58 in Australia and 54 in Tennessee, USA. And yes, one couple in London. We are still the smallest number, but we are only one family of the nine children in Colin's family.

I mentioned in my last editorial that Evangeline's boys, Zadok and Sharar, traveled up to the Yukon to gold-dredge for five weeks. We praise the Lord that they arrived home safely after many adventures, even experiencing frostbite and not being able to walk for a week! They loved the adventure and came home with enough gold to pay for their trip! They were happy about that.

What's happening to Serene and Pearl's new book? I know you've been waiting a long time. Take heart, it is nearly completed. They worked on it all summer of 2009 and all this past summer of 2010. But, before they finished, it was time to get back to homeschooling again.



Nancy speaking at a Day Seminar in Sydney, Australia.

They are now up to revising, editing and proof-reading and hope to have it ready to print sometime in the New Year. It is called, *Satisfy and Energize—a Practical and Budget Friendly Approach to Healthy Mothering, Weight Control and Anti-Aging*. This book will shed the myths and confusions about health. They will teach you how to make macho meals for your husband that will at the same time be slimming and nutritious for you and nourishing for your children! They have included about 100 delicious recipes that won't break your bank balance, but will keep you slim, satisfied, energized and healthy.

You will notice that I have advertised *100 Days of Blessing* on the back cover of this issue. My daughter, Evangeline, can't stand the boring advertisement! After reading this book, she wrote: "If I could **dong every woman on the head and they could wake-up exhilarated with fresh zeal, God-inspired motivation and excitement for the future that**



Can you believe this is summer? Zadok and Sharar in the Yukon.

The Pain of Motherhood!

I love my children so much that at times it hurts. Mothering brings me so much joy, yet it is the most frightening and overwhelming task imaginable.

One day you are handed the most beautiful, marvelous gift. You stare in awe-struck wonder and breathe in the sweet fragrance of new life. You cannot fathom how this tiny little human will forever change the world as you know it. Or, how your own life as you know it, will forever change.

Once you are a Mother, things you never worried about suddenly become foremost in your mind. You find yourself double-checking if the doors are locked before you go to bed. You always make sure you buckle up. You apply two layers of sunscreen just in case. You baby proof e-v-e-r-y-thing.

Mothering is so very scary. Life isn't about you anymore. Not only do you worry about your child's well-being, you worry about your own well-being. After I became a mom, I found myself constantly praying for God to protect me, because, second to the thought of losing one of my children is the thought of them losing me.

I pray more than I have ever prayed in my life. Life is so unpredictable and our children are at the mercy of this dangerous world and have an enemy who wants nothing more than to devour them. This reality drives me to my knees, daily. Each day I have to give my fears over to God and ask Him to help me love my little ones while entrusting Him totally with their care.

The hardest part of being a mother is knowing that at some point in time my children will have to suffer. Suffering is an inevitable part of life. Some of my children have already experienced it and I can't express how much it pains me to know there was nothing I could have done to save them from it.

Many times I have seen one of my children in pain and wished I could take

their place. I would take any amount of suffering if it meant my child didn't have to suffer. Tears form in my eyes at the very thought of one of them becoming ill, facing despair, having their hearts broken or making mistakes that will forever alter their future. I often think of Mary. What must it have been like to be Jesus' mother and to witness His torture and death?

Sometimes I wonder why God called me to be a mother. At times, the task seems too great to bear and my heart feels like it could crack into millions of pieces. I love my children so deeply, so profoundly that I wonder sometimes if I can handle it. And yet, my God loves them even more. He loves me even more. He loves you even more.

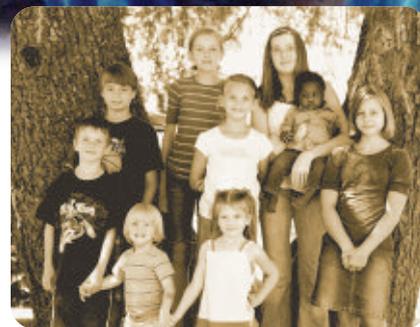
Mothering is the perfect picture of Christ's love for us. He saw us suffering in a dark and sinful world. He came to us to save us from an eternity of suffering. He took our place and paid the ultimate price. He loved us that much. My love for my children is just a speck in comparison to His love for us.

Each day, I lay my precious treasures at His feet. I lay my fears, my heartache, and my ever-present desire to protect them, at the foot of the cross. I pray that God will give me all that I need to mother them well. I ask that He will provide me the strength to endure whatever comes our way.

I thank Him for the incredible privilege of being called Mommy. I thank Him for each day that I get to experience a glimpse of His vast love for me through the love He has given me for my treasures.

"And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is." (Ephesians 3:18 NIV)

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Brian and Courtney's children are: Olivia (14), Galya (13) adopted from Russian, Abigail (12), Micah (11) adopted from Russian, Madelyn (9), Aiden (7), Leah (4), Asher (2) and Malakai (1) adopted from US.

"National virtue is the virtue of collected individuals."

~ James W. Alexander

In 1996 my whole world fell apart. In early December I discovered that I was expecting my 5th child. Two weeks later I found out my husband was having an affair. He admitted it wasn't the first time he'd been unfaithful during our nine-year marriage. Despite my efforts to hold our marriage together till after the holidays, I caught my husband with his girlfriend just after midnight on New Year's Day. I confronted the woman (although she wasn't the one breaking a vow), threw a fit, hit my husband, threw away my wedding ring and wished him a Happy New Year before going home and packing all of his belongings. I called his family and mine on New Year's Day 1997 to explain. No one could believe it—we were the "perfect couple."

Over the next few weeks I contemplated suicide. I even scheduled an abortion. I didn't see how I could possibly raise all our children on my own. I hated Terry for what he had done, but I also missed him terribly. He came over one day, looking like a wreck, and told me he loved me. He told me that even if it took him ten years he would win back my heart. I felt sick. How could he win back my heart after he had ripped it out? I didn't think I would ever be able to trust him again, and even if I did, there was absolutely NO WAY I could forgive him!

In spite of Terry wanting to "work things out" I refused to let him come near me. He agreed to play by my rules. When he was scheduled to stay the night with the children I would leave before he arrived; he was to leave by the back door the next morning so I wouldn't have to look at him. I think I was trying to make him pay for the pain he had caused me.

The children missed their daddy. Giggly little Haley was only 18 months old at the time and she simply stopped smiling. One day I overheard Emily (age 4) and Stephanie (age 8) conversing. Emily was crying and saying she wanted her daddy back home. Stephanie replied, "Mommy won't let him come back." They were blaming ME! I thought I'd better do something to "cover" myself.

Terry suggested marriage counseling. I believed there was no hope for our marriage but I thought that if we went a time or two, I could say to the children, "Mommy tried to make it work, but there was no way." My best friend suggested we see a pastor who offered free marriage

From Suicide to Sanity

counseling.

"Hook me up!" I told her.

I didn't know much about God, but I had heard of the Ten Commandments and I knew Terry had broken a few. I thought this pastor would surely be on my side and would give me God's approval to divorce

After the third explanation he finally asked, "What don't you understand?" I said, "You are telling me that I can come to God just as I am, smoking, drinking and with all the stuff I've done, and He is going to forgive me?" "Yes," he smiled.

