

Strengthening Families Across The World

ABOVE RUBIES

www.aboverubies.org

Issue: Eighty-Five



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Heather, Nancy, and Val at the Garden of Gethsemane, Jerusalem. Behind us are olive trees which they believe are over 2,000 years old, and they are still bearing olives today!

I have just returned from a trip to Israel with the *Jerusalem Prayer Team*. It is always such a privilege to be in the land from where God has chosen to one day rule and reign. I didn't expect this trip, but behind my back, God wondrously orchestrated and provided for me to go. I traveled with Val Stares, director of *Above Rubies* in Australia, and her sister, Heather Jones, Director of *Above Rubies* in New Zealand. Val has been faithfully working with me in the ministry of *Above Rubies* from its very inception in September 1977 and we went to Israel to celebrate 35 years of working together in this ministry.

Val, Heather, and I raised our young children together in the city of Palmerston North, New Zealand where I started *Above Rubies*. When we moved to the Gold Coast of Queensland, Australia in 1982, Val and her husband and children came with us to continue helping in the

ministry. When we moved to USA in 1991, Val stayed in Australia to lead the work there, and later Heather took over the leadership in New Zealand. *Above Rubies* now goes to well over 100 countries and we have eight bases around the world.

Our trip to Israel was unforgettable, as is every trip to Israel. Val, Heather, and I were very privileged to spend one evening and the next day in the biblical heartland of Israel, which is currently called the West Bank. We stayed in the temporary dwellings and tents with Tommy and Sherri Waller and their family, and the 120 workers (singles and families) they are bringing in from all over the world to help harvest the grapes and pick the olives on the hills of Samaria. We were up at 5.00 am in the morning on the misty hillside to help pick the luscious bunches of grapes. What a joyful privilege to fulfill Bible prophecy. Over two and a

half thousand years ago the prophet wrote, "Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers" (Isaiah 61:5).

It is amazing to see these fruitful vineyards growing out of the barren rocky soil. It is nothing less than miraculous. The farmers of the West Bank were told the soil was not suitable for growing vineyards, but they obeyed God's plan for the land rather than a soil test. Jeremiah 31:5 says, "Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria, the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things." Read Amos 9:13-15, too.

Did you know that God not only speaks to His literal people of Israel, but He also speaks to His land? Read Ezekiel, chapter 36. I'd love you to read the whole chapter. Here are some little excerpts, "Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God; Thus saith the Lord God to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are broken... O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: and I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded... they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the Lord. Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance."

When the children of Israel first possessed the land of Israel, it was a land of lush fruitfulness. However, when they

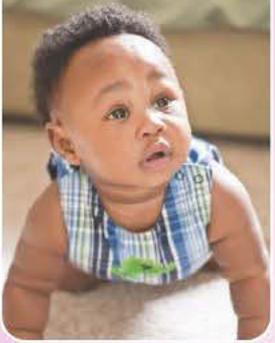
Val and Nancy picking the grapes. Look at the stones in which they are grown. It is a miracle of God!



Fruitful vineyards on the hills of Samaria. On the right hand side you can see the arid rocky ground in which they are grown.



* To read the divine promises of God bringing His people back to the land of Israel, go to:
<http://tinyurl.com/EverlastingPossession>



Anthony Joseph who is beginning to crawl.



Haven Rest



Georgia Sky

were scattered to the four corners of the earth, because of refusing to walk in God's commandments, the land became barren and unfruitful and turned into deserts and malarial swamps. But, now they are coming back to the land, God has spoken to the land to bring forth fruit again. When they plant and water in this barren land it comes to life.

The rocky hillsides of Samaria release minerals that enhance the grapevines. In fact, because the vines have such pressure to grow and establish in the rocky soil, the pressure causes the grapes to become even sweeter. What a great analogy for our lives!

If you would like to do a mission trip to serve the Lord as a family, you may like to pray about helping in the vineyards of Samaria and enjoying the privilege of fulfilling Bible prophecy. It is also a wonderful opportunity for young people. If you are interested, go to www.hayovel.com.

This area of Israel is the very place where the children of Israel first estab-

lished themselves in the land. They put down the tabernacle at Shiloh and made it permanent. What a privilege to stand on the site where the tabernacle was situated. But, although God gave the land to His people, they had to go in and possess it. It is the same today. God has never revoked His divine promise of giving this land to His people for an everlasting possession.* However, as in the beginning, they still have to possess it again today. Pray for the farmers on the West Bank as they struggle to possess the land in the midst of many enemies (Joshua 18:3).

Isn't it wonderful that our God is a God of increase and fruitfulness? He is never stagnant. Our families are meant to be like this, too. God wants them to increase. He loves to see the growth in our children. I was only in Israel for ten days, but I was amazed to see growth in that short time! Some of our teen grandsons grow overnight. Zadok (Evangeline's oldest son) went through an amazing growth spurt. Each day we looked at him, we could see he had become taller! He is now 19 years and 6' 5". Arden, 14 years, is doing the same. Before I left for Israel, he was nearing my height. When I came back I was looking up to him! Literally! We checked back to back, and yes, he was taller—and taller than his mother, too, and we are both just on 6'.

God has also blessed us with three new precious grandbabies this year. Psalmody's baby, Anthony Joseph was born 19 February. Serene's baby, Haven Rest was born 3 June, and Monique's baby, Georgia Sky was born 20 August. There is nothing like new life coming into the family. I remember when Serene brought Haven Rest home from Mississippi (you'll read her story on pages 18 and 19). What a beautiful sight as Serene's children gathered around their new baby sister. And not only all her children, but all the cousins gathered around too. They all wanted a turn to hold the baby, some put out because they hadn't had a turn yet. Their



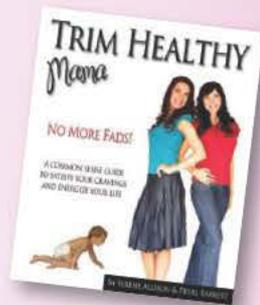
Monique, our daughter-in-law, the day before she gave birth.

eyes were filled with wonder and delight. The room was suffocating with children and the excitement of a new baby.

Oh the joy of new life. No greater wonder and blessing can come into the home than a new precious life that comes fresh from the hand of God, "the descent from heaven of a new soul," a child destined by God for specific purposes on this earth and who will live forever. There is nothing children would rather have than another baby sister or brother, and no matter how many children in the family, the awe and excitement never fades.

The long wait is over! Thank you for waiting patiently, or maybe impatiently, for your copy of *Trim Healthy Mama*. We never dreamed that the final editing and design would take so long, but it ended up bigger than we expected! Now it is here—all 640 pages of the most cutting edge information you will ever need to keep trim and healthy. Mothers will learn the optimum diet and ways to exercise in their seasons of pregnancy and nursing. They will discover that child-bearing is not the undoing of a trim healthy figure, and with over 200 easy recipes included, the knowledge is easy to put into practice.

This book is not only relevant to mothers, but to all women. Women going through menopause, and those who are



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ABOVE RUBIES

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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."

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FRONT COVER: Pearl and Serene making their FAT STRIPPING FRAPPA (find recipe in their book). Even though it's sweet, frothy, and creamy (you can drink a full quart at one sitting if you can handle that much), it will strip off the pounds! Photography by Rashida Johnson and Meadow Barrett



Brody and Jerene's children are Josh (21, and living on his own), Zephaniah (11), Ryllie (9), Coco (7), Gracie (2), Madison (1), and Aspen (4 months)

On July 4, 2008, Brody and I announced to our children that we were getting divorced, a decision we made after years of fighting and disrespect. The children began to cry hysterically. Our oldest daughter, Ryllie, who was turning five years old that week, cried so hard she started hyperventilating. I was broken-hearted. All I could do was sob uncontrollably. Seeing the children's reaction, Brody decided to take the children to the 4th of July parade in the neighboring town and pack up and leave that night after they'd gone to sleep.

At the parade, we watched the clowns, fire trucks, and many other festive things go by. Brody sat on one side of the children and I on the other. We observed that everyone around us were happy and carefree, but we didn't talk much. The end of the parade finally

came and I wondered how it would feel when he actually left. How would I ever learn to carry on without him? I grabbed the three children's coats and one by one began getting them ready to leave. When I went to get the second child ready, Brody asked, "Where's Ryllie?"

I said, "She's right here and I pointed behind me without looking. He replied, "No she's not!" I swung around to look for her and she was gone! Just like that! Our first-born daughter was gone!

Ryllie had been wearing a red shirt with a flag on it. I scanned the crowd of people bustling by but couldn't see her. Brody took off running and yelling her name. I turned and asked the couple sitting next to us if they could watch the other children. Not even waiting for their answer or knowing who they were, I ran to the platform where the parade announcer was still standing with a

microphone and told him we had lost our daughter!

"She's wearing a red shirt and has glasses," I screamed. I took off running and I could hear him announcing it over the loud speaker. I didn't get too far away from the other children. Keeping them in the back of my mind, I stood in the nearest intersection and desperately cried out loud, "JESUS! Please bring her back to me! Bring her back to me, PLEASE."

A police officer came up to ask routine questions. As I answered, I realized fully that she was gone. She was really gone. Every minute that went by, I grew more hysterical.

Strangers asked what she was wearing. They wanted to help look for her. I told everyone she had on a red shirt and wore glasses. I continued to cry out to Jesus to bring her back.

We found out later that after the parade had ended that Ryllie had put on

We Called off the Divorce!

her pink pull-over jacket. When she looked around she could no longer see us. She only noticed the crowd flooding by and thought we were somewhere in the mass of people. She took off running and crying, "Momma! Daddy!" She'd run as fast as she could from street to street and screaming for us when two teenage girls saw her and asked her if she was lost.

Fortunately, earlier that week in preschool, she learned and memorized her daddy's cell phone number. She told the girls, like a P.O.W. might recite their name and serial number, "My name is Ryllie Broker. My dad is Brody Broker. His number is ***.****." Then she would start all over again repeating those three lines. One of the teenage girls put Ryllie in their car and the other one stood on the sidewalk waiting for someone to come and claim the little girl they'd just found.

She finally saw Brody frantically running and calling out Ryllie's name. She went up to him and said "Are you Brody Broker?" "Yes!" he replied.

"We have your daughter in our car," she said. After being reunited with Ryllie they told him what Ryllie kept saying over and over. He took Ryllie in his arms and came back to find me. As I stood in the intersection crying and praying with all my might, I looked down the road and saw Brody rounding the corner with Ryllie in his arms. My knees buckled and I was overwhelmed with a feeling I can't fully describe. When he handed me my precious daughter I fell to the ground and held her sobbing. I thanked the Lord Jesus and I kept stopping our embrace only to look at her face again.

We walked back to the other children who were crying and scared. We all hugged and cried together. We finally made our way back to our car and I noticed Ryllie wasn't saying anything. She actually didn't talk for the next few hours. She just sat in her car seat and stared at us.

Brody and I kept looking at each

other. I suppose we were analyzing each other's emotions. We drove around not knowing where we were going or what we were doing. When we finally started talking to each other, we immediately decided to call off the divorce. We talked over the events of that day as we aimlessly drove and realized that compared to losing and finding our daughter our selfish bickering, fighting, and needing to be right was nothing. It was worthless. It was downright stupid. We wound up driving and talking for hours. We stayed in that town and watched the fireworks and held each other closely. Ryllie eventually started talking again, and the children had such a joy and lightness in their hearts.

From that day on, Brody and I decided to quit trying to fix each other. We went to the Lord separately and grew in our personal relationship with Jesus. In doing so, we grew closer than we'd ever been to each other. Four months later, Brody and I officially renewed our marriage vows in a beautiful ceremony in front of our friends and family. We traded my original wedding rings and purchased an amazing new set with a vibrant green sapphire as the center stone. The green represents new beginnings.

Thankfully, we decided to have more children as well. Brody went in that same month and got a vasectomy reversal. Two months later I was pregnant with our daughter, Gracie, and so far, we have been blessed with three reversal babies. Glory to God! Life wouldn't be the same without our three reversal babies. Our last two babies were born at home after four previous c-sections (including one vertical cut). The Lord has been so amazing. We both give God the glory. He is our Strength and it is only because of His goodness that we are able to tell this story.

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THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION OF YOUR LIFE

"Choose you this day whom you will serve; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."
(Joshua 24:15).

Have you made this most important choice in your life? So many marriages and homes are falling apart. It is only the lives and homes that are built on the foundation of Jesus Christ and His commandments that will stand. How can you get your life on a right foundation and receive God's salvation?

