

August 2023

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OUR MISSION



Nashville Christian Family® exists to provide Christians and the community at large with ways to strengthen and grow as a part of the Middle Tennessee Christian Family. This local monthly publication is designed to promote positive living by sharing with readers of all ages relevant and timely news and information related to health, faith, parenting, youth, finances, Christian entertainment, missions, church leaders, and much more GOOD NEWS!

FROM THE PUBLISHER

It's Almost Time for Football!

Even though the hot and humid days of August are here, I am getting excited because I know that college football will kick off another exciting season very soon. I love sports, but college football is my favorite of the sports that I follow.

I am a University of Alabama Crimson Tide fan through and through. My father attended there and then taught there for many years, my mother was on the staff and I attended as did a son. Add to that, throughout his life, my father was a college football fan, followed Bear Bryant's storied career that ended at Alabama. Until his death at 96, my dad got great enjoyment from following and watching college football and "our" team. So it is no surprise that friends and family would say that I am a rabid fan.

During the season, I need to temper my enthusiasm and ask myself a couple of questions: in God's plan for my life and his desire for me to be an example of a follower of Jesus, is a football game really that important? Does my ardor for my team taint my example to others of being a Believer and spreading the Gospel and witnessing? Do I get as excited when the Lord presents an opportunity for me to witness to a non-believer about Jesus as I do for a big game?

College football or sports in general may not be what gets you revved up, but whatever we have a passion for other than serving God as a witness should take a backseat as we ask ourselves the questions that I ask myself during football season.

I believe that the most important thing that we as Believers must do is to spread the Gospel and the Good News of Jesus Christ with as much excitement and enthusiasm as we can. Remember, the Lord will provide not only the opportunity, but also give us the words that we need to say.

"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord." Romans 12:11 (NIV)



Robert Stringfellow, Publisher, 615-815-8765
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August 2023

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TEACHABLE MOMENTS

God's Way is Always the Best Way

God has always made provisions for His people. Despite what it may look like in the world through the media or the naysayers, there are always two sides to the story running parallel.

Look at the story of the great Exodus of the children of Israel, there are two different stories of the same event.



The people of Egypt experienced one of their bleakest times in history. In addition to blood in their water, frogs, gnats, flies, livestock, boils, hail, locusts, and darkness, they woke up to their first born children dead. Life was at an absolute low and they had no hope. Circumstances were unsurmountable.

The children of Israel faced the same circumstances. Life was bleak – however, they had a hope that the rest of the world did not know. They experienced one of the greatest victories of all time. Their children and households were spared and they were set free after 430 years of captivity with a promise of a better future.

God had a solution before there was a problem. He had a plan for His children to settle in a wonderful countryside that would be their very own. And yet, between their grumbling and complaining and choosing to focus on the negative instead of the positive, they got in their own way. Even though God had declared it and made a way for His children, many did not see the wonderful things God had planned for them.

They were looking at the same land, the same circumstances however the majority chose to let their fears be the deciding factor instead of what God had promised them.

Present day mainstream media would have us believe the sky is falling and the world is about to crumble. While there may be awful things happening around us, we do not limit God's power to what we see. As children of God, we have another side of the story. God has made a way and has provided for His children. He has given us a road map and book full of His promises.

Just as the Children of Israel had to believe what God said instead of caving into fear, so do we. It is called faith and we know without it, it is impossible to please God. (Hebrews 11:6). Many of the Children of Israel did not believe God's promises, and it did not end well for them. The ones that did believe, they were able to enter into the "Promise Land".

Trust in God. Choose to live through His side of the story and enjoy all the promises of a loving God. His ways are always best!

— Rhonda L. Smart, rhondalsmart@gmail.com

ASK THE EXPERT

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A Trust Beneficiary is able to Make Purchases Independently

Question: My adult son would like to be able to spend some of his special needs trust money without coming to me for approval. I want him to have some independence, too. I know his trust cannot give him cash. Is there any other way for him to have some spending money that he can manage on his own?