I shook my head. I honestly believed



Terry and Cheryl's family are Amanda--married to Ryan and mommy to Aiden (3) and Jade (15 months), Stephanie (21), Emily (18), Haley (15), MacKenzie (13), Corrie Beth (11), Isaac (9), Samuel (7), Destiny (5), and Michael Ray (1). Photography: Vanessa Myers

my husband.

During the first session the pastor sat at our dining room table and listened to me pour out the sordid details of our lives as Terry bowed his head in shame. I waited for the pastor to tell us that our marriage could not be saved and that I was justified in seeking a divorce. Instead, he talked about God's purpose for marriage and how we had been headed down the wrong track. He agreed to counsel us every Monday night.

A few weeks later, the pastor patiently explained God's way of salvation to us. I didn't understand, so he repeated himself.

that I had to "clean myself up" and make myself presentable before I could come before a Holy God and ask forgiveness. The pastor patiently explained that salvation is a free gift from God and there is absolutely nothing I could do to earn this gift. I knew in my heart he was sharing truth, but I was not yet ready. Terry, however, asked Jesus Christ to forgive him and received Him as his personal Savior that very night.

Terry began to change. He quit using foul language and got up every morning to read his Bible. He had a new purpose for his life. I, on the other hand, became more

contentious and bitter with each passing day. Finally, I knew I could not continue living this way. I had to make a choice: either end my life or accept Jesus Christ. There was no other alternative.

One night after Terry left for his night shift job, I knelt at the end of the bed and talked to God. I felt silly at first, but continued telling Him what a mess I had made of my life. I sat in the darkness and confessed all the "major" sins I could recall. I knew there was nothing I could do to save myself out of this pit and I asked Jesus to cleanse me from my sin and be Lord of my life. As I left the bedroom that night I remember thinking, "There's no turning back now!"

Within a year of our conversion, our lives were hardly recognizable. Those who knew us were amazed at the transformation. The old wounds appeared to be completely healed. Yet, nearly four years later, one question continued to tug at my heart. If all had been forgiven, why were the memories still so painful?

In December 2000 we were preparing for the birth of our seventh child. What should have been a joyous time in my life was instead plagued by depression. Generated by the Christmas season, the old feelings of insecurity and distrust resurfaced as memories from the past overwhelmed me. I looked like a godly wife and mother but my spirit was overcome with turmoil and chaos. I felt trapped by the hypocrisy. By the end of the month I felt so defeated that I began doubting the Lord's presence in my life and even questioned my salvation. Though I didn't understand at the time, I had finally reached the end of reliance on myself.

We learned of a marriage intimacy course and our church agreed to pay our way for two weekends. We were both keenly aware that if we chose to do this study, all the old wounds would be ripped open once more. We would have rather avoided the pain but we both felt the Lord leading us in this direction.

We began cautiously. The first chapter was very enlightening and didn't hurt a bit. A glance at chapter two however, caused me to panic! It was all about resolving bitterness. I watched the video alone the first time and wept bitterly as suppressed emotions surfaced. I was surprised by the

amount of bitterness locked away in my heart, not toward Terry, for this pain was obvious to me, but towards my mother!

A memory flashed through my mind. I was seven years old. My Mom had gotten remarried and left us three children with our grandparents to finish out the school year and only visited us on weekends. I had not seen her for about a week when I had a dream that she had died. The dream was horrifying and I longed for my mommy to hold me in her loving arms and reassure me that she would always come back. A day or two following this dream my mom came for a visit. I ran to her without restraint and threw my arms around her with joy. She simply pushed me aside and walked away. I sobbed from the pain of this memory.

As suggested in Step Three of

I had to make a choice: either end my life or accept Jesus Christ. There was no other alternative.

Resolving Bitterness from Childhood, I shared this pain with Jesus, asking Him to come into my pain and speak peace. These words came into my mind: "I was there watching over you all along." I dutifully wrote these words on the worksheet even though I didn't really believe them.

I continued working through the worksheets and eventually began, "My Spouse Who Has Hurt Me." Reliving the memories was as painful as I had anticipated, but God was faithful in comforting my heart.

That first weekend many issues were resolved. On Saturday evening, as Terry read the painful memories I had written concerning our marriage, he looked at me with tears overflowing and asked, "How can you ever forgive me?" I had just been reflecting on my own sins and cried, "You ask me how I can forgive you?" The question is, "How can God forgive me?"

Although I was on the road to healing and truly desired to let go of all the pain, bitterness and unforgiveness, I still felt some unknown cord of the past holding me back. Step Four suggested praying through the worksheets for thirty days, or until the pain of each incident was gone, so I continued to pray through these issues

faithfully each morning.

I soon realized that the issues I had with Terry didn't hurt nearly as much as the memory of the incident that happened when I was seven. The day before Terry and I were to leave on our second weekend away, I felt it was time to resolve this issue completely. In my mind's eye I saw this pathetic little girl standing with tear-stained cheeks, totally rejected and unloved by the one person whom she loved more than anyone in the world. My heart ached as I sobbed and cried aloud, "Jesus, You said You were there; where were You?" Right then, I saw Him step up beside that broken little girl and wrap His loving arms around her. She was immediately comforted. "I loved you even when your mommy couldn't," He whispered to her.

Terry and I returned to the marriage retreat the next day. As the Holy Spirit revealed to us the ground we had surrendered to the enemy, our hearts opened and became tender toward the Lord. On Sunday morning, half an hour before check-out, we were discussing our family. Terry's only remaining concern was for Emily, our precarious eight-year-old. The Lord showed us that the many struggles with her were due to her heart being locked. I alone held that key.

The Lord prompted me to share with Terry my painful childhood memory. When I came to the part about Jesus coming to that little girl, I broke. For years I had been imprisoned with bitterness. I had not been free to love or even accept love. I suddenly realized that seeing Jesus in the midst of my pain was the key to my freedom. "Emily will be okay," I whispered through my tears.

As we left that room for the last time, I felt as though I was literally stepping into the light. My heart sang joyfully as Terry loaded the van. We decided to see my Mom before going home and I had the most fulfilling visit with her. The anger and bitterness was completely gone from my heart and replaced by an intense love for her. Before, I was quick to recognize and criticize her faults; now I was free to see her strengths and the goodness in her heart.

As we pulled up at our house, we immediately noticed a banner the children had made: "Welcome Home, Mom and Dad and Isaac." My heart swelled with joy.

Emily was the first to burst out the door. "Mommy, Mommy, I missed you so much," she squealed. I wrapped my arms around her. "I love you so much, Emily," I cried. She looked at me with genuine concern. "Mommy, what's wrong?" I took her face in my hands. "I love you, Emmy Jo and Jesus loves you too. He loves you so much and He knew you needed to be loved in a special way. Your Mommy and Daddy didn't know how so He sent us away this weekend to fix our hearts."

Tears flowed down her cheeks. I will never forget the beautiful smile on her face as I told her, "You are my precious Emily and I love you with all my heart." She fell into my arms and we sat there awhile, just the two of us, sobbing and clinging to one another.

We stepped out of the van together as Terry came out of the house. He'd been watching us. He picked up Emily and pulled me into his arms. "You don't know how long I've prayed for this," he said as he smiled through his tears. That day the Lord began healing Emily's heart as He had mine.