1. **ACKNOWLEDGE** that you are a sinner. It is your sin that separates you from fellowship with God. (Luke 18:13; Romans 3:21)
2. **REPENT** of your sin and turn away from it. (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38,39; 3:19)
3. **CONFESS** your sin to God and He will cleanse you and forgive you. His forgiveness is complete. When He forgives, He forgets! (Psalm 32:2; 1 John 1:7,9; Romans 10:9,10)
4. **FORSAKE** your own way and determine to follow God's ways. (Isaiah 48:18; 55:7; Mark 8:24-38)
5. **BELIEVE** that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the Son of God. He is the One who has borne the punishment of your sin. (John 3:16; Mark 16:16)
6. **RECEIVE** His great salvation that He has purchased on your behalf. (John 1:12)
7. **BE BAPTIZED.** (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:38)
8. **THANK** Him for His great salvation and His blood that He shed for you. Receive Him gladly and ask Him to take control of your life.
9. **DETERMINE** that you and your household will all serve the Lord.

I thought our world had come crashing down in August of 2009 when I was told I no longer had my full-time job. I had been working as a teacher and children's minister for over 15 years. I knew no other way.

My husband, Jim and I, had decided after the birth of our first child that he would work part time as a worship leader and devote the rest of his time to caring for our children. I have a college degree, he does not, and we knew that putting our children in childcare was not something we wanted to do. He had been doing this for over eight years. Now, we would have no medical insurance, no retirement fund, and no realistic way to pay our bills.

I started looking for new employment, all the while praying for God to lead me down the right path. I reached the final stages in several interview processes. Every time it was between one other person and



Our Common Sense Returned

me, and every time the other person received the job. After the last rejection I confided in a friend and asked for her prayers. She reminded me, "Isn't the desire of your heart to stay home with your children? Isn't this what you always wanted? God is now giving you this opportunity."

My first reaction was to reject my friend's comment. She had to be wrong. There was no way that our family of six could live on Jim's part-time salary. We would lose our home and probably everything. However, the more we prayed about the situation, the more we felt a peace about me not returning to the work force. It would be the greatest challenge we had faced as a family, but it was clearly what God had called me to do.

The first challenge was telling people I was going to stay home. My extended family was so disappointed, I was the first to graduate from college in my family, and

now I was choosing to "just stay home." Many friends thought we were crazy. We were told, "It's one thing to have faith; it's another thing to abandon all common sense."

Almost immediately, after making our decision to stay at home, my husband's hours increased. He was still not full-time, but over the next few months his hours increased numerous times to where he was working over 38 hours a week. He was also blessed with many sub-contracted positions. God used his gifts, people passed his name on to friends, and the opportunities kept appearing. He was adjusting well to his new role, and it was great to see more joy in his everyday activities. We grew closer as a family and reevaluated our friends, activities, and priorities.

I was challenged by staying at home. I have learned that making a home is my job. I work hard to provide healthy meals, beneficial activities, and educational experiences for our children. It has taken me several years to develop a system that works for us, but I can honestly say I enjoy my days "at home" more than I ever thought. It is truly a joy to spend these days with our children. They are growing so fast and I am grateful to have this season with them.

This spring, almost three years after losing my job, God blessed Jim with a full-

time ministry position, something he didn't think possible without a college degree.

The new position required us to move, but now we are able to be closer to family and old friends. Our new home, although a rental, has more bedrooms and a classroom (something we have never had before). And, in April, our family was blessed with our second son, Ethan.

It's not always easy, but we have never gone without a meal, we have always had something clean and appropriate to wear, and although it looked like we would lose our home God provided, and we did not.

We may never have the summer cottage, the leisure boat, or the fanciest of new cars, but we don't even notice. God has taught us that life is about the choices we make and the ability to find joy in all circumstances. I have learned that God provides exactly what we need. He doesn't shower us with unnecessary blessings, but provides for us right here and right now. Each day is another amazing opportunity for us to see how God, in His mercy, is going to bless our little family.

TRISH KAPELKE

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Jim and Trish with their children, Hope Elizabeth (11), Kylie Grace (9), Halie Joy (6), Josiah David (3) and Ethan James Gilman (4 months).

"The World is Waiting for You!"

These are the words a mother spoke to her children each night as she tucked them in bed. Her seven children grew up to be philanthropists, preachers, composers, writers, reformers and missionaries.

In 2006, I was introduced to *Above Rubies* by a wonderful mystery person who requested I receive a copy. I read an article by Pearl Barrett, "Cool Water to the Thirsty" (February 2006, #67) where she mentioned other people's reactions to her five children. I specifically recall Pearl's comment that five was not that many. At the time, I had three children, and thought my hands were definitely full—full to bursting! "How would I manage any more than that?" I wondered.

In November 2007, we welcomed our fourth daughter, just before my husband's semester finals for his graduate degree. We made room in our home, our hearts, and our lives, and I saw what a blessing this child was, especially to our oldest daughter who connected with her wee baby sister in a healing way. I enjoyed my first fear-free birth! Nursing was easier than ever before. I felt satisfied with the size of our family.

Two years later, my husband was working full-time in his new career field while still writing his thesis paper, which is like working two full-time jobs with half the pay. He assured me that once he finished, we would sit down and talk about the size of our family. About a month later, I watched the second blue line appear on a pregnancy test! At the local market, I selected a prenatal vitamin to get me started and chose a checkout assistant with gentle eyes and a wide smile. When she rang up my vitamins, she smiled warmly and asked, "Is this your first?"

"No, my fifth," I answered quietly. She surprised and touched my heart when she shared that she was also the mother of five, and commented on the blessing of children. I thanked God for providing an understanding person in my nauseated state. As I headed out the door, I dreamily recalled my words, "... my fifth." I startled slightly. Did I just say I am having my fifth child? What struck me was how casually I said it, as if I was answering a question about the weather.

Throughout the rest of the rather uneventful pregnancy, including the

I Never Knew it Could be Like this!



Rob and Cheri with Autumn (13), Caitlyn (8), Elise (6), Gabi (4), Ryan (2), and Keith Lakota, born July 15, 2012.

sweet mid-term ultrasound that confirmed we'd been blessed with our first son, I was in awe that we would be the parents of five children.

Our son made his debut appearance April 21, 2010 and we began the process of finding a "new normal" as family dynamics changed. Not long after our son's six week milestone, I became aware of a surprising phenomenon. Whenever my mommy radar went off to check the location of each child, I would think, "Is that everyone?" I might see an older child reading a story to a younger child,

another playing on the floor, one working on school work at the table, and the baby nursing in my arms. All five were easily accounted for. But, each time was the same, "Is this all the children we have? I thought it would feel like more."

What a surprising change of perspective! True, some days managing the needs of our particular children is a challenge, but just as true, five children is really not that many. Pearl was right! As a former public school teacher, I managed 25 children for about seven hours a day. Five is only a handful! The older ones lend a hand, making the load lighter, and in many ways, easier than when I had only one or two children. There's plenty to do, but in the great scheme of things, my five children don't even take up much space! I'm often surprised that while we have a spacious house, the children often choose to be in the same room—and they don't even fill it!

I especially enjoy this fact on our family movie nights when all seven of us fit snugly on one couch to experience the show together. It is a treat to cuddle up, warm and restful, for a while. We also experience this coziness at church when we take up one row. I have time to reach over and rub one daughter's back as my son rests his sleepy head on my chest, and sing a hymn to the daughter on the other side who is still learning the words. Another child cuddles with daddy and our oldest daughter helps a younger one hold a hymnal. Then,

she carries the baby downstairs to the nursery and the others go to Sunday school, while I link arms with my husband and tune my heart for worship. What seemed like what would be a chaotic day is blessed with fantastic moments full of peace!

Tremendously busy days melt into a quiet time of refreshment as each member of the household drops off to sleep, including the baby at my breast. I am renewed as chubby cheeks stop sucking and a little fist rests gently against my side. I soak up his complete trust that I

will supply all he needs, while I talk to God, the real supplier of our needs, asking Him for sweet sleep and strength for tomorrow. I read the Bible or my latest edition of *Above Rubies* for a few minutes while I enjoy the sweet baby smell, and glance at my handsome husband asleep at my side, thankful for his commitment to this household. I pray for my husband to accept the courage to do all God asks of him. I lay baby down, walk through the now-silent house to kiss each sleeping child, get a snack and a drink, and talk to Jesus. I never knew it could be like this!

It's one of the best kept secrets that having the family God wants us to have is worth every minute of work, sleeplessness, sacrifice, and personal weakness, as God gets glory day by day just by our living together! On difficult days, I check with God, asking for His perspective. I "see" God in my mind, and He is smiling, even laughing in response! His response reminds me that so much of my day is temporary. He rejoices in my little crew of mismatched socks and muddy hands at various stages of training and

growth. He DELIGHTS in us! I never noticed this before.

Personally, I don't recommend doing much of anything without consulting God. I see that even my seemingly brilliant ideas for serving God have absolutely no power or usefulness if God is not leading me. On the other hand, I see God always coming through, always offering strength, help, and resources when I follow His plan.

God's plan for my life doesn't seem to bring me any glory. I end up with unglamorous jobs like cleaning poop off the crib railings, making food and cleaning it up, day after day after day, and repeating certain instructions till I wonder if I'm going crazy. People I don't even know feel compelled to offer advice on how to fix this "problem" of having "too many children." My husband's fellow workers hint that we are part of the "problem of overpopulation." Many well-meaning church fellows crack jokes at our expense or make pitying statements on a seemingly regular basis.

I go to God for a true perspective every single day and God DOES change

my perspective. I see more clearly that when I bring glory to God by obeying and loving Him, as I'm designed to do, I live with a peace that's worth risking everything. It's ONLY five children; five children that will grow up before we know it, and I only get a little time to be their mommy.

P. S. Baby #6, Keith Lakota, joined the Lawler Team July 15, 2012. This baby boy is a special treat for me, 40-year-old that I am. I discovered his conception at an ultrasound of a 10 X 7 cm fibroid that I believed might end my fertility. The night before the ultrasound, I finally let go of the situation, praying that God would work it out according to what He knew would be best for our marriage, my health, and our family. God answered by revealing a tiny heartbeat, and kept Keith safe throughout the pregnancy, culminating in a beautiful water birth in our bathtub! Life with God is an adventure!

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Our Home continued from page 3

postmenopausal, will be helped amazingly. This is the time of life when the weight begins to pile on, even though you still eat healthily. Serene and Pearl give you the secrets of how to eliminate that unwanted postmenopausal "belly fat."

Another spot we visited in Israel that I hadn't been to previously was the Valley of Elah where young David, as a teenage boy, picked up stones in order to fight against the giant, Goliath (1 Samuel 17). David would not take it sitting down that a man, though a giant, would defy the God of Israel.

The children of Israel cringed in fear each time they faced Goliath. But, David was of a different caliber. He did not have a spirit of tolerance. He could not stand silent and do nothing. He fought against Goliath, and won, not in his own strength, but in the name of his God.

I am challenged again. The church of God faces giants in the land today that



Pearl and Serene enjoying their BIG BOY SMOOTHIE. Drink as much as you want and still lose weight.

defy the living God and the truths of God's eternal Word. Will we stand up and fight for truth? Or will we cringe with fear? Will we compromise and be tolerant with that which defies the holy name of God?

I believe it is time to stand up. We can no longer be silent. We either possess the land for God or we will be dispossessed. Do not be afraid to speak truth to friends at church and to strangers you

meet in the supermarket. Radiate the joy of embracing children. Never give into deception. Stand up for God's plan for marriage for one woman and one man. Do everything in your power to strengthen your own marriage. Saturate your children with truth. Remember, this is your greatest task as a parent. You are raising your "arrows" to "SPEAK with the enemies in the gates" (Psalm 127:5). Did you notice the word? It is "SPEAK." We fill our children with truth so they are emboldened to contend for their faith.

We fortify them with courage so they will not be afraid to "speak in the gates."

Let's be families who will stand up and challenge all that defies the living God! Let us raise sons like David.

NANCY CAMPBELL
Editress and Founder of *Above Rubies*
(35 years ago September, 2012).
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Debunking the Over Population Myth



God gives mankind His first five commandments in Genesis 1:28.

Be fruitful—create, build, grow things.

Multiply—increase in number, have babies and lots of them. It's okay, there is plenty of room, I'll show you.

Fill the earth—inhabit the whole planet (Isaiah 45:18).

Subdue—overcome and bring under control.

Take dominion over—rule, govern, husband.

Many in the world today contradict God and claim the world is on the brink of unsustainable failure due to our growing population. This faulty thinking of doom and gloom by irrational minds is absolutely incorrect. However, most skeptics want to know about the impact of a growing population on food, water, air, waste, forests, oceans, animals etc. Let's take a look at food. Is there enough? The earth is more than able to support not only seven billion souls, but up to two to four times as much with a little work and little impact to other life.