Answer: I'm happy to tell you, there is a way. We have a TrueLink Credit Card that your son can use. Our trust company will deposit money, from his trust, on his credit card. Parameters are set for what he can purchase. Your son will have a printed copy of what types of purchases he can make. If he tries to purchase something that is not permitted, the transaction will be denied.

— Darlene A. Kemp, MPH, MBA-HCM, Executive Director - Vista Points Special Needs Trusts, www.vistapoints.org - 888-422-4076



VistaPoints
The Special Needs Trusts & Resource Center

A white ceramic mug with a red arrow pointing downwards. Below the arrow, the text "YOUR FAVORITE KJV VERSE GOES HERE" is printed in black, and "ORDER NOW" is printed in blue below that.



So Are You Happy or Joyful?

Happiness.

Everybody wants to be happy, right? I mean, that's what we're all chasing, isn't it? Our culture is obsessed with, "Finding the Thing that Makes You Happy." Magazines are filled with self-helps articles like "10 Ways to Find Happiness," and, "25 Ways to a Happier Life." Even our Declaration of Independence written by Thomas Jefferson in 1776 stated a right to "the pursuit of happiness."

But how long are people happy once they obtain the thing that makes them happy? Getting a new car or house may make them happy but then trouble hits at work or in a marriage and they aren't happy anymore. People may want happiness, but what they really need is joy.

Joy is a person's "internal" state of being whereas happiness is an emotion affected by external factors such as a promotion, a new car, a relationship, a breakup or a death. Happiness comes and goes depending on circumstances. Joy remains even in the most challenging of times.

Why? Because joy comes from God. We know because Galatians 5:22 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Joy is the result of God "working in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose" (Philippians 2:13).

But what is the source of our joy? Grace. God's grace extended to us through Jesus Christ is the source of our joy. Think about this, apart from God's grace, we all stand in judgment before God having violated His law. He created us and established how we are supposed to walk in relationship with, and worship, Him. But on our own, we don't and won't without His intervention. The Bible says we are enemies of God, and we can't do anything to fix the problem. But God, out of His love for us and while we are sinners, graciously sent Jesus to take the punishment we deserve. That's grace; getting what we don't deserve (forgiveness) rather than what we do deserve (eternal punishment).

Jesus dying in our place so that we can worship God changes everything. We are forgiven! We have new life! We are restored to have a personal relationship with our Creator! Our condemnation is gone forever!

That's the Good News of the gospel. Like the Apostol Paul rhetorically asks, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). The unshakeable reality of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection is the foundation for our bottomless, endless joy, regardless of our circumstances.

So today, are you chasing happiness or resting in joy? Your response will help clarify how you will view everything else in your life.

— Mark W. Koch is an Author, inspirational and Hollywood Film Producer. To order a Free Copy of, "The First Hour" for Men 30-Day Journey, Visit www.thefirsthour.com and use promo code NCF.



Rely On God and He Will Show the Way



A few years ago, a petite young woman came to the WHTN studio for a meeting. As we talked, she shared her dream of having her own health and fitness television show called Rise Up with Jennifer Brindley. I was especially excited to hear the idea because there aren't a lot of workout shows on Christian Television.

I gave Jennifer a tour of the studio and outlined the process and costs associated with creating a tv show. Jennifer was undaunted by the work and cost, as she was confident that God was leading her to start the show. It wasn't long before Jennifer launched a daily television show on WHTN/Christian Television Network. Her show was a welcome and popular addition to WHTN's program lineup. Viewers loved Jennifer's upbeat personality and were excited to join her workouts and receive tips on healthy eating. Today's Secret from the Studio is about getting started. While having a television show may sound exciting, it's also hard work. The timing is never just right. Nor are the conditions ever perfect. If you wait for everything to line up just right, you may miss your opportunity. With God's help, Jennifer walked by