December 2001 sneaked up on me and I was soon swept away in the busy-ness of the season. The second Saturday morning in December Terry sent me off to do some holiday shopping alone—a rare treat!

The question popped into my mind: "It's December! How do you feel?" I considered this for a moment before answering aloud, "Well, I'm not stressed, or anxious, or sad or depressed." I felt a surge of joy as I continued, "I haven't experienced any overwhelming memories nor have I cried one tear of regret. Father! You have performed a miracle in my heart!"

God reminded me of this just before I turned into that same pizza place where Terry had once worked. I hadn't been back for five years! With my spirit soaring, I hopped out of the van to go to the new Christian book shop and raised my hands in praise to God for His mercy and faithfulness. When it was time to leave, I drove past the back door of that pizza place that I had hopelessly stormed out of on January 1, 1997 and the words, "It is finished," ran through my mind. I was instantly reminded of my last thought when I had walked out that same door five years before saying, "This is finished."

I cried tears of joy as I reflected how the Lord had delivered us. He had mended



Our Springtime!

Since 2001 I have had severe back problems. It was excruciatingly painful to even lift my head to drink water. Often I could not read the Bible as it was too heavy to lift. Sometimes I was not able to walk for a month at a time. Once I was hospitalized and in 2008 I was bedridden for three months. Besides the pain, it was lonely being stuck in bed for months. I had a few special friends who visited, prayed, helped clean and cooked the odd meal. The rest of the time my daughters did the cooking. I remember Angie (11 at the time) getting towels and basins to wash my hair in bed, without being asked.

After physiotherapy to my back, I slowly recovered but was told I would never be able to pick up anything heavier than 3 kgs.—certainly not a 10 kg. toddler! I was also told not to carry more than one grocery packet and I had to wear a back corset to do light housework. Bending was hard so I could not clean a shower or bath. My wonderful daughters graduated with complete degrees in housecleaning!

Then, totally unplanned, I found I was pregnant! Amazingly, as the pregnancy progressed my back became stronger. I rested each day, mostly due to the high humidity (over 40 degrees) and when winter came I was re-energised. I had lots of false labour, a new experience for me, but found very hot baths took it away each time.

my broken heart and restored our marriage. What He did in my life, He can do in yours. He is looking for broken hearts that are willing to surrender to Him and place their lives in His capable hands.

CHERYL LONG

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 cheryl.a.long@gmail.com
 www.treasuresfromashoebox.blogspot.com

The main fear was the birth messing up my back! I was also concerned about the length of labour as my previous labour lasted 36 hours and it took over an hour of pushing for both of my daughters to be born.

All my prayers were answered. Little Raim was born in a Christian Missionary hospital with midwives and he took less than two hours to be born! Lying on my side, to prevent my back from straining, I had a strong contraction and pushed. I felt with my hand and his head was already out—one more push and he was born! Jesus is so wonderful!

Riam is the best gift from heaven our family has ever received. His name stands for Richard, Ingrid, Angie and Maria. It is also short for Ephraim which means, "God has made me fruitful." Riam is to all of us our springtime after a long spiritual winter of many years. My husband had stopped reading the Bible and praying for many years, but when his little son was born, he began worshipping God again and holding Riam as he watched worship DVDs. Now he leads our family in prayer, Bible reading and singing every morning.

INGRID D'AGUIAR

ingridpreach@telkomsa.net
 Durban, KwaZuluNatal, South Africa
Richard and Ingrid's children are Angie (13), Maria (10) and Riam (1 year).

You may also like to go to www.aboverubies.org

and click on *Articles and Stories*, then *VBAC Stories* to read

THE COVENANT,

Cheryl's amazing testimony of four cesarean births followed by six VBACS (6 VBA4C)

Homeland Security

Soon after 9/11, President George W. Bush ordered a new branch of security and named it *The Department of Homeland Security*. We were told this was most needful in order to keep the citizens of the USA as safe as possible from fanatical extremists who would like to do nothing better than blow us all up. This Department seems to have done an excellent job, as evidenced by the fact that there has been no successful major attack on the USA since 9/11. Let's pray that security at our airports and major ports of entrance will continue to be vigilant and successful in foiling all attempts against us.

However, I believe that every home should have its own Department of Homeland Security. There is no question that the family is under major attack. Over 50 percent of Christian marriages end in divorce and multitudes of other marriages are on shaky ground. Over 50 percent of American children live with a single parent and many well-meaning Christian families are losing their teenage children to the devourer.

How indignant and horrified we would be if our national homeland security was so slack as to allow an army of terrorists from abroad to break into our nation's homes and kill, rape and destroy over 50 percent of our families. Yet, in many ways, this happens morally on a daily basis and few are up in arms and appalled about it. We are tempted to think that moral destruction is not as serious as physical destruction, but the Scripture is clear and plain when it says in Romans 3:23, "The wages of sin is death." Moral decay often leads to drug addiction, alcoholism and physical destruction.

Border Control

Do you believe in border control? Many Americans are concerned about our southern border between Mexico and the USA. It is easy for foreign terrorists to smuggle in weapons of mass destruction. It has, and still remains a major problem because of political correctness. And yet we so easily allow loose border control around our own

home! It is imperative that godly parents set up stronger borders around their homes. We must have strict control over the TV programs our family watches. Never be afraid to turn off the TV—or away with it altogether! We must take control over who our children hang out with, where they are going, and exactly when they will return home.

You are not unloving when you say, "No, I do not want you to keep company with so and so," if you do not feel right about them. The truth is that multitudes of churchgoing parents are losing their children to the world, the flesh and the devil, all because they do not take border control seriously.

Many Christian parents think that movies containing soft witchcraft incantations and spells are harmless. They do not realize that it softens their children and paves the way for them to get involved with

the hard-core stuff as time progresses. Play stations and video games should be patrolled by the eyes of godly parents. Parents must take control over anything that would spoil the godly atmosphere of their home.

I believe it is hypocritical to have more regard for our military and national defense than for our family's morals and values. The nation is only as strong as the moral values of its families. The moral values of our families are only as strong as the moral values of the parents, coupled with their vigilance and determination to teach and pass on these values to their children.

Hypocrisy

It seems hypocritical to me that we love our children enough to ensure they are buckled up securely in the family car, and yet at the same time plan to divorce our



spouse. The question is, what dangers the child most?

It seems hypocritical to me that mothers say they love their little ones and yet drop them at day care centers to be cared for by someone who is not their mother. Little children need their own mothers at all times for their emotional and spiritual security.

It seems hypocritical to me that Christians who say they love and care for their children send them off to state schools and colleges to be indoctrinated with socialism, liberalism and progressivism by those who have no love or fear of God. How can Christian parents happily allow their children to be under “the counsel of the ungodly” and to “sit in the seat of the scornful?” (Psalm 1:1)

It seems hypocritical to me that many parents make sure their children receive immunization shots while at the same time allow them to be exposed to all sorts of media junk as if they were immune to moral and spiritual disease.

Ray Comfort, a fellow New Zealander who now lives and evangelizes in the USA, published an interesting article on the importance of parental vigilance in an early edition of *Above Rubies* (1986). He begins the article describing a scene from a TV documentary that he had recently viewed.