Most of the raw data that I use to prove my points are from official government sources such as the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) and USDA (United States Department of Agriculture).

Calculating Calories

Using the FAO worldwide food production reports from 2010 and standard nutritional data, I have calculated the total calories produced by each food category, divided by seven billion people per year (Calories, Per Person, Per Year - C,PP,PY):

Grains (Corn, Wheat, Rice, etc.) – 848,810

Roots and Tubers (Potatoes, Yams, Carrots, etc.) – 113,856

Oils, Pulses & Nuts (Olives, Soybeans, Peanuts, etc.) – 302,586

Fruits and Vegetables (Oranges, Tomatoes, Lettuce, etc.) – 78,091

Meat and Eggs (Chicken, Beef, Pork,

etc.) – 113,856

Fish and Seafood (Salmon, Clams, Lobster, etc.) – 21,496

Dairy (Milk, Cheese, Butter, etc.) – 61,581

Raw Sugar (Sugar cane, Sugar Beets, etc.) – 121,483

Total of all calories produced by God's creation – 1,661,460 calories, per person, per year or about 4,552 calories, per person, per day! Multiply by seven billion people and you have an approximate grand total of 11.63 quadrillion calories that were produced in the year 2010.

Considering an average healthy caloric intake of 2000 calories per person per day (2000 calories x 365 days = 730,000) 730,000 calories are consumed per person, per year.

Generally men consume more than women. In 1971 American men consumed 2,450 cals per day, women consumed 1542, a combined average of 1996 cals per day. The earth produced 1,661,460 C,PP,PY minus an average consumption of 730,000 C,PP,PY = 855,519 extra calories, per person, per year. This is more than enough to sustain an additional population of seven billion for a total of 14 billion people!

Land Use

According to the FAO, there are 12.07 billion acres of agricultural land, all land capable of producing food. This includes arable land of 3.41 billion acres capable of producing temporary crops such as grains and vegetables. Permanent crop land of 375.8 million acres producing nuts and fruits in trees or vines. Pasture/Meadow land of 8.28 billion acres providing for livestock foraging. Of the land above, only 769.8 million acres is irrigated. Most often irrigated lands can produce twice as much as non-irrigated. Total acreage of agricultural land per person equals 1.725 acres.

All things being equal, 1.725 acres of land produces 1,639,964 calories per year (calories per person, per year, minus calories from fish and seafood). This is well

over twice as much land as needed per person with very little that is actually irrigated!

Where do all the Calories go?

A good chunk of the extra calories produced each year are consumed by the people of the planet. The average American diet in 1971 was about 2000 calories a day. According to a survey in 2004, that average consumption has expanded to 2247, over a 10% increase and has likely increased even more eight years later. It's not just Americans that are eating more, but most of the world as well. From 1961 to 2003, the available (for consumption) calories per capita has risen from 2254 to 2809, over 24% increase in about four decades.

In that same four decade span, the global population blossomed from three billion in 1961 to 6.3 billion in 2003, over double the population. At the same time, life expectancy rose from an average of 52.2 years in 1961 to 66 years in 2003, over 25% increase across the globe. Not only did the population more than double, but we lived longer and consumed even more calories over a life time. The earth, along with our fruitful domination, creativity, hard work, ingenuity, and God's blessed provision has been able to produce more than enough. Because we have been created in God's likeness, we have the ability to do amazing and wonderful things.

Overabundance

We've actually created an overabundance of food. So much so that hundreds of thousands of calories per person, per year (C,PP,PY) are lost or wasted every year. Roughly 564,532 (34%) calories, per person, per year are lost or wasted through the activities of harvest, postharvest, processing, distribution, and consumption.

The developed world (Europe, North America and Industrial Asia) is very good at preventing losses from harvest to distri-

bution, but is rather wasteful from retail to the dinner plate. The opposite is true for the under-developed world (Africa, Asia and Latin America). Often their largest losses occur from harvest to distribution, but they are very efficient at the consumption level. What is the reason?

The developed world has the equipment, infrastructure, and experience to efficiently move product from harvest to retail with relatively little loss. So much so that now it costs a relatively small portion of personal spending. Thus, what is not valuable to us is often taken for granted, the west has become picky with little regard to throwing away food that is no longer "appetizing."

For example, for the past 80 years, the citizens of USA have enjoyed a steadily shrinking food budget. From 1929 to 2010, food expenditures as a percentage of disposable income fell from 23.4% to 9.4%. At the same time, the food demand from a burgeoning population has grown. Food production over the past 80 years has not only kept pace with demand, but surpassed it by a great amount. Though I appreciate Benjamin Franklin's quote "waste not, want not," I can't help but think that in today's over abundance, the better term is actually "want not, waste much."

The under-developed world unfortunately does not have the equipment, infrastructure, and experience needed to efficiently move product from harvest to retail. Threshing grain by hand for example incurs greater losses than if done by machine. However, once the product reaches the store and the dinner plate, the under-developed world becomes very efficient in consumption. Food costs as a percentage of personal income is greater in the developed world, thus they value food more and waste little.

If it were possible for the developed world to consume more efficiently (the same as Sub-Saharan Africa), and the under-developed world were to use modern equipment, infrastructure, and experience (the same as North America and Europe), by my estimation food loss and waste could be reduced from 34% to 19.8%—a savings of about 235,213 C,PP,PY. Keep in mind that if the under-developed world were to use modern farming practices, not only would they preserve more food, but they would produce more as well.

People or Cars?

There is also a contingent of food produced and wasted that does not end up in a land fill, but actually makes it into your fuel tank. Vegetable cooking oil is now being recovered on a large scale in the West, chiefly used for biofuels, specifically bio-diesel. Some corn, sugar beets, and sugar cane (not included in the food data above), is being grown for bio-fuels such as ethanol. Some agricultural lands that are used to grow fuel could produce food for human consumption instead. More calories would become available to feed more people instead of fueling cars and trucks.

Farming in Israel

From its founding, Israel's farming has been a monumental effort of self-preservation. They have literally had to cultivate hard, rocky soil in an arid climate to produce food for themselves. Over the past 60 years they have become extremely successful.

Wikipedia states: "Modern agriculture developed in the late nineteenth century, when Jews began settling in the land. They purchased land which was mostly semi-arid, although much had been rendered unillable by deforestation, soil erosion, and neglect. They set about clearing rocky fields, constructing terraces, draining swampland, reforestation, counteracting soil erosion, and washing salty land. Since independence in 1948, the total area under cultivation has increased from 408,000 acres (1,650 km²) to 1,070,000 acres (4,300 km²), while the number of agricultural communities has increased from 400 to 725. Agricultural production has expanded 16 times, three times more than population growth.

"Water shortage is a major problem. Rain falls between September and April, with an uneven distribution across the country, from 28 inches (70 cm) in the north to less than 2 inches (5 cm) in the south. Annual renewable water resources are about 5.6 billion cubic feet (160,000,000 m³), 75% of which is used for agriculture. Most of Israel's freshwater sources have been consequently joined to the National Water Carrier, network of pumping stations, reservoirs, canals and pipelines which transfers water from the north to the south.

"The area of irrigated farmland has

increased from 74,000 acres (30,000 ha) in 1948 to some 460,000 acres (190,000 ha) today. Israeli agricultural production rose 26% between 1999 and 2009, while the number of farmers dropped from 23,500 to 17,000. Farmers have also grown more with less water, using 12% less water to grow 26% more produce."

The population of Israel has increased from 1.25 million in 1950 to now 7.48 million in 2012, a 500% increase. The otherwise "useless" land has been subdued and dominated to the point of not only producing enough food for its rapidly growing population, but also an abundance for export to the tune of 22% of production. Since 1948 they expanded the total area of cultivation from 408,000 acres to 1,070,000 acres (about 150% increase), while increasing production 16 fold. This is from what was once considered desolate wasteland (read Mark Twain) combined with some sweat equity and God's blessing.

New Technology

What about the deserts of the world? Consider the Seawater Greenhouse:

"A single Sahara Forest Project facility with 50 MW of concentrated solar power and 50 hectares of seawater greenhouses would produce 34,000 tons of produce, employ over 800 people, export 155 GWh of electricity and sequester more than 1,500 tons of CO₂ each year."

Let's project this amazing potential. The major hot arid deserts cover 15,577,000 sq.km. If but a meager one percent of that desert space was used to build these types of seawater greenhouses with the above specifications listed in the article: 311,540 facilities could be built (50 hectares a piece), 10.592360 billion tons of food could be produced per year (about three times as much as the current grain, tuber, root, fruit and vegetable harvest, equaling 3.580572593 billion tons per year). At a paltry \$.25 per pound, the value of that produce could bring \$5.29618 trillion dollars in sales, 48.2887 trillion kilowatt hours could be generated (at a better than fair price of \$.10 a kilowatt hour, \$4.82887 trillion dollars of revenue could be generated). And 249.232 million jobs could be created. These SWGs are not fantasy-land day dreams. Many are already in existence and more are slated to come on line.

No Longer Doom and Gloom

At this point, your doom and gloom about the planet's prospects should be lifting slightly, maybe causing a half smile to form across your lips. There is more than enough room, food, water, trees and space for all our garbage. You've heard it said that "necessity is the mother of invention." God, man, and the earth have not only met every demand from a burgeoning population, but exceeded them abundantly! It's true that the human family has exploded in growth over the past several decades, but as I have demonstrated, our ability to produce food has grown even more so, creating huge surpluses and bringing down the costs for food for all people.

Consider these calculations. If you were to take every single man, woman and child on the face of the planet (nearly seven billion precious souls to date) and make them lay down on the ground side by side and head to toe, laying out an immense "human carpet," that "carpet" of human beings would not even cover the state of Connecticut.

Here's the math. This allows 18 square feet per individual (3' x 6'). Granted, children would take up much less room, but they are a bit squirmy and don't sit still very well.

18 square feet times seven billion people equals 126 billion square feet.

27,878,400 square feet are inside one square mile.

126 billion square feet divided by 27,878,400 equals 4,519.63 square miles.

Take a Nap in Connecticut

Connecticut is the 48th largest state at 5,544 square miles, only beating out Rhode Island and Delaware in size. That's right, the entire population of planet earth can lay down and take a nap inside the state of Connecticut with some room to spare, leaving the remainder of the globe completely uninhabited.

"But all those people couldn't possibly live like that!" you exclaim. "Come on dude, get real! Okay, what if all of those seven billion inhabitants were to live in one big fully functional "mega city," the same size population density of New York City? They would fit inside the foot print of the state of Texas, again leaving the remainder of the globe completely devoid of human life.

Here's the math. The population of

New York City is 8,175,133 and covers 303 square miles. 8,175,133 divided by 303 equals a population density of 26,980 persons per square mile.

Texans can Host the World

Seven billion people living at a population density of 26,980 per square mile would require a mega city which encompasses 259,451 square miles. The state of Texas sits on 268,580 square miles—more than enough room. However, I doubt them Texans would appreciate all them city slickers moving in on their turf!

The entire land mass on planet earth (excluding Antarctica and who would want to live there anyway?) is 52,208,738 square miles. Our fictitious "mega city," housing every single individual on planet earth, some 259,451 square miles, would only take up .5% of the entire land mass. That's right, only half of one percent, leaving 99.5% of terra firma completely uninhabited.

Thankfully for most of us, we don't have to live in such relative "claustrophobic" conditions.

Unfortunately, a godless population control movement in the world today is seeking to scare the masses with the "overpopulation" myth of "unsustainability." It is a scare tactic to control the lives of individuals and justify all kinds of dehumanizing acts, primarily abortion and euthanasia. They call God a liar, attempting to convince us that His glorious creation, planet earth, is not capable of handling His first commission to His human family to Be Fruitful, Multiply, Fill the earth, Subdue, and take Dominion.

SEAN LANAHAN © 2012

Mount Vernon, Washington State, USA

To contact Sean for further information email Lanahan95@hotmail.com



Sean and Cheryl with Violet (15) and Josiah (14).

Electronics Fast

Once every six months our family regroup and we implement our electronics fast. We shut off VCR/DVDs, computers, and computer/video games although we continue to use computers for schoolwork and business work. We do not have TV or we would shut that off too.

I notice that the first week we do this everyone bickers and cannot seem to get along. By the second week, however, the board games and chess come out and the books come off the shelves. My children begin to play together, read, and enjoy each other's company. We laugh and talk and are not distracted.

The children come out of their rooms and out from in front of the screens and we come together as a family. I love these times. I often wonder, why do we ever go back?