“Over one million birds have built their nests in that massive thorn bush,” exclaimed the TV commentator. As the TV documentary continued, I watched the male birds build their nests as the females looked on. Three days and the home was complete—and just in time. On to the nest hops mum and immediately lays her eggs. A few weeks passed and now the hatched chicks were beginning to develop feathers. They acted just like children, mouths continually open. Both mum and dad devoted themselves tirelessly to the welfare of their offspring—and it was paying off. They were now around the teenage stage with a complete covering of feathers. However, they were still semi-blind.

When the scene seemed to epitomize suburban utopia, something horrible happened. Large stork-like birds, with long legs and even longer beaks, appeared on the outer edge of the thorn bush and began devouring

those helpless young chicks right before the eyes of the panic-stricken parents. These ugly storks walked around the outer edge of the bush, going from nest to nest, and with cool expertise plunged their long beaks into the entrance and plucked out semi-blind chicks by the thousands! I felt helplessly horrified as each bird was lifted from the nest, tossed slightly in the air and swallowed with one gulp!

Helplessness and horror also grip me as I see Christian children, slowly but surely being devoured by Satan. One by one he plucks semi-blind teenagers from the warmth and security of the nest before the panic-stricken eyes of their parents. The problem is very clear to the onlooker. Too many nests have been built on the outer edge of the thorn bush. Satan is walking about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

Ray Comfort goes on to warn the regular church-attending father who is not in touch with what his teenage children are up to on a daily basis. We each need to ask ourselves the question: does my homeland security for the protection of my family’s morality measure up to the vigilance that I expect from the nation’s homeland security? The truth is that whatever requirements of alertness our nation expects from the agents who are paid to keep us secure and safe are the same requirements for Christian parents. 1 Peter 5:8 says, “Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour.”

Build a Hedge

From the beginning, God has given parents the great role of protecting their children. The ancient Israelites built hedges or walls around their vineyards in order to protect the vines from being attacked. Psalm 80:12-13 says, “Why have you broken down her hedges, so that all who pass by the way pluck her fruit? The boar out of the woods uproots it, and the wild beast of the field devours it.” We should also take notice of Solomon 2:15, “Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.”

If it was important enough for Israel

to build hedges and walls around their grapevines, how much more important it is to build walls and hedges around the most important crop in the nation—our precious families.

Job was a man who was “blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.” (Job 1:1,8) God built a hedge of protection around Job, around his family and all that he owned so that Satan was not able to attack him. It is very obvious from this Scripture that Job’s righteous life enabled God to build this hedge around him.

What should we do to protect our children?

1. Be alert and watchful.
2. Be diligent in border control.
3. Keep priorities in the right order. Protecting your marriage and family is your most important role.
4. Realize that as a parent you are responsible for your children, not anyone else—not the teacher, pastor or youth leader.
5. Live a God-fearing, righteous life.

COLIN CAMPBELL



Have you joined the Above Rubies Facebook yet?

Here is your opportunity to be encouraged in your high calling each new day.

The Value of

Diamonds!

One night I had a dream. I found myself in a land where everyone used diamonds as money. I walked into a sweetie shop and saw a young lady buying a packet of crisps with a diamond. The man exchanged the diamond for the crisps and nonchalantly

threw the diamond into the cash box.

I stood amazed! The most beautiful, dazzling, bright shiny jewel exchanged for a packet of "ready salted!" Wow!

I walked passed a "fish and chip" shop and saw two young people buying sausage and chips with two diamonds; I stood amazed yet again!

Back in my land diamonds were precious, priceless, sought after and desired; here they were like common pennies. I couldn't figure it out. I decided to ask the young couple to accompany me back to my homeland and bring their diamond bag of "pennies" with them.

They did so. Back in my homeland we went into a sweetie shop to ask for a can of coke. When the shopkeeper received the diamond in exchange for the fizzy drink, he almost fainted! "Where did you get this? Do you

know how much it is worth?" he exclaimed. The two strangers couldn't believe his reaction. They stood astonished! In their land, diamonds were worthless. They were so common that everyone used them. In this foreign land, they were now prosperous beyond belief, beyond anything they could have imagined!

Then the interpretation to the dream came to me. In this land of ours people are no longer treated like the priceless jewels they are. They are often thrown away, even before birth! And because so many are doing it, it becomes even more common and acceptable, and the richness of human life is lost.

Once the eyes of our hearts are opened to the real value of human life, we can understand how wealthy, marvelous and precious we actually are. Knowing this preciousness of life makes us see how precious others are, especially the true value of our children and unborn baby "diamonds." They are jewels hidden in the darkness, yet very much alive and precious.

PAUL VIVIAN

Louth, Lincolnshire, UK (Birthplace of the Wesleys and home of Bomber Command during WW2)
paulandblanca.vivian@yahoo.com

Paul and Blanca with Emily Grace (10), Jemimah Grace (9) and Gabriel Emanuel (5).



Paul Vivian is the founder of TRUTH FABRIC. To view Bible Hero Bedsets, Story and Song Bedtime/drive-time CDs, Hero T-shirts and children's briefs and Pro Life T-shirts go to www.truthfabric.com

"We are never nearer to heaven than when we are upon our knees."

~ James W. Alexander

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FAMILY RETREAT at Rocky Creek Conference Center, Pineville
Contact: Angela Decoteau
Ph: 225 715 1587 • calmdec@cox.net

12 – 14 MARCH, WASHINGTON

AR LADIES RETREAT, Black Lake Bible Camp, Olympia
Contact Nicole Stol with questions concerning registration.
Ph: 253-655-4713 • arblessings@gmail.com
Or other questions: Heather Bryant
Ph: 360-271-9668 • hbbry91@msn.com

25 – 27 MARCH, WISCONSIN

13th ANNUAL FAMILY RETREAT at Inspiration Center, Williams Bay
Contact Roger and Jackie Thelen
Ph: 262-723-6557 • safehaven@pensys.com

1 – 3 APRIL, OHIO

LADIES RETREAT at Camp Carl, www.campcarl.com
Contact: Brianna Graber • heartforliberia@gmail.com • Ph: 330-877-2471
Or: Sharon Carmichael • heimschule@neo.rr.com • Ph: 330-455-7571
Website: www.neohrubies.blogspot.com

8 – 10 APRIL, BROWNWOOD, TEXAS (2 hrs SW of Dallas)

LADIES RETREAT at Heart of Texas Camp
Contact: Jeanette Watje 830-608-0880
Email: Retreat2011@TexasRubies.com • www.TexasRubies.com
Prayerfully; Pearl, Meadow, Serene, and Vange will be there!

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10 – 12 JUNE, ONTARIO, CANADA

FAMILY CAMP at Torrance (near Gravenhurst)
Contact: Alison Morrison 705-458-9631 • labadddc@hotmail.com

26 – 28 AUGUST, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

FAMILY and LADIES RETREAT at Pine Valley Bible Conference Center
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*“The Sunday school cannot in any wise replace the vital need for a daily diet
of God’s Word in the home around the family altar.”*

~ Norman V. Williams

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(and what happened behind the scenes)
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Families which ignore God and His Word
six days a week will not be likely to know
God in "the power of His resurrection"
on the seventh day of the week!

~ Norman V. Williams

would blow-up every pessimistic thought—thought that destroys the true joy of living and of facing the moment as we change the face of the earth as mothers--this book is the donger! Don't stop until you devour this book. Read it through in one go! Read it through six times in one go, before you lay it to rest by your pillow for the most exciting nightly and daily devotional that's ever been printed! I can't help but feel the adventure in it every jolly day. Why? I myself had the most fun-loving, wild, adventurous mother who swamped us children with exhilarating encouragement. Now, you can have her in all her raw, God-inspired, encouraging form!" Wow! I didn't know my daughter could be so inspired by a book her mother has written!

When my sister, Kate, was proof-reading this book, I noticed loads of little Post-it Notes sticking to her arm. "What on earth are you doing, Kate? I asked. "There are so many statements in this book that are life-changing. I don't want to forget them," she replied. "You should get bracelets with these slogans on them so mothers can look at them and be reminded of these truths throughout the day," she continued. It sounded like a pretty good idea to me.

It would be too expensive for mothers to purchase fancy embossed bracelets so I have printed eight different rubber wrist bands with positive affirmations for mothers and wives. See page 6. I also added another chapter to *100 Days of Blessing* listing affirmations from the book that you can type and print off to pin up in your kitchen to remind you of who you are and of the great work you are doing. You will love these.

A young mother I know has recently been going through a hard time while her husband is overseas. She confessed that wearing her I'M ABOVE SELF PITY band has saved her life. Each time she wants to get into a "poor-me-self-pity" trough, she looks at her wrist and states emphatically, "I'm above that! I don't have to go there!" and she is back on top again! Another young mother enjoys wearing I'M WORTH MORE THAN RUBIES. She says that when she is doing some menial task such as washing mess from her cloth diapers, she looks at her

wrist and realizes she is involved in the greatest career in the nation, that of raising the next generation. She is reminded again that her price is far above rubies.

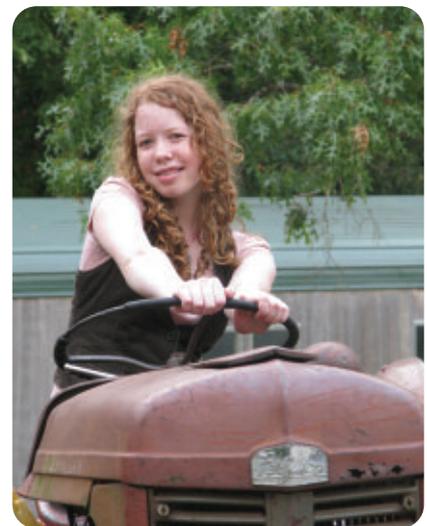
My daughter, Evangeline,—exuberant mother of 10 children, loves wearing MOTHERHOOD=ADVENTURE! Of course, she was the inspiration for this one!

I love to wear the I LOVE MY HUSBAND band. Each time I look down, I see it and am reminded how much I love him. I am also proud to wear I'M A COVENANT KEEPER. I'm more committed to wear this one since being in Australia. While having to sign some forms, there was nowhere to state my status as a wife. No place for *Wife!* No place for *Husband!* Only *Partner!* It was humiliating to be relegated to a partner! I am not just a partner who happens to live with a guy! I am a committed wife. I have a unique function as I serve my husband and seek to be one with him in purpose and vision. I have a unique function as I mother, nurture and manage our home.

My husband has his distinctive function as a husband and father—providing, protecting and leading our family in the ways of God. Together, as husband and wife (not temporary partners), we are a powerful force in this world as we raise a godly family that will determine the course of the nation. We are fulfilling God's original intention to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth... subdue



Above Rubies packaging time. Even the little ones like to get in and help. Above: Saber, Evangeline's 10th baby doesn't want to miss out. Rashida and Mercy take time to interact with him. Below: Promise (my sister Kate's little girl), Sahara (Evangeline's daughter) and Authumn Rose (Pearl's daughter) help with counting magazines.



Above: Cherish and Chalice Allison, (10 years). They used to be the same height, but now Chalice is sprouting upwards. Below: Meadow on her grandfather's tractor. Colin uses this old tractor regularly on our land.

ABOVE RUBIES
 PO BOX 681687
 FRANKLIN, TN 37068-1687 USA
 Ph: (877) 729-9861 (9am - 4pm Mon-Fri)
 Web site: www.aboverubies.org

Above Rubies is a magazine to encourage women in their high calling as wives, mothers and homemakers. Its purpose is to uphold and strengthen family life and to raise the standard of God's truth in the nation. The name has been chosen from Proverbs 31.10 AMP, "A capable, intelligent and virtuous woman, who is he who can find her? She is far more precious than jewels and her value is far ABOVE RUBIES or pearls."

EDITRESS: Nancy Campbell
 GRAPHICS: Duane Dominy, Dominy & Associates, duanead2@yahoo.com
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 FRONT COVER: Joel, Adam, Jubilee and Abigail Engelke enjoying the Autumn leaves in Tauranga, New Zealand.

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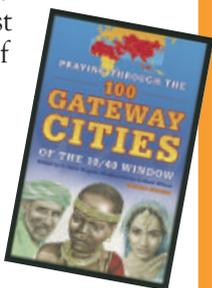
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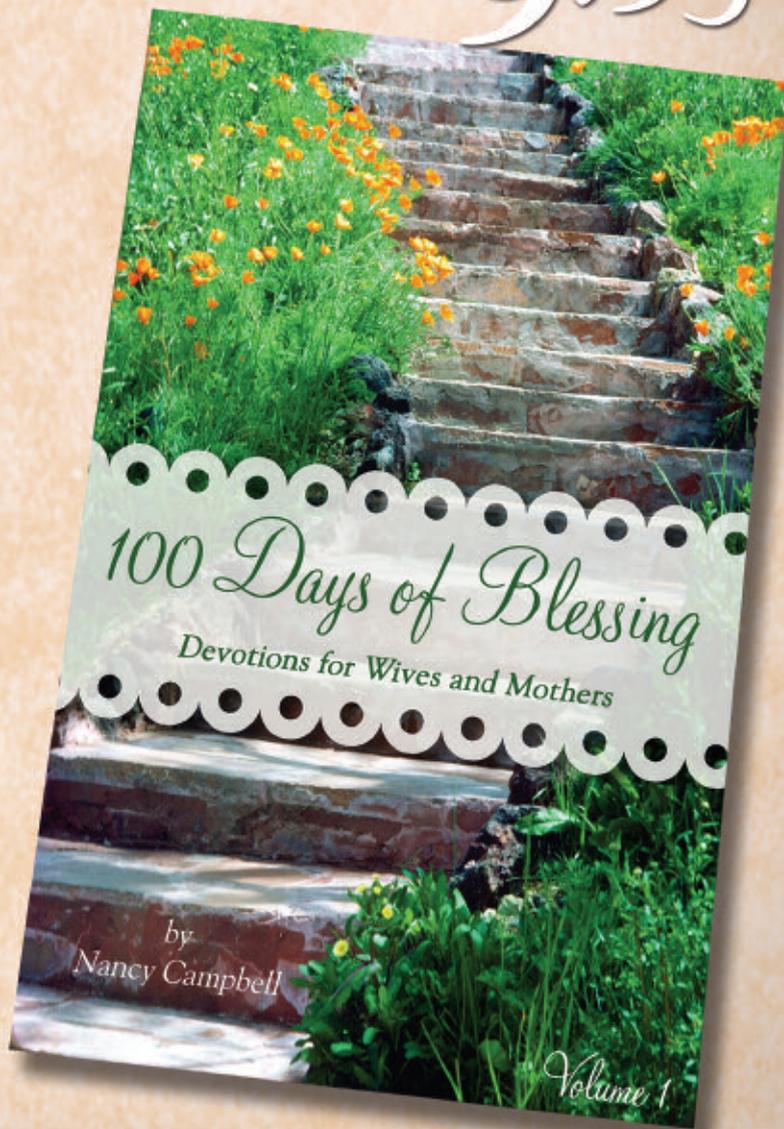
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Head over Heels in Love

I've heard both sides of the marriage argument. One side says that soon after marriage the honeymoon ends, the lovey-dovey feelings gradually leave and sexual intimacy becomes dull. You better have a solid and strong intellectual commitment to carry you through the years of boredom ahead.