JUDI RYAN

Acra, New York, USA

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Michael and Judi's children are Ariel (22), Leviticus (21), Jasmine (19), Josiah (16), Abijah (14), Elisha (11), Micah (6), Jade (3), Sophia (1) and Jordan and Judah waiting in heaven.

Inspiration for Women

To receive Nancy Campbell's inspiring devotions to women, send a blank email to subscribers-on@aboverubies.org

You will receive a confirmation letter and then you must **CONFIRM.**

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

Did you know that God wants to dwell in your home? God is a dwelling God. He not only dwells in Heaven, but loves to dwell with His people on earth. He delighted to dwell with the children of Israel in all their journeys, He wants to dwell with us now, and His ultimate purpose is to dwell with us forever. When John saw the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem, he *“heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God”* (Revelation 21:3).

Although we can experience the presence of God continually in our hearts and in our homes, God loves to align Himself with something very specific. Did you know that God loves altars? He loves to come to altars. In Exodus 20:24-26 God explains explicitly how He wanted His people to build their altars. And then He says, *“I WILL COME TO YOU.”* How would you like God to say to you and your family, *“I WILL COME TO YOU?”* And what does He do when He comes? He says, *“I WILL BLESS YOU.”*

Who would not want God to come to their home? Who would not want God to bless their family?

As I read through God's Word, I find many principles relating to altars. All these principles relate to us and to building an altar in our home. 1 Corinthians 10:11 says, *“All these happened unto them for an examples (a type): and they are written for our admonition”*

“that they should not desire the things which they see: for all these things shall come upon them, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” These ancient truths are as up-to-date as tomorrow and show us how to live our lives today. They are like seeds in a pod that can open up and flower, even in this 21st century.

The patriarchs built altars to make a place where they could draw near to God, to call upon Him, and to hear Him speak to them. We no longer have to build a physical altar, but we establish a spiritual altar in our home—a time each day where we come before the Lord as a family. Christians in years past called it *The Family Altar*. Not many Christians have even heard of this phrase today; that's how far we have got away from our biblical roots.

Let's see what we can learn about altars and how we can apply them to our family life today.

Altars are Always in God's Presence

Over and over again in the Bible it talks about the *“altar before the Lord.”* In other words, God reveals His presence at altars. 2 Chronicles 1:6 HCSB says, *“Solomon offered sacrifices there in the Lord's presence on the bronze altar.”* Creating a family altar in your home will always bring the Lord's presence.

Altars are to be Simple and Down-to-Earth

God demanded that any altars made to Him were to be made out of earth or whole uncut stones (Exodus 20:24-26).

They were not to use any tool to cut the stone to make it fit perfectly

and look professional.

They were to pile up the

stones as they found them in the rough. This reminds me of family devotions in our families. Children don't always behave perfectly. Everything does not always go according to plan. Often there are upsets. Sometimes children are tired and irritable.

Dear mother, relax. You are not on candid camera! God understands family life. Don't give up when it doesn't all pan out the way you want. It doesn't have to be perfect. All God requires is that you are faithful. The more faithfully you do this in your home, the more your children will become accustomed to it and it will become more and more enjoyable. You will always reap the benefits of your sowing, especially as they grow older.

God also told them not to make their altars high with steps going up to the top. Instead, they were to be low altars. You don't have to be experts at doing family devotions. God is looking for humble hearts. He avoids the proud like the plague.

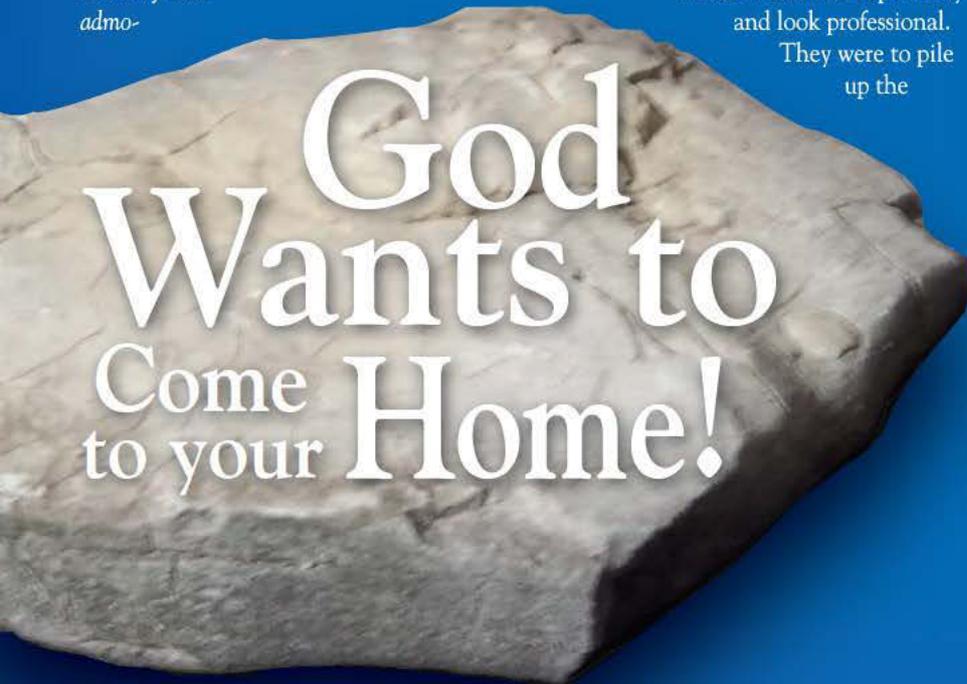
Altars Don't Suddenly Happen

You have to build altars. They don't just happen. It took effort and hard work to make the altars of old and I'm sure that everyone in the family was involved in helping. Jacob said, *“Let us arise... and I will make an altar unto God”* (Genesis 35:3). It's the same in our homes. We have to make the family altar happen. We have to organize our whole day around our morning and evening devotions because we know they are most important times of the day. They are not optional. They are paramount for the blessing of our family and future generations. We may have to forgo activities that everyone else is doing or cut out activities that are of less importance. We have to do everything in our power to make it happen.

Altars are Where We Call on the Name of the Lord

The patriarchs' main purpose in building altars was to call upon the name of the Lord.

Solomon knelt before the altar of the Lord and spread his hands out to heaven as he prayed for his nation and also the nation's future (1 Kings 8:22-55). To establish a time every morning and evening to call upon the Lord is the most important thing we can do as a family. It is top priority. How can we say we are a



God
Wants to
Come
to your Home!

believing family when we don't take time to call upon the Lord?

We are living in a strategic hour when our great nation stands on the precipice. It is turning away from the foundation on which it was built. Are we concerned enough to pray? Imagine if all God-fearing parents gathered their children around them each day to call upon the Lord for this nation? God has promised to answer if we cry out to Him (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Jeremiah 10:25 gives a warning. It says, "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name." Could it be that we are like the heathen if we are not calling upon His name?

God Blesses at Altars

Solomon gave his blessing on the nation at the altar of the Lord (1 Kings 8:55-62). God comes to bless families at altars and this is where parents bless their children, too. Let's not miss out on God's blessings because we allow our time to be encroached by lesser things.

God Speaks at Altars

When God told the children of Israel to offer a lamb upon the altar every morning and evening, He also said, "where I will meet with you, to speak to you" (Exodus 29:42). God can speak into our hearts at any time of the day or night, but He especially loves to speak at altars. What an opportunity we have each day to gather our families around the Word of God and listen to God speak to us. Don't read God's Word to your children just because you know it's the right thing to do. Teach your children to open their ears and their hearts to hear God speak to them. When we listen in faith, expecting God to speak, we will hear Him. God wants us to ask, "Where is the Lord?" in every Scripture we read (Jeremiah 2:8). And tell me, what is more powerful in this life than hearing God speak?

We Eat and Rejoice at Altars

Altars are not to be religious. They are associated with eating and rejoicing. That's why we like to have our family altar at the table. After eating and fellowshiping, we are ready to hear

God's Word. Deuteronomy 27:5-7 says, "And there shalt thou build an altar unto the Lord thy God... and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the Lord thy God." God is not a kill-joy. We can laugh and rejoice in the presence of the Lord. After a great altar experience, Moses and the elders of Israel went up the mountain and "saw God and did eat and drink" (Exodus 24:1-22). Eating, drinking, and experiencing the mighty presence of God are associated together.

Blood Splattered Altars

There are many family altars today. It is a phenomena that many God-believing families don't have time to establish an "altar of the Lord" but they have time for their sports altar, their TV altar, their Facebook or computer altar, or even their "too busy to give time to God" altar.

The biblical altars were blood-splattered altars because atonement for sin was made at the altar. In fact, the blood was not only sprinkled on the altar, but on the people, too (Exodus 24:4-8). On every altar an animal was slain and the blood was poured out. Every sacrifice pointed to the ultimate sacrifice, the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world for the atonement of our souls. Leviticus 17:11 says, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

Is it too much to gather your family together every morning and evening to honor the precious blood of Jesus Christ and to thank Him for His great salvation, without which we would be condemned and have no hope?

Altars Release a Sweet Smell to God

The first of many Scriptures we read of God smelling a sweet savor is when Noah built an altar to the Lord, "and the Lord smelled a sweet savor" (Genesis 8:20-21).

Numbers 28:6 tells us that the burnt offerings upon the altar were "ordained in mount Sinai for a sweet savor." When Jesus sacrificially offered himself and shed His blood on the cross as an offering for our sin, He became a "sweetsmelling savor" to God (Ephesians 5:2).

As we sacrifice ourselves to His service each day at our family altar, we too can become a sweet savor to God.

It Takes Sacrifice to Build Altars

When God judged the land of Israel because David had taken a census of the people, the prophet came to him with a message from God, "Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite" (2 Samuel 23:18). Araunah was happy to offer him not only his threshingfloor, but the oxen, the wood, and everything he needed for the sacrifice. But David answered, "Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing" (2 Samuel 24:24).

Is it because of the cost involved that many Christians families don't get around to having family devotions in their home? Is it because it will cost them time from their other activities? Is it because it will cost them the effort to train their children to sit and be attentive? Is it because they may have to change their lifestyle to make it happen? Or perhaps because they do not have a love for God's Word and prayer? We need

David's attitude,
don't we?



Altars are for Cleansing and Sanctification

When Jacob took his family to build an altar in Bethel, he commanded everyone in his household to "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments" (Genesis 35:2-5). Each morning and evening the priests took out the ashes from the brazen altar, speaking of the sin and dross which the fire of the Holy Spirit consumes in our lives (Leviticus 6:8-13). It is at the altar, in the presence of God, that He shows us that which grieves His Holy Spirit. When we don't take time to come to the altar, the sin and grime of the flesh and the world builds up and often we don't even recognize it. However, in the presence of God, these things are exposed, enabling us to keep short accounts with God.

Altars are for Consecration

The burnt offering on the altar was consecrated to God. In the new covenant, we no longer offer a burnt sacrifice, but we now offer ourselves as a "living sacrifice" to God (Romans 12:1). Each day we consecrate ourselves and our family to live for God, which is our "reasonable service."

The Fire of God Falls at Altars

Do you want the fire of God to fall upon your family? The family altar is the right place for it to happen. The classic family hymn by B. B. McKinney says, "God, give us Christian homes!/Homes where the children are led to know/Christ in His beauty who loves them so,/Homes where the altar fires burn and glow,/God, give us Christian homes." The "altar fires" speak of the family altars that were once part of every God-fearing family. He also commanded us in Leviticus 6:12-13 that the fire upon the altar must never go out. Has the altar fire gone out in your home? Or is it burning brightly?

Altars are Part of Revival

We know we are living in Laodicean times when God's people are too busy to meet with him as a family each day. It means we are still in our state of lukewarmness, mediocrity, and complacency. However, we will know we are in revival times when family altars are repaired and established all over the land. We will see God move His mighty hand of power as God-fearing families gather together daily to cry out to God for their city and

nation and to listen to Him speak through His Word.

The altars were always repaired in great moves of God in biblical days. It was a spiritually barren time in Israel when Ahab and Jezebel reigned. Do you remember how Elijah met with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel and challenged them to which god would answer by fire? After the prophets of Baal had screamed and cut themselves for hours, all to no avail, Elijah "repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down" (1 Kings 18:30). He prepared the sacrifice on the altar and then ordered 16 barrels of water to be poured over it. As he prayed at the time of the evening sacrifice, "the fire of the Lord fell... and when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord he is the God" (1 Kings 18:37-39). The fire fell after the altar was repaired.

Read the story of revival in Asa's time. 2 Chronicles 15:8 says, "When Asa heard... the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abom-

inable idols out of the land of Judah and Benjamin... and renewed the altar of the Lord." Check out the blessings that came to the land after they renewed the altar (2 Chronicles 15:9-15).

Manasseh was a very wicked king, but he humbled himself and repented. And what was the fruit of his repentance? "He repaired the altar of the Lord, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings and commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel" (2 Chronicles 33:12-16).

Revival starts with repairing the altar of the Lord. Will you be part of this revival?

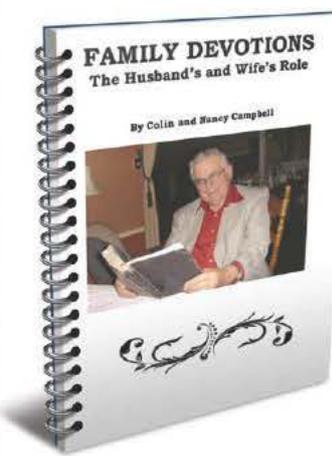
NANCY CAMPBELL

Scripture List for Altar Building

I have listed many Scriptures on every point in the above article.

If you are a "Berean" and would like to check them out, go to:

<http://tinyurl.com/ScriptureAltarBuilding>



To understand more of this important family function, which is the powerhouse of the nation, order the booklet,

Family Devotions

The Husband's and Wife's Role

You will discover what is the husband's role, what is the wife's role, and how to make it happen in your home.

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"Before the modernist tore down the altars in our churches, we had torn down the altars in our homes. Before worldly indifference paralyzed our churches, it had paralyzed our homes. Before the pastors denied the Word of God in the churches, parents had denied the Word of God access in their home life... Every night thousands of children are put to bed starved for the Word of God, having received nothing of God's Word from their parents that day, robbed of the only bread that can give them strength and wisdom to overcome all the wiles of the devil!"

~ Norman V. Williams

Seventeen years ago when I was pregnant with my first child, my husband and I excitedly went for our first ultrasound at 19 weeks of pregnancy. The technician showed us all of our cute baby's physical features. We noticed she made a phone call to a specialist while she was scanning the brain area. Mike and I didn't think much of this and were thrilled to learn that we were expecting a precious baby boy!

At a subsequent prenatal visit, I learned that the ultrasound test showed that our sweet unborn baby had what was called a left choroid plexus cyst which was a small cyst on the left side of the brain. I was so disheartened and worried. What exactly did this mean? The doctor later explained that this could possibly lead to various disorders such as hydrocephalus. He went on to explain that I was still early enough in my pregnancy and that an abortion could still be safely performed in the state of Indiana. An ABORTION? I was flabbergasted! As my face grew pale and I became dizzy and faint, I told her that we didn't believe in abortion.

After I regained my strength, I left the doctor's office feeling overly concerned and distraught. I did my own reading and research into the abnormality of my unborn baby. After many days of worry, stress, and prayer, I finally received a spirit of peace and calm from God.

Upon the follow-up ultrasound a few weeks later, they told us that the cyst on the baby's left side of the brain was totally gone! We were relieved and overjoyed to hear this fantastic news and went on to deliver a precious and healthy firstborn baby boy named Noah whose name means "peace, comfort, and rest."

With our subsequent pregnancies God put on my heart to not go down the traditional medical path, but instead take a more natural approach. We went to a birth center for our second child and enjoyed homebirths with the rest of our babies. My husband and I decided that all of the stress and worry from the diagnostic



The Dreadful Word

pregnancy tests were not worth the effort, and the needless anxiety was not good for the pregnant mother or her unborn child. I also had no desire to hear that frightful word spoken about my babies ever again!

Our firstborn son has since gone on to develop amazing musical and artistic abilities as he has developed into his "becoming a man" years. He has learned to play the most exquisite classical piano pieces by Beethoven, Mozart, Chopin, and more. This originally began from a .25 cent student piano book I found at a garage sale when he was in preschool. All of his lessons have been given at home by his parents who possess only mediocre musical abilities, except for one assessment session.

Noah also paints handsome custom-made football figures that he sells and gives away as gifts. We have been told by a chiropractor that Noah is our only right-brained dominant child which explains

why he is so gifted in music and art. Did his right-brain dominance occur because of the left brain neonatal cyst? Did this abnormality develop because I was prescribed a medicinal skin cream prior to this pregnancy? Only God knows. But, we hate to think about all of the gorgeous piano music and talented art work that would not fill our home with such beauty and joy if we had heeded that one dreadful word mentioned by the doctor.

We thank and praise God that He has given us a son who brings us peace and comfort, and we are grateful to Christ that He turns our weaknesses, whatever they may be, into strengths!

MICHELE DICEN

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Mike and Michele with their children, Noah (17), Olivia (14), Victoria (10), Sophia (5) and Garrison (2).

Fashioning Immortal Souls

"Mothers of your children, your work is most holy. You are fashioning the destinies of immortal souls.

The powers folded up in the little ones that you hushed to sleep in your bosoms last night, are powers that shall exist forever.

You are prepping them for their immortal destiny and influence. Be faithful. Take up your sacred burden reverently.

Be sure that your heart is pure and that your life is sweet and clean."

~ J. R. Miller



Our Children: The Way

Children are wonderful.
 They are beautiful.
 They know how to get your attention.
 We adore their chubby cheeks.
 Their cute ways.
 Their big innocent eyes.
 Their little pitter patter of feet.
 Their unending questions as they seek answers.
 They are our flesh and blood.
 They hold our DNA.
 They are our future.
 They are our heritage.
 They are our true riches (money and possessions cannot compare).
 They are gifted, talented, and creative.
 They are tomorrow's leaders.
 They are tomorrow's provision for the family and nation.
 They are tomorrow's security.
 They draw love and many other virtues from us.
 They make us a characted people as we build character in them.
 We must take responsibility for them so they will in turn take responsibility for us.
 Without children there would be no family.
 No Home, Sweet Home.
 No family vacations.
 No birthday parties.
 No romances.
 No weddings.
 No future work force.
 No future soldiers to fight evil.
 No future fathers and mothers to raise children.
 No babies.
 No families.
 No nation.
 It is foolish to raise cats, dogs, and goldfish to satisfy our paternal and maternal instincts.
 Animals and things are no substitute for children.
 By refusing children we accept the destruction of our nation.

*Sasona Anaëlle Thompson, Abilene, TX • Jack Hoeve, Holland, MI • Wyatt Birgen, Graham, WA • Monroe, Bowling Green, KY • Kam
 Rebekah, Benjamin, Aaron, Matthew, and Hannah Goodyear, Louisville, KY • Abigail Hana Lopez, Corpus Christi*



ay We Build the Nation

Parenting children is NATION BUILDING.

Our western nations have become increasingly sterile, selfish, spoiled, and boring.

We have sacrificed our families and nations on the altars of selfishness, careerism, and materialism. With smaller and smaller families we have become lonely, deprived, unfulfilled, and without character.

We have little, if any family to come home to.

No laughter, no singing, no natural family to entertain us.

We have no one to care for. We have given what little we have to daycare.

No one to love.

In turn, we have no one to love us.

We have been deceived.

We have created our own holocaust.

We have destroyed ourselves through contraception, sterilization, and abortion.

Pro-choice is the choice of destruction.

We are swiftly breaking the generational chain.

The dynasties are quickly ending.

Hell claps its hands.

Heaven weeps.

What have we left to live for?

By the grace of God, every Christian husband and wife should aim to build a dynasty for God.

The world, heaven, and all creation waits to see what can come out of your home.

Every home should be a little church—the father/pastor, the mother/assistant pastor, and the children the congregation.

Give your children your very best effort.

Your home is your sculpturing studio.

But, you are not sculpturing clay, stone, or paper mache.

You are sculpturing flesh and blood.

As your children are molded in the ways of God, by the enabling of the Holy Spirit, you are sculpturing nothing less than the glorious likeness and image of God.

Could anything be greater? I think not.

The whole world is waiting. Heaven is waiting.

All creation waits for the manifestation of the “sons of God.”

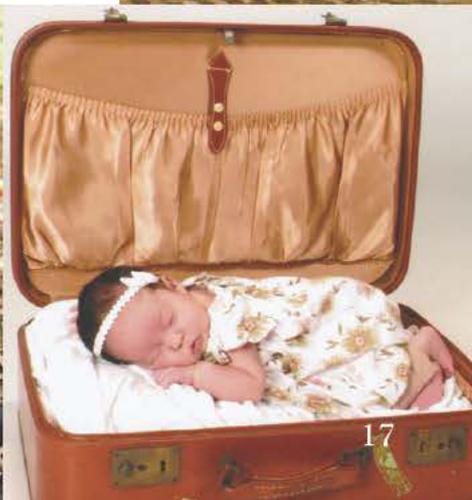
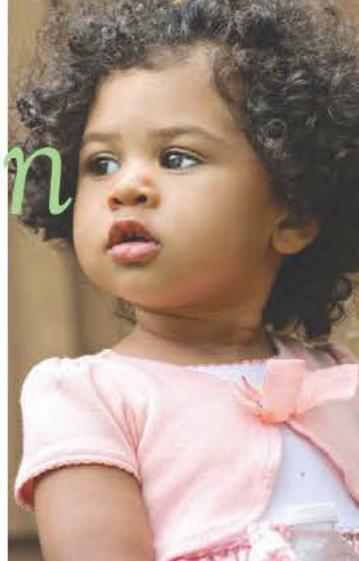
It is the desperate need of the nations.

What are you waiting for?

It is high time to stand up and take your place in the greatest building project of all time—THE FAMILY.

Colin Campbell

St. George, Ferndale, WA • Mia Gabrielle and Marian Adelle Fiddes, on vacation in Destin, FL (in picture) but they live in Rowlett, TX
K • Emmaline June DiGiovanni • Avelyn Greer-Nichols, Buckley, WA • Angelina Victoria Hayes, Breeding, KY





A Haven of Rest

Deep soul rest—my innermost craving. I was raised from my mother's breast to know God, but the anchored state of rest eluded me. I wasn't a worrywart that agitated over every little thing. I never fretted over finances—even when our farm was in the beginnings of foreclosure, or when we were feeding 13 children in our home. I always knew God would provide. I never lost sleep over life's particulars and have always considered myself a carefree spirit.

But, deep inside my soul was a pit of angst. Under the layers of a light-hearted sanguine personality was this dark lurking fear, a phantom I could never touch to fight away. It hung around in the deep recesses of my soul, heavy and foreboding.

I adored my Savior, Jesus. I was always moved in His presence and longed to serve and know him more. I trusted him. Well, at least I thought I did.

Then came a poignant moment when going through the most challenging months of my life. My face pressed against the shower stall, the hot steam inadequately calming my shaking body—another dreaded panic attack sinking its teeth into my being. My heart beat like a warring tribal drum and my soul rocked madly back and forth to the nauseating racing rhythm of fear.

What are you afraid of? Face it! Name it! Realize your enemy! The words buzzed around in my mind like a rude fly waking me out of an almost hypnotic fog of panic. What is this giant of fear? Stare it down! Don't be a coward! I cried out to God, "Take this fear away from me. Hold me. I trust you!"

Do you? Do you really? These thoughts annoyed my consciousness. They probed me. This was the moment of naming, the moment I became aware of my greatest sin. For the first time I touched the fear that gnawed at my bones since a little girl. Yes, I loved God and He loved me, but would His love be kind? Would His love hurt? Would His love allow great loss or tragedy?

I had seen bad things happen to God's children. Could I experience this and still rest in His arms? Could I lay my children in his arms? Could I fully let go?

This was my fear and I finally met it face to face. I was a woman of the "faith" who now realized she had no faith, no faith in His love when the circumstances looked horrific and there were no answers.

I had to admit I distrusted His sovereignty. This was huge to admit and it hurt to strip off all the pretty clothes of denial and stand naked before my God. If God's love is truly bigger than any earthly crisis, if His ways and thoughts are truly higher than mine, and He reigns sovereign over all, I have absolutely nothing to fear.

My scandalous human heart had dared to distrust the Omnipotent God. My fears spat in God's face and sent Him the message that my love was wiser than His and that I had to hold onto the reins of anxiety and control in case He did not do things my way.

The Scripture verse I knew so well from a child played in my ear, "*Without faith it is impossible to please God*" (Hebrews 13:6). Fear is the opposite of faith and yet my life had been paralyzed by it. I no longer needed the surface warmth of the hot shower and turned off the faucets. For the first time I realized my betrayal and laid my sorry heart in His to hold. He held it more tenderly than a sickly newborn babe and dripped little droplets of succoring milky comfort into the parched mouth of my soul. He gently uprooted the tumor of fear and made me strong again.

Deep soul rest was mine—blissful communion, intimate, and abiding. There was nothing between us. The part of me I had refused to give away now lay quiet under His wings, quiet amidst the raging storms I faced, quiet when everything looked bleak, and quiet when the arms of my dearest dreams lay empty.

Quiet. Why? Because He is God. He is all-knowing, all-seeing, and His scope goes beyond this mortal realm and is set towards eternity. Why? Because He is the potter and I am the pliable clay, not the protesting clay. Why? Because He is the weaver of threads and He designs the tapestry. It's a picture of love—divine love, crimson love, incomprehensible and self sacrificing love, a love that

begets all love and covers me with no corners left unloved.

His love is kind, but not a weak insipid kind. His love is gentle, but fights to save until the bitter end. His love is the only really “lovely” love that’s not concerned with lovely circumstances and appearances, but the molding of lovely hearts.

His love covered Joseph when his brothers beat him and threw him into a pit. It never weakened when he was sold into slavery, faced wrongful accusations, and years of imprisonment. God sketched Joseph’s life with wisdom and divine artistry. The dark shadings of the picture brought more light to the crowning touches. Joseph’s suffering led him to Egypt where he was exalted next to Pharaoh and not only saved his family, but an entire nation. His whole story was stamped with the will of God. And in Joseph’s own words “*what they meant for harm, God meant for good*” (Genesis 50:20). Yes, God is good, all the time.

Creatures of mere dust and “worm-like” understanding cannot grasp the reason for our cocoon. All we know is the dark struggle. But, in this darkness our Creator is designing beautiful rainbow wings of flight. The pain and battle to push through this black curtain builds our strength. With the first light of blue sky the worm is gone and now we are creatures of a higher region. Rebuilt to fly. Designed to soar... above the dirt... to see life from a different perspective.

Science explains that if a butterfly is helped to escape its cocoon that it does not grow strong enough from its appointed struggle and will die and not take to the sky. God’s love is always there even in our blind cocoons of sorrows.

While God birthed this anchor of faith within me, He also breathed life into my womb. During this season of soul renewal and healing, I was blessed with the conception of my seventh biological child. I sensed this pregnancy harmonizing with a delivery from fear and a birth of deep soul rest. I continued growing in God’s rest the entire pregnancy.

I had found my haven. When the poisoned arrows of anxiety darted about my mind, I ran to my home of refuge, to the most sheltered quiet haven of rest, my Father’s huge heart of love for me. That was it! Haven Rest. The name for our lit-

tle child growing stronger within me every day. My husband and I decided to use this name for either a boy or girl.

Three weeks before my due date I was still in Mississippi where my husband was on assignment for a six month job. The children and I planned to drive the eight hours to Tennessee to wash all the baby clothes and get ready for the birth back home. My husband still had one week to finish his assignment but wanted me to get back with time to prepare and relax.

“To live by faith is to live by joy, confidence, and certainty about all that has to be done or suffered at each moment according to the designs of God. It is an order to animate and to maintain this life of faith that God allows the soul to be plunged into and carried away by the rough waters of so many pains, troubles, difficulties, fatigues and overthrows; for it requires faith to find God in all these things...in all these faith finds its food and support, it pierces through all and clings to the hand of God, the Giver of Life.”

Jean-Pierre de Caussade in
Abandonments to Divine Providence

As I started piling things in the car, labor pains came out of nowhere. About four hours later our little baby girl, Haven Rest, was born in the nearest Mississippi hospital. The beautiful thing was that my parents were speaking at an *Above Rubies* Family retreat in Louisiana about three hours west of Mississippi. They left the conference and my mother miraculously made it to her birth—out of state and out of our Tennessee plans!

Within minutes of her birth, Haven was taken from my arms with signs of struggled breathing. Within the next week, my little baby had all kinds of tubes and wires sticking in and out of her. She suffered through all kinds of blood tests and exams and her extreme rapid breathing continued. She was breathing so fast I could not hold or nurse her. She could not suck and breathe at the same time

without causing her severe distress. She lay under an oxygen hood where a wet curtain of condensation blurred her face from mine. I couldn’t look in her eyes or console her needy cries.

My husband was working long hours and my parents had taken all the children home to Tennessee. I knew no one. I sat alone in my hospital room or by her incubator when I was allowed. As I pumped my breasts one lonely morning I longed for encouragement. I usually read the Bible on my iphone but my husband and I had swapped phones for a few days.

I remembered a little pocket New Testament and Psalms in my purse. It was old and dilapidated, always frustrating me with missing pages. Inscribed on the front cover was Nancy Colene Bowen, Te Puke, New Zealand. This was my mother’s maiden name and her home before marriage. To this day, I don’t know how it ended up at my house, or why I had put it in my purse to begin with. I picked up this tattered little Bible where an underlined section caught my eye. I browsed the rest of the Bible and seeing nothing else underlined, thought it might be meaningful.

Underlined in faded green ink was Psalm 107:27-31 “*They... are at their wit’s end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still* (as I sat beside her oxygen bed and stared at her monitor the nurse would say, “When those big waves start to calm down, you can take your baby home.”) *Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired HAVEN.*”

Goose bumps. A spine-tingling moment. My baby’s name is underlined before my very eyes. I didn’t even know the word “haven” was in the Bible! And it was “desired haven.” She was all that I desired. My arms ached for her, my milk dripped for her, my eyes wept for my desired Haven. “Oh God, what are you saying to me?”

The next verse underlined was, “*Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!*” I had been reading one-handed. I turned off the breast pump and lifted both arms in praise to God. He called this “wonderful works” and wonder-

continued on page 21

I am nursing my baby. I check to make sure I'm not dreaming. There is my handsome husband who still gives me butterflies in my tummy. My oldest son is asking if he can snuggle the baby, my beautiful helpful daughter and second youngest, Benji Bear, are trying to make goofy faces at the baby. The last thing I thought I would have is another baby in my arms.

My husband and I met in Butte,

I thought if I changed professions I could be home more and therefore went to school and continued to work. It proved to be a horrible decision, ending my marriage and family life without anybody actually moving out. We went through all the horrible things that go along with a wife working outside the home. When my husband told me he was getting a vasectomy, I was devastated.

One day when I got back to our cabin, I felt God whispering to me, "I'm bringing your baby home." I responded with, "You can't do that. You promised you wouldn't give us more than we can bear."

Remarkably, I was enveloped with a comfort that is inexpressible and I knew that with God's power and enabling we would get through anything. A couple of

Free From the Curse

Montana in the summer of 1997 and were married two months later. Charlie, our first child, was born after a difficult pregnancy at 34 weeks. He was the most amazing thing that had happened to either of us. My mom had always told me, "You will know when you have your own children how much I love you."

I didn't work with our next pregnancy. I enjoyed every minute of being an at home mama. Carlie was born after an easy pregnancy at 40 weeks. You would have thought she would be an easy baby, but she was not! She was a screamer!

At this time, I decided I had better get a job to help out. I believed the lie that a mommy is supposed to work outside the home. My husband told me differently, but I didn't listen. It was stressful to walk out the door every evening leaving a forlorn looking toddler, a screaming baby, and a very angry husband.

Three years passed. I had started a business and it was going extremely well. I was committed to it, but to the detriment of our family. Our marriage was taking a tumble and I barely ever saw my children. I became pregnant with our third child. My husband cried. He was overwhelmed and falling deeper into a state of depression.

"You will have to give up your job," he pleaded with me. I told him the lie I believed with all my heart that we couldn't make it without my income. I worked through the pregnancy, watched my husband retreat into a dark place, and was angry at him for it. Our third child, Benjamin was born after a difficult labor, but he was a delightful baby.

In the midst of the darkness some people came into our lives whose faith sparked something in me. I wanted to know more about this God they served. My heart started changing and I made the choice to serve the One who created the universe. I had no idea how much He could and would bless us. My husband later joined me in this decision.

One of the fruits of this experience was that we decided I wouldn't work outside the home. We met more brothers and sisters in Christ. One of these friendships was with a midwife, Judith. One day after studying the Scriptures together Judith asked me, "Are you guys going to have any more babies?" I told her that Bydge had a vasectomy.

"Well, miracles happen," she answered. I laughed. She gave me that intent stare of hers and said, "I'll be praying." You can imagine my shock, when not more than a week later, my husband told me he wanted a vasectomy reversal. I was in turmoil. We didn't have that kind of money, but after praying, I went to the computer and the first doctor that popped up was Dr. Wilson in Oklahoma. It is his ministry to help people like us who cursed ourselves because we believed a great big lie. We made the appointment and it went really well. We were pregnant in less than a month—six years after the vasectomy!

At the time we were working towards taking a trip to Israel and decided we better go instead of waiting as we did not want to take a baby to the Middle East. It was amazing. Words can't describe my connection to the land.

nights later, I woke up having a miscarriage at about 13 weeks. We chose not to go to the hospital in Israel. We named the baby we lost, Nathaniel, which means "given from God." As I searched for comfort from on High, my husband said, "Hey, come here!" I looked at two pigeon doves on the window sill of our room. One flew away, but the other stayed. I heard a soft voice, "I'm giving you one," but I didn't understand.

When we pulled into our drive on our return from Israel, we had not slept for over 30 hours. I called the doctor's office and told them we had lost the baby and they told us to come right away. We live an hour from town but we made the trip and got a blood test. The numbers were more than double what they should be for a normal pregnancy. Quite confused, but trying not to get up hope, we went in for an ultrasound. There was a little baby, kicking and playing!

"That is the meaning of the birds we saw at the Dead Sea," I exclaimed to my husband! This is the one God is giving us!" The radiologist had a disturbed look on her face. She said she wasn't sure if this baby would make it because my uterus was full of blood. My husband showed me a picture of the pigeon dove he had taken with his phone and we prayed for healing before we left the office. A nurse said it appeared we had lost a twin. I cried and bled for a month.

When they did another ultrasound at the next doctor's appointment, the radiologist was astounded. She said, "Last time your hemorrhage was so big I couldn't measure it. This time it is so small I can't

"There is no higher height to which humanity can attain than that occupied by a converted, heaven-inspired praying mother."



measure it. You're gonna have a baby!"

He was born into my husband's and nurse's arms at 38 weeks (the doctor wasn't used to natural birthing and didn't make it)! We named him Jeremiah Boaz and we can't imagine life without him.

The truth is that children are one of the greatest blessings ever to be bestowed upon us. I have a job ordained by the Almighty. I am a mommy. It does not pay much, it's demanding, but the benefits are awesome!

I am so thankful for our second chance at life. God brought us up out of a great valley of destruction into his abundant blessings!

JESSICA WILSON

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Bydge and Jessica with their blessings, Charlie (12), Carlie (10), Benjamin (8) and Jeremiah (16 months).

A Haven of Rest *continued from page 19*

ful it was. My mother was 71 years old and five and a half decades before in a little town of Te Puke, New Zealand, she had underlined these words, including her 39th grandchild's name to be used by God to calm my storm in Mississippi, USA. What a glorious tapestry He weaves. I have since discovered that this passage is the only time "haven" is used in the whole Bible.

God was testing me at the birth of Haven Rest. "Will you trust me? Will you be glad because you are quiet in soul?" The way I initially read these underlined verses on my hospital bed was backwards—verse 31 back up to verse 27. It started with the praising part, not with calming the waves first. I was told to praise Him and then He would bring me to my desired haven.

As I write to you, little Haven Rest nurses at my breast. God has brought me to my desired haven in the natural and in the spiritual. Both are God's beautiful and cherished gifts to me.

Do you know "deep soul rest?" Do you relax carelessly on your Daddy's knee, knowing that He holds every detail of your life in His gigantic marathon-loving heart? Do you breathe this satisfying air of true peace, not the tight rapid gasps of anxiousness? If not, name it, and allow your loving valiant Father to slay the giant and hold you in His never-slipping grip.

SERENE ALLISON

Primm Springs, Tennessee, USA
Sam and Serene have nine children at home—Arden (14), Cherish (12), Chalice (12), Cedar (9), Engedi (7), Vision (7), Shepherd (5), Breeze (2) and Haven Rest (3 months).



Brian and Julie with their blessings; Allie Grace (11), Maggie James (5), Penelope Della (3), Rosemary Rebekah (2), Samuel Pearson (1), and Denali Pearl (4) in heaven with the Lord.

LEARNING TO TRUST THE DESIGNER

When my first child was born, I was really young and didn't know anyone who breastfed. My mother and mother-in-law had used formula and touted its benefits. I just assumed that breastfeeding was a thing of the past. I read *Baby Wise* and put my newborn on a strict schedule from which we never deviated. She never had a drop of breast milk. I gave her four ounces of formula every four hours and she was sleeping through the night by the time she was six weeks old. I thought having a baby who slept through the night that early was a great success.

I gave birth to my next child five years later and met a few people who had breastfed and loved it. I decided to give it a shot. That single decision to breastfeed in the beginning made me a completely different mother. Instead of putting her on a schedule and trying to get her to sleep through the night, I fed her on demand and brought her into bed with us. I was much calmer, more confident, and felt more bonded to my baby.

However, I didn't have any kind of support group or close friendships with other breastfeeding moms and when I started having problems at around six

weeks, I decided I must not be "good" at breastfeeding and gave up. My third child came 20 months later, and I only breastfed her for the first few weeks also. I was experiencing a lot of pain, she had trouble latching on, and I was overwhelmed with homeschooling my oldest and caring for two little ones.

I became pregnant only four months later with my fourth. I really wanted to be a breastfeeding mother and I was determined to figure out how. I joined La Leche League, a breastfeeding support group while I was pregnant with her. Listening to the other moms, I realized that breastfeeding didn't just come "naturally" to everyone and that most people had some difficulties at some point. I was relieved to know that there was a place I could come to get help, knowledge, and comfort.

When Rosemary was born, I set to work, determined we were going to make it. At about six weeks, I started experiencing excruciating pain every time she latched on. The pain was so bad I had to bite down on a towel or blanket to not scream! I remember getting up in the night and psyching myself up to feed her.

I put on my headphones and listened to praise music and had my towel handy to bite down. I cried out to Jesus for the first minute or two and it usually got a little better.

After weeks of enduring, I was miserable and about to give up. I went to La Leche League and the nice lactation consultant could see I had a yeast infection. I got some natural cream that helped the pain, cut back on sugar, and started taking a probiotic. Within about a week, the infection was gone. I was SO glad I had persevered.

After that, it was smooth sailing. I loved every minute of breastfeeding Rosemary. It was such a bonding experience. I was overjoyed as a mother! When Rosemary was nine months old, I became pregnant with my fifth child. My milk seemed to dry up overnight. I was sad, but very glad we had made it to nine months.

Samuel, my fifth, was my first boy and first natural delivery. I had epidurals with the others. I LOVED natural childbirth and felt like a supermom when after birthing him naturally, he latched right on, and we fast became a lovely breastfeeding team.

I had a baby scale at home and proudly weighed him to see if he was gaining weight. He gained nicely for the first eight weeks, but then lost six ounces.

I became a little worried and started upping my calories and nursing him more often. Two weeks later, he had not gained any of the six ounces back.

I was worried. My child wasn't growing! I began to panic. Was I being selfish to keep breastfeeding him just because I liked it, but he wasn't growing? After another two weeks of eating every calorie I came across and nursing him nonstop without seeing any weight gain on his part, I decided to supplement. I thought we could do both, breast and bottle. However, Samuel really liked how fast he could drink from the bottle. We continued to nurse at naptime and bedtime for another month, but he completely weaned himself by four months.

I was SO SAD. My period came back at four months postpartum and I wept. I longed to nurse my sweet baby. Samuel is a year old now and I still long to nurse him. I miss that bond that goes with nursing. I also miss how much more convenient it is to breast-feed! Breast milk is always the right temperature and always available wherever you are. I hate having to find warm water, deal with the mess of formula, and keep up with bottles. I hate that he is receiving man-made second best. Most of all, I hate that I can't console him by letting him suckle at my breast. He loves his momma, but it isn't the same.

I'm praying for another baby. Much of the reason is because I want to nurse another baby. What will I do differently next time? Most of all, I will not give in to fear. Looking back, I think that I let fear keep me from persevering with Samuel. If I had quit worrying about the number on the scales and kept doing what I knew to be best for my baby, I would still be nursing Samuel today. God knows what my baby needs to grow. He designed the perfect feeding system for babies. If I am blessed with another opportunity to nurse, I will completely trust the God who designed the system and let go of my doubt, fear, and anxiety.

JULIE RODGERS

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The Magic Pill Didn't Work

I muddled our way through our fifth year of homeschooling. The pressures of homeschooling, taking care of a new baby, looking after the home, and feeding and caring for our little ones really weighed me down. The call of Christian school was too strong for this tired mom of five. I allowed myself to "grow weary in doing good." I felt I had had enough of practically solo parenting as my husband was home late nearly every night. School never seemed to get finished, the house was too messy, and the children were always fighting. I gave up. I put things in motion and enrolled the three oldest children at the closest Christian school which was in another town.

From the fourth day of school, I regretted putting them in, but my husband wanted them to stay. Initially, we both thought school would be a magic pill. I'd have so much time to clean and get organized. The children would fight less as they wouldn't spend every moment together. I'd be more patient as I wouldn't have so much on my plate. My husband would come home to a clean house with a happy wife and children every night. The children would get a better education and I'd have more time to play with the younger ones. But, that's not what happened.

I had to wake up two hours earlier than usual and it left me very tired. When they first started, I'd often fall asleep with the younger children or even at the bus stop as I waited in the van. The children still fought just as much as when they were home and I had even less patience. I tried harder to get the house clean, but that's not dependent on homeschooling or not. It's dependent on me staying on top of the children to pick up after themselves, put away things when they are done, and getting my priorities straight.

In the back of my mind, I always feared I wasn't educating the children well enough. They had to do entrance tests to determine if they were on grade level. My fifth grade daughter placed in 5-6+ in all areas, but math. Math is her weak spot. However, everything used to be her weak spot. She couldn't read until

she was seven and a half. Now she finishes one inch thick books in less than a day. She was just coming around in math and quickly began to struggle again once she was in school.

My third grade son placed in 3-3+. His teachers commented on how advanced he was. He complained he already knew most things he was being taught. I didn't fail them after all. They were being well educated at home.

I had intentionally held off with my third child as she was very young for her grade and I knew she would come along in her own time, just like her older sister. We chose to bring her home after the fourth day. She had fallen asleep on the floor after lunch and slept the whole afternoon and the whole bus ride home. Being placed in the end of first grade with no prior classroom experience, and an hour long bus ride each way was too much for her.

Then there was the bus. We couldn't get on route mid-year. My husband took them in the morning to the bus stop 10 minutes away and I picked them up. They spent 12 hours commuting to and from school each week. Thirty-six school weeks equals roughly 436 hours a year commuting, or 18 entire days. It was usually 4:30 pm when we got home and they were gone at 7:15 am. They were away from home over nine hours a day.

My three-year-old kept asking why his brother was gone and why his family wasn't together. I usually replied, "Because they're at school." One time I responded, "I don't know."

I truly don't know how I ever convinced myself that to send the children away all day would be better. I threw it all away because I wanted the easier road. They say you don't know what you have until it's gone. It's true.

I woke up. I felt I'd given my children away. We used to have all day together; now we only had a few hours at night. I used to know what my children were doing and be involved with them; now I only knew what they told me at night. Instead of seeing the blessings, all I saw was the work. I didn't see what my

children were gaining at home; I only saw what I thought they were missing. I thought the grass was greener over the fence.

Instead of bringing my problems to the cross, I took the escape route. But, who says hard is always bad, or that easier is always better?

Aside from how I was feeling, things weren't going well at school for my children. In the beginning, they both loved school. But, as weeks drew on, it changed.

Neither wanted to return in the fall. My oldest, who'd struggled at home for the longest time, yet had been growing in leaps and bounds in the past two years, started struggling again. My second child was being bullied. This is not what I wanted.

One thing I am thankful for is that by sending them to school, I know I will never want to send them back. I am so thankful the Lord allowed me another chance at homeschooling, another chance to spend every day loving, learning,

and laughing with my children, another chance to raise them myself.

I want to encourage all mamas that home is the best place for your children. You are their best teacher. No one but the Lord Himself will love them like you do. If you grow weary, turn to Him. He will give you strength. 1 Chronicles 16:11 says, "Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!" Psalm 34:4 says, "I sought the Lord, and He answered me, and delivered me from all fears."

Childhood is fleeting. Before we know it, they'll be gone. What a privilege to spend these precious years teaching our children about the Lord. Deuteronomy 11:19 says, "You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."

SECOND CHANCE MOTHER
blessedandjoyfulmama@gmail.com

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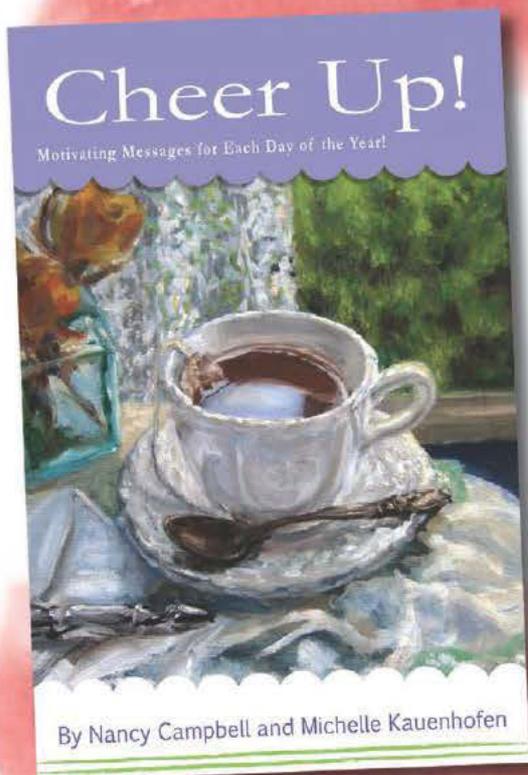
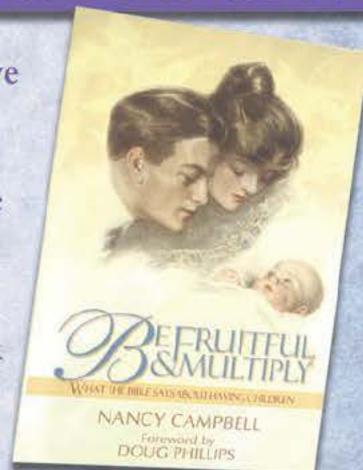
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Doug and Jennifer celebrating their 25th anniversary with some of their children.

25 Ways to Communicate Respect to Your Husband

without ever uttering a word

Actions speak louder than words. You can say you respect your husband, but he'll have a hard time believing that unless your behavior backs it up.

What does respectful living look like? Here are 25 ways you can communicate respect to your spouse without uttering a word. If you'll make it your habit to do these things, the next time you tell your husband how much you respect him, he won't have to wonder if you really mean it.

1 Choose Joy

It's true: A happy wife makes a happy life. Please don't use moodiness as an attempt to manipulate your man, but in all things rejoice, because that's the right thing to do (1 Thes. 5:16; Phil. 4:4).

2 Honor His Wishes

Give weight to what your husband thinks is important. Make those things a priority that matter most to him, whether it's having dinner ready when he gets home from work or keeping the house tidy or limiting computer time. Don't make him ask twice (Phil. 2:4).

3 Give Him Your Undivided Attention

Yes, I know that women are masters of multi-tasking, but when your husband is

4 Don't Interrupt

Have you ever been around a person who won't let you finish a sentence? That gets old fast. Even if you think you already know what your husband is going to say, allowing him to say it without cutting him off mid-sentence shows both respect and common courtesy.

5 Emphasize His Good Points

Sure, he has his faults (as do you), but dwelling on them will only make you (both) miserable. Choose instead to focus on those qualities in your husband that you most admire (Phil. 4:8).

6 Pray for Him

Ruth Bell Graham advised wives to "tell your mate the positive, and tell God the negative." Take your concerns to God. Faithfully lift up your husband in prayer every day, and you will likely notice a transformation not only in him, but in yourself, as well (Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Thes. 5:17).



Doug and Jennifer celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary. Yes, this is her original wedding dress!

7 Don't Nag

Your husband is a grown man, so don't treat him like a two-year-old. Leave room for God to work. You are not the Holy Spirit, so do not try to do His job.

8 Be Thankful

Cultivate an attitude of gratitude. Don't take your husband for granted. Be appreciative for everything he does for you, whether big or small. Always say thank you (1 Thes. 5:18; Ephesians 5:20).

9 Smile at Him

Smiles spread happiness. Smiles

have even been shown to create happiness. Smiles are contagious. And a smile makes any woman more beautiful.

10 Respond Physically

Did you know that the way you respond (or don't respond) to your husband's romantic overtures has a profound effect on his self-confidence? Don't slap him away when he tries to hug you or make excuses when he's in the mood. Your enthusiastic cooperation and reciprocation will not only assure him of your love, but will make him feel well-respected, too (1 Corinthians 7:3-5).

11 Eyes Only for Him

Don't compare your husband unfavorably to other men, real or imaginary. It is neither fair nor respectful and will only breed trouble and discontent. Avoid watching movies or reading books that might cause you to stumble in this area, as well (Psalm 19:14; Proverbs 4:23).

12 Kiss Him Goodbye

I once read about a study done in Germany which found that men whose wives kissed them goodbye every morning were more successful than those who weren't kissed. Success and respect often go hand-in-hand, so be sure to send him off right, and don't forget to greet him with a kiss when he returns home, for good measure.

13 Prepare His Favorite Foods

Although the rest of the family is not overly-fond of spaghetti, my husband loves it, so I try to make it at least two or three times a month as a way to honor him. Next time you're planning meals, give special consideration to your hus-

band's preferences (Proverbs 31:14-15).

14 Cherish Togetherness

I love to sit near my husband, whether at home or away. Our church shares potluck dinners every Sunday afternoon, and although the men and women normally sit separately to visit, I like to position myself close enough to my husband that I can listen to the conversation, as I think everything he says is so interesting. At home, I'll take my book or handwork to whatever room in the house he's working in, just to be close to him, because I enjoy his company, even when neither of us is talking.

15 Don't Complain

Nobody wants to be around a whiner or complainer. It is grating on the nerves. Remember the serenity prayer: accept the things you can't change, courageously change the things you can, seek wisdom to know the difference (Philippians 2:14).

16 Resist the Urge to Correct

I know one wife whose spouse can't tell a story without her stopping him fifteen times to correct inconsequential details: "It wasn't Monday evening, it was Monday afternoon.... It wasn't blue, it was turquoise.... He didn't ride the bus, he took a shuttle." Please. Please. Please. Don't ever do that to your husband — or to anyone else, for that matter (Proverbs 17:28)!

17 Dress to Please Him

Take care of your appearance. Choose clothes your husband finds flattering, both in public and around the house.

18 Keep the House Tidy

To the best of your abilities, try to maintain a clean and orderly home. Seek to make it a haven of rest for your entire family (Proverbs 31:27).

19 Be Content

Do not pressure your husband to keep up with the Joneses. Take satisfaction in the lifestyle he is able to provide for you. (1 Timothy 6:6-10; Hebrews 13:5).

20 Take His Advice

Do not dismiss his opinions lightly, especially when you've asked for his counsel in the first place. Make every effort to follow your husband's advice.

21 Admire Him

Voiced compliments and heartfelt praise are always welcome, but you should also make it your habit to just look at your husband in a respectful, appreciative way. Think kind thoughts toward him. He'll be able to see the admiration in your eyes (Luke 6:45).

22 Protect His Name

Honor your husband in the way you speak of him to family and friends. Guard his reputation and do not let minor disagreements at home cause you to speak ill of him in public. Live in such a way that it will be obvious to others why your husband married you in the first place (Proverbs 12:4; 22:1).

23 Forgive His Shortcomings

In the words of the late Ruth Bell Graham, "A happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers." Please do not hold grudges against your husband. Do not allow a root of bitterness or resentment find a home in your heart. Forgive your husband freely, as Christ has forgiven you (Mark 11:25; Matthew 18:21-35).

24 Don't Argue

You are not always right, and you do not always have to have the last word. Be the first to say, "I'm sorry." Be willing to accept the blame. It takes two to argue, so "abandon a quarrel before it breaks out" (Proverbs 17:14; 21:19; 25:24).

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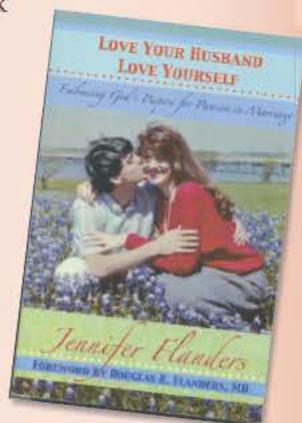
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25 Follow His Lead

If you want your husband to lead, you must be willing to follow. Neither a body nor a family can function well with two heads. Learn to defer to your husband's wishes and let final decisions rest with him (Ephesians 5:22-24).

Proverbs 18:22 tells us, "He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord."

Do these 25 things consistently, and your husband will never have trouble believing that fact.

JENNIFER FLANDERS © 2012

Tyler, Texas, USA

flandersfamily@flandersfamily.info

Douglas and Jennifer are blessed with 12 children—Jonathan (24), Bethany (22), David (20), Samuel (18), Benjamin (16), Joseph (14), Rebekah (12), Rachel (11), Isaac (9), Daniel (7), Gabriel (4), and Abigail Rose (2).

They also have four grandchildren so far—Jonathan and Matti have Aiden (4), Sawyer (3), Chase (2), and Grayson (7 months).

Making It Happen In My Home

I've often joked that I was the perfect mother "at the supermarket"! I talked gently to my obedient and helpful children. I smiled sweetly as I patiently guided them to find items on the shelf. I explained what I was buying, and why. I smiled and offered courteous greetings to strangers, and then let the children unload the trolley onto the conveyor belt with gusto and enthusiasm without appearing frustrated or controlling!

I could be found in many public places displaying this same joyful attitude. You would think I was a lovely mother! I never really thought much about my "prideful public displays" until I read Psalm 101:2 NIV, "I will walk in my house with blameless heart." This verse really hit me because my attitude in my home was different to what God obviously expected! I was often joyless, stressed, discouraged, and exhausted. I was irritable, with tension in my stomach. The ever increasing demands of daily life somehow eroded the peace and joy I used to have.

I was born into a great Christian family, I was home schooled through my primary years and always knew that mother-

hood was my ministry. I couldn't wait to have children. I thought it would be easy!

Back in 2003 (when my second child was just a baby) I hit bottom. The lack of joy in my life was unbearable. I looked at a photo of myself and my husband as newlyweds and said to my husband, "I want to be that woman again, where has she gone? I want the joy she has." I set about finding it. I began telling myself to be joyful and have a cheerful heart. It worked for a couple of days until I realised that joy is not something we "do."

My search had to go deeper. I desperately wanted to have a blameless heart in MY OWN HOME, not just in public view. I finally admitted defeat and surrendered it all to Jesus. The only way to lead a godly Christian life is by walking hand in hand with Jesus Christ, EVERY minute of the day. Of course, this is hard to do, I fall back into the same old patterns of self reliance.

I haven't reached a place of consistent joy in my home yet. But, as I walk close with God, I am discovering a few basic truths. One of the difficult things I have had to accept is that life is not always easy. Life brings times we enjoy and times we endure. For me, the state of my heart is uncovered during times of trial.

I recently read that "sometimes we're on top of the mountain, other times the mountain is on top of us." Life is about peaks and troughs. "There is...a time to weep (trough), and a time to laugh (peak); a time to mourn (trough), and a time to dance (peak)" (Ecclesiastes 3:1,4). While it's more fun to laugh than weep, "He has made everything appropriate in its time." God, who is Alpha and Omega, determines the seasons of our lives. Whichever one you're in, God's Word for you today is, "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

No dictionary can adequately describe the definition of Christian Joy. People commonly mistake joy for happiness. Happiness is triggered by an external influence and is always short lived. Joy is always related to our unchanging God and is everlasting. No matter what the current situation, the Bible tells us to "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again, I say Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4).

When I was a child, the words of my favourite song were "Joy is the flag flown high from the castle of my heart, when the King is in residence there" (I'm humming the tune). I have discovered that when Jesus is on the throne of my heart (and not me), I can know true and lasting joy.

BONNIE WALKER

Dunalley Tasmania, Australia
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David and Bonnie are blessed with Matilda (11) Liam (9) Caleb (6) Esther (4) and Charlotte (20 months).

Proud to be a Tent Peg

A tent peg is a lowly object. It is not made out of fancy material or decorated with fancy designs. Its job is to bore into the dirt and stay there as long as needed. But here is a wonderful truth about tent pegs and other humble implements. God accords them just as much significance as He does golden altars, fragrant incense, and beautifully embroidered linen.

When the Israelites had completed all the components of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, Moses had them present their work before him to be inspected. He didn't just ask to see the ark of the Testimony and the pure gold lampstand; He asked to see every last piece of this most important structure. Aaron's priestly garments had to be perfect, but so did the tent pegs. (Exodus 39:32-43)

In God's eyes, and therefore in the eyes of Moses, His servant, each item had an important job to do and each was infused with value and significance. Sometimes you may not feel like anything more than a tent peg, holding down the flapping tent of your home. But in God's eyes it is not important whether you are made of bronze or gold. What is important to Him is whether or not you are carrying out, to the best of your ability, the function for which you were designed. That quality is what passes the inspection of our Lord and gives glory to Him.

ESTHER MACDONALD

Waterville, Quebec, Canada
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Dave and Esther's blessings are Maria (4) and Jack (2).

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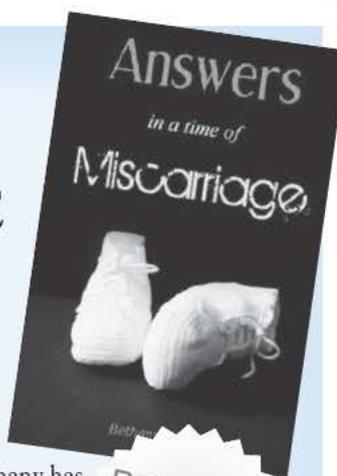
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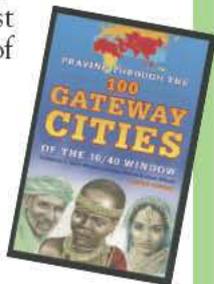
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This book gives information on the 100 key cities in the 10/40 window, the world's least evangelized area. Most of these cities are in darkness with less than one percent Christians. They need the light of the Gospel. What a privilege to pray together as a family for these cities.



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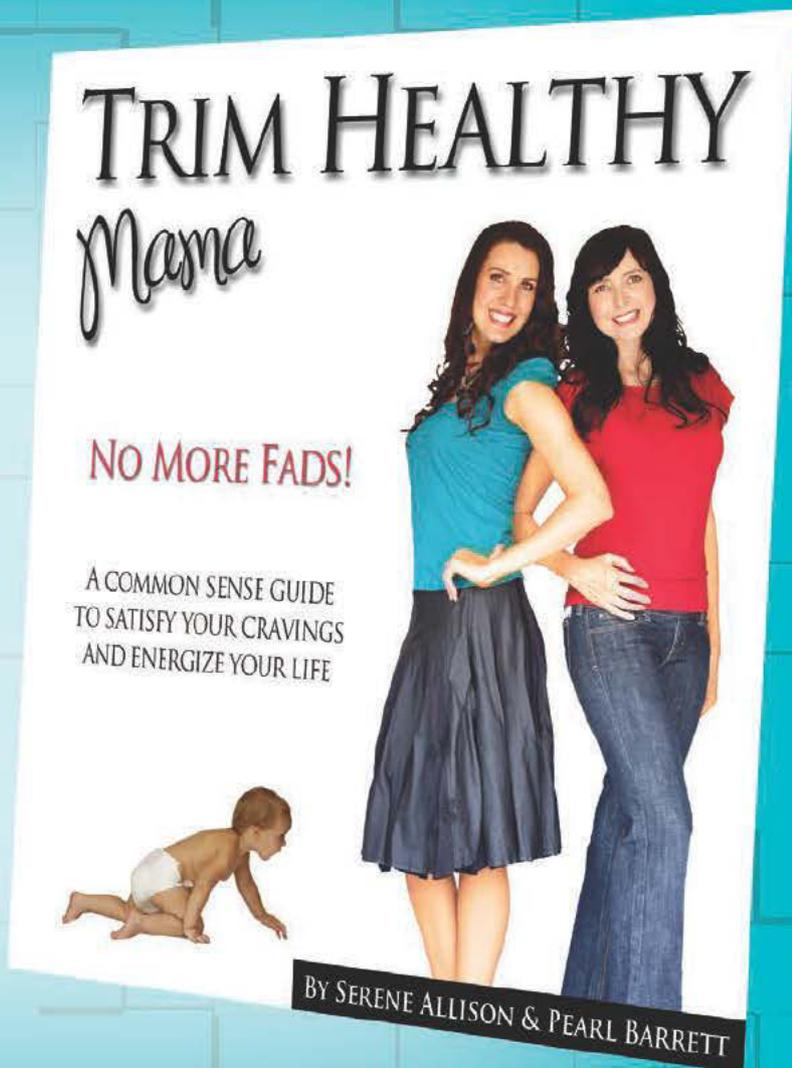
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