The other side insists that there really is such a thing as "happily ever after" and through hard work you can maintain the "head-over-heels-in-love" feelings you had at the beginning of your marriage. This side also insists that sexual intimacy will improve rather than decline as the years pass.

Which side is right? I lean toward the second one. Ask me again in 25 years, but it seems to me that the majority of the behaviors involved in maintaining a "head-over-heels-in-love" romance are very

The Wedding Rose:

Cliff painted this beautiful rose for Elisabeth on their wedding day morning. He left it on the bush so it was never plucked. To check Cliff's art, go to www.cliffsnell.com or search for "Cliff Snell III" on Facebook.



deliberate. If you let resentment simmer, or allow little things to eat at your marriage relationship, when does the magical time of love get to happen?

My husband and I have worked to drop our single habits instead of trying to force our marriage to accommodate two single lives. We try to do fun things that keep us together instead of taking us apart.

It is good to read up on the care and keeping of our marriage. I recommend the book, *Love Life for Every Married Couple*, by Ed Wheat in which he gives recommendations for the "feelings-can-last" way instead of the "neglecting each other" way.

I'm very much in love with my husband. We hate to part every morning and we're relieved to be together again in the evening. I can tell him anything. I respect him. I deliberately do not speak about him negatively. Of course, he isn't perfect, but you won't find me gossiping about my husband being "such a child" even if that's what's popular to say.

To us, the magical part of love is worth preserving. We go to great lengths to maintain it—little notes, smiles, surprises and gentleness in a moment when a harsh thing could be said. We play together. We pray together honestly and with the protective shades down, letting each other see the truly broken places so we can reinforce one another. The payoff is extraordinarily wonderful.

I think the one thing that's helped the most is the knowledge that we were brought together by God. It takes away all the second guessing and thinking of "I deserve better than your dirty socks on the floor!" I know that whatever happens, I'm where I'm supposed to be. If it's uncomfortable, it's probably because I'm supposed to learn something—spouses are such wonderful refining tools in the hand of God!

The following are my 10 points for encouraging the healing, magical lovey-dovey feeling so often disdained by the "wiser" who've decided it's naive.

1. Be faithful.

Both husband and wife must be faithful—mind included. No porn, flirting, and no mind-wandering

trips to places you shouldn't be. If your spouse would be hurt to see what you're thinking, STOP!

2. Spend time together.

Arrange life to spend as much time as possible with your beloved. Others will encourage you to seek out your own pursuits, but shared adventures are better. Stretch yourselves to try each other's favorite things. Our society is so arranged around a single life that marriage seems like a foreign concept. But it holds true—you will grow closer to whoever you spend time with, spouse or not!

3. Think positively.

Deliberately think about your husband in a positive way. Cross out the negatives. You're married to him, so what difference does it make if you think he's acting rude today? Think on the happy and positive things. Think about your romantic moments together. Think on sweet words he has said to you. Write them down so you don't forget them. Do not criticize him without careful prayer, as criticism tears down a marriage. Annoyances are ultimately temporary anyway—life is very short.

4. Embrace sexual intimacy as God's gift to you.

God created sexual intimacy to be enjoyed by the husband and wife! *Intimate Issues* by Linda Dillow and Lorraine Pintus is a great book on this topic. Thinking about your husband sexually throughout the day is both appropriate and beneficial to your marriage. It creates "lovey" hormones, joy and desire for your husband when he comes home which enriches your marriage.

5. Encourage one another.

Encourage one another. Be childlike in expressing feelings in a non-condemning way.

6. Don't "play games."

Don't "play games" with your lover. You will affect the precious soul of someone who will one day stand before God. If you deliberately overreact to small issues to create drama, causing pointless worry in the mind of the man who loves you, you may distract him from more important issues. Studies show that men who are

kept at high stress levels are more prone to serious health issues. An old book I found contained a doctor's advice, "To keep your husband alive, don't keep him in a stew."

7. Build high hedges.

Put high hedges around your marriage. Another great book (and one I recommend for ALL newlyweds!) is *Hedges* by Jerry B. Jenkins. If you don't have purposeful walls up to guard your garden, don't be surprised when other people find the way in.

8. Respect your husband.

The greatest aphrodisiac in the world is submission and respect. Respect the needs of your spouse, whether you think they're silly or not. I read about a rich man who left his wife and children for an elevator girl because she admired him openly every day. Was he wrong? YES! He lost his job, money, children and social standing but he somehow decided her flattery was worth it. It won't kill you to openly admire your husband. I heard about another man whose wife passed away. He had always been a confident man, smiling at everyone, but some years later he remarried and began to look like a whipped hound.

9. Listen.

LISTEN to your spouse even when the issue he is concerned about may have no value in your own mind. Respect what he is saying. If he's taking the time to tell you, it must be important to him.

10. Make your home peaceful and loving.

Try to make your home a peaceful and loving place. Let go of small offenses and problems as much as possible. Forgive as much as possible. Touch one another each time you pass. Give little kisses. Let your hands minister acceptance and love to your spouse. Accept him physically—he doesn't have to compare to anyone else. He is your own special version made by God. Don't leave him hungry in any way—emotionally or physically.

ELISABETH SNELL

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Cliff and Elisabeth's children are Sebastian Saenz (12), Clifford Snell IV--they call him Ford IV but shorten it to 44! (3), Harbor Silas (2) and expecting their fourth son, Winterbourne, around Christmas Day.



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From Our Home to Yours *continued*



Arden resting on his horse, Freedom. He always rides him bareback and loves to canter with his arms outstretched in "freedom."

it: and have dominion..." (Genesis 1:28)

When a nation does not honor the sacred institution of marriage, the first institution that God set into being, it stands in a dangerous place. A nation will only be as strong as its committed mar-

riages and families.

At the *Above Rubies* retreats in Australia, I talked about how adversaries came to stop Ezra and Nehemiah from building the temple and the walls of Jerusalem. I noticed that they tried ten different ways to stop them. It is interesting that the devil uses the same tactics on mothers today in order to stop them in their great building program of building godly families which builds a godly nation. One of the greatest threats to Satan's plans is God-fearing parents who raise godly children. The more godly arrows they sharpen and polish for God's purposes, the more Satan's plans will be frustrated in the earth. Godly mothers, embracing and raising children for God's glory, are dangerous to the enemy!

Nehemiah had a good response to his adversaries. When they tried to distract him and get him to come down from his work, he did not get pulled into their plans, but stated, I AM DOING A GREAT WORK. I CANNOT COME DOWN! You can read about this in Nehemiah 6:1-4. These words are worth printing and pinning up in your kitchen. Whenever you are tempted to feel sorry for yourself or discouraged because of the negative comments of people around you, don't give in to these lies. Instead, confess out loud, I AM DOING A GREAT WORK. I CANNOT COME DOWN!

Never forget the power and importance of your high calling, given to you by God.

NANCY CAMPBELL

Founder and Editress of *Above Rubies*
 Primm Springs, Tennessee, USA

Mothering Teens

Have you noticed that as your children grow older, the questions begin: when are you going to go back to work? pursue your career? get a degree? or (fill in the blank)?"

It is much easier for others to accept an at-home mother of young children. After all, that is when children need their mother the most, right?

It is easy for many mothers to buy into the notion that their older children no longer need them as much and to feel justified in abandoning their post at home. While society may tell you that a teenager no longer needs you, I believe the opposite is true.

I think they need you more.

Many times I think that being their mother when they were small was easier. I enjoyed their undivided love and attention. I kept them safely by my side, guiding and nurturing their every move. As they grow and begin to develop their own personalities, make their own choices and decisions, and discover their own walk with the Lord apart from me, I am learning the fine art of letting go, yet holding strong.

Because of the feminist and humanistic attack on family, the values of our culture are slipping further away from God's model every day. This makes my role as a

mother critical in the life of my children through all the stages of their lives, not just when they are babies and toddlers.

I must become a stronger Warrior!

When my teens were small, I often protected them from getting hurt physically. Now I protect them from getting hurt emotionally and spiritually by a cruel world that wants to rob their innocence and steal their soul.

The older they get, the bigger the war that is waged against them, and a stronger warrior I need to become.

As they grow and their circle of influence widens, they need the council of their mother even more to help guide their lives in the right direction. Just as there were dangers to protect them from when they were little, there are dangers to protect them from when they are older. Just as there are lessons to be taught when they were three, there are lessons to be taught at thirteen, fifteen and eighteen. The lessons may change, but the need for proper protection, care and guidance never changes. I cannot imagine abandoning my children at such a pivotal time in their lives!

I must not abandon them during the pivotal times of their lives!

If a mother is at her post as an unwavering watchtower over her children's hearts, minds and souls I wonder whether we would be dealing with that "age of rebellion." A mother who doesn't leave her post can quickly remove any seeds of rebellion that are sown into their lives, because she is there—watching, guiding and praying.

If you are a mother of older children, you are still needed—maybe more than ever—to guard the gates, mend the fences, and continue to teach, protect, and guide your children.

Motherhood is a lifetime job—always changing, but never stopping. God didn't designate you to be your children's mother until they reach a certain age, but He called you to be their mother for life. It is a high and noble calling and I don't think we should surrender our post too quickly!

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Scott and Stephanie's children are Amber (14), Lindsey (11) and Eric (7).

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My Head on His Chest

Our family had spent the week prior to Christmas celebrating with family. Like so many Christmases before, we had to return home for my husband to go back to work. We arrived home late that afternoon only to realize that I had spent so much time getting ready for our trip that I had forgotten to plan for our Christmas Day meal. By the time I got into town all the stores were closed except for the local chain store pharmacy, which left me the choice of a few questionable prepackaged foods. It was certainly not the makings of our traditional Christmas meal. I picked through the available items as the children relished the idea of eating something “special.” They rarely got to eat macaroni and cheese. I picked up some applesauce and a few more goodies before heading off toward the check-out counter.

On my way, I passed the section for pregnancy tests. For years my husband and I had been attempting to conceive another baby. A hasty decision after our fifth son was born led to a premature ending of our fertility with a vasectomy.

But the Lord uses our mistakes and we were in for some life changing experiences. The first was our entrance into homeschooling. Secondly, we began to understand how precious our fertility was to God and thus our road to a reversal was born. We went to Conway, Arkansas to a godly doctor using his gifts of healing to help return our fertility to the Lord. We expected the babies to immediately start arriving but that was not the case. By October of 2006, we were informed that my husband’s “count” was not significant enough to bring about a pregnancy.

So why in the world, on this Christmas Day, did I decide to pick up a pregnancy test? I was only a day late and my menstrual cycles had been a bit crazy. After all, I was over 40 and women like me were not supposed to desire pregnancy; we were supposed to succumb to the inevitable—menopause.

I went home and prepared our Christmas Dinner, but I have to admit, curiosity got the best of me. I took the test and waited. A faint pink line? I could not believe it! I hid the test under the bathroom rug so I could go back and check it without my sons seeing it. I wanted to believe that it was true, but I had gone so many years hoping and being disappointed that it was really beyond my compre-

hension that night. God was giving me a baby? Did I really get to have another?

My husband arrived home after midnight. I was lying in bed attempting to sleep when I heard him call from the bathroom. I got up to see what he needed. He’d found the test and needed an explanation! I told him I really did not know what to think about the test—as the line was very faint.

We both decided we would get up before 6 am to get to Wal-Mart when it

Another baby! How wonderful!

The reality of pregnancy hit quickly as I became sick with all-day morning sickness. I spent the next twelve weeks in bed. The nausea was so bad that being vertical made me “green.” On top of the nausea I could not bear to eat anything with color. As one of my girlfriends said, “I was eating white. Potatoes, rice and bread.” Even ice cream which had been a comfort food for years was difficult to eat, especially if it was not white.



Jon and Denise with their children: Jonny (22), Andrew (20), Michael (18), Stephen (15) and Daniel (11).

opened. At 6 am sharp we were buying the triple pack of pregnancy tests. Being the experienced “pregnancy test-taker,” I had dutifully collected the first morning urine, put a lid on it and took it in the car with us. I needed to know right away! I took all three tests in the back parking lot of the store and they were all positive!

My husband and I were both ecstatic.

I made it through and was on to the second trimester. My first trimester screening provided us with the first glimpse of our baby’s profile, complete with my sharp nose. What a precious sight to see this incredible little gift from God sucking its thumb.

We were excited about the prospects of our sixth child. My pregnancy was nor-

mal and uneventful. The doctor had already done two ultrasounds and everything seemed fine. On April 17, 2007, we went to the radiology office find out the sex of our baby, our 20-week ultrasound. The ultrasound tech informed us that she needed to take some standard measurements first and then we would be on to, "The Big Reveal!" As she moved the instrument over my abdomen, I noticed something missing. Concerned because my eight-year-old was in the room, I calmly turned to the Tech and said, "I haven't seen a heartbeat. She earnestly looked over and over and then ran a sound strip of our baby... there was no sound. She quickly excused herself.

A dead baby? How could that be? If I only have faith, he could be raised to life, I thought to myself. I held on to that hope but it was not to be a miracle of resurrection. I was about to enter one of the darkest times in my life, a grief so deep it sometimes took my breath away, but I would get to encounter the God of all creation, my Father in heaven and He would grieve with me.

Our son, Timothy Seth Fehlman was born nine days later on April 26, 2007. His body was lifeless but he was perfectly formed. His body was stained with meconium but the most amazing thing about him was that when I touched his skin, he

felt like a newborn baby.

In the days following his birth I sank in my Heavenly Father's arms. He held my head to His chest, just as a mother holds her child when his little heart is broken, and He wept with me. He held me and comforted me.

The words of comfort from most people, well-meaning as they were, I found to be painful. What did they mean that it was probably "for the best?" Who's best? My baby who would never draw a breath? My aching mother's arms that longed to hold him? My aching breasts that longed to nurse him? What did they mean by saying that "God needed him in heaven instead?"

The words rang so hollow. Sure, many of them were prefaced with, "I'm so sorry..." and then they added those awful lines. The most comfort came when a friend or family member said only, "I am so sorry. We were looking forward to this baby, too." It let me know they hurt too and did not feel the need to discount my loss with reckless words.

My sweet sons who had so longed to hold this little brother would never know him this side of heaven. And because I grieved so deeply, they refrained from showing me their hurt. They each grieved alone, crying for the brother they never got to know.

Life moved on and the reminders of our loss started to lessen but the sting was still there. I had so many hurts and so many questions. Was I not good enough of a mother? Did I not deserve another baby? What had I done to deserve this pain? Why would God let me even get pregnant if He was going to take the baby away? Would my son even know me when I got to heaven? Would he love me like I loved him? At times these questions tormented me, but God in his mercy provided answers through His Holy Spirit.

One day when I questioning yet again, God's still small voice broke through my pain and guilt and whispered to me, "If you had not been willing, then your son would never have existed." These words tore at my heart but also gave me peace. Suddenly, the "why" made sense. Our son needed to exist. Our willingness to follow the Lord's leading with our fertility had brought another soul into existence. I was in awe of the Lord.

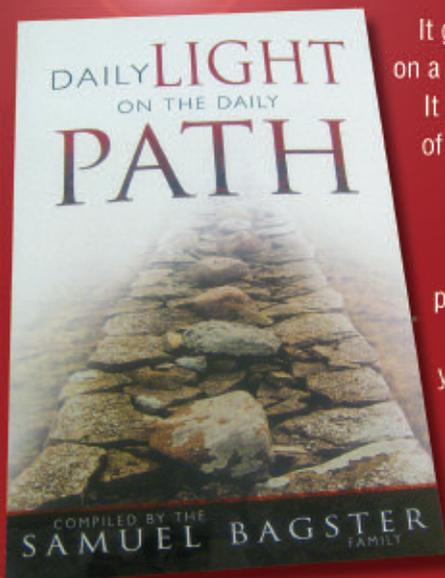
I still wondered if my son would know me in heaven. I so wanted to know him. Three months after his delivery, as I was driving down the road, a song came on the car radio—"To run with the angels on streets made of gold, To listen to stories of saints new and old..." It was near the end of the song that I heard so clearly, "I love you, Mom." I knew that voice! It was a mature male voice, one I had never heard on earth before but I knew who he was. He was my son, Timothy. I had gotten the gift of hearing the voice of my son. I would know him when I got to heaven.

I also heard The Holy Spirit's tender voice say to me, "I said there would be no husbands or wives in heaven but I never said there wouldn't be mothers." My son will know me as his mother. I will get the opportunity to love him when I am in a place where there will be no pain, no sorrow and no sin. All this will happen because my Heavenly Father loved me enough to give His Son to redeem me. I will see my son again in glory and in the presence of the only True Comforter. I will be in the presence of my Father that took me in His arms, put my head to His chest and wept with me.

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Chris and Misti's children are Aslan (14), Noah (13), Hosanna (10), Josiah (8), Jubilee (6), Praise (4) Gilead Courage (22 months) and 8th precious baby due March 2011. Photo taken at Niagara Falls.



High-Need Babies

The Life-saving Sling

We have had seven babies, six of whom I would consider “high needs.” Across the board, the one thing that calmed ALL of my babies was wearing them in a sling for the first four months, and after that, wearing them in the ERGO baby carrier.

Another thing that worked with most of them was noise. One loved the vacuum sound so much, we finally tape recorded it and played it for her whenever she got fussy. It always put her to sleep. Another baby liked the vibration and sound of sleeping in her car seat on the clothes dryer—a more expensive option, but when they are screaming, it is worth it!

MISTI KONSAVAGE

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We Persevered in Bonding

Our only child, Elizabeth Cristina, was born on December 28, 1999 during the first and worst snowstorm of the year, six years after losing our first baby. Labor was induced pre-term after a difficult pregnancy. We were elated. The years of riding the “trying-to-get-pregnant-find-out-you’re-not” roller coaster were at an end. We could now gaze into the face of our long awaited and much prayed for child. After the less than ideal pregnancy experience, I dreamed of the tranquil days and nights of

mommy and baby intimacy.

Tranquil? Oh my! Little Elizabeth didn’t nurse well, sleep well, relax well or bond well with her mama. By God’s grace, however, I was introduced to the writings of Dr. William Sears and his wife, Martha Sears, a registered nurse, in a book called *The Baby Book*. Dr. Sears, a pediatrician, had periodically encountered moms with “difficult” babies, but held the opinion they were, for the most part, creating their own problems. He had three children, and they’d never experienced babies who couldn’t be put down, needed to nurse constantly, were given to frequent distraught and forceful crying, were hypersensitive to just about everything, and who were resistant to most things new and different.

Along came baby Sears number four, a little one who manifested all of the above signs. The Sears eventually wrote a



Bill, Diana and Elizabeth

book called *The Fussy Baby* about their daughter, Hayden. Dr. Sears calls them

“high-need” babies and children. While I don’t agree with everything in the book, I was helped. I personally did not know, and still don’t know, one other person who could relate to what I was experiencing. This doctor and his wife told me I wasn’t crazy, I didn’t cause this, and there was hope for my ability to not only cope, but help my baby daughter to flourish. God provided just what I needed when I needed it and every day since.

Elizabeth’s behavior was paradoxical in that she would not tolerate not being held, yet she seemed also to not want to be close. I was at a loss as to how to comfort and bring peace to her, and quickly became devastated at the lack of bonding between us. Through the Sears’ writings and other resources, I learned to nurse on demand, to allow her to sleep with me, and spent considerable time holding and nursing her skin-to-skin, which was invaluable to our bonding. We did bond, praise the Lord! It was a long and arduous process, but a very blessed and privileged first year with my little girl.

Nursing was difficult due to a small palate abnormality in Elizabeth and my very sensitive fibromyalgic body. I received priceless advice and direction from a lactation consultant, who identified our particular difficulties and gave me the confidence I needed to persevere with nursing. I nursed Elizabeth until she stopped nursing on her own. I am very thankful to the Lord for His tender mercies in leading me to the lactation consultant and for my dear mother, who spent many weeks in our home serving my family that first year and driving me to all my appointments in those early weeks.

Sleep-sharing didn’t work quite like the books said either. Elizabeth could not and would not sleep lying down or by herself. I learned to get rid of clothing, blankets and diapers that irritated her sensitive skin, and that created an uncomfortable build-up of heat in her body. I tried numerous sleep strategies. Many of them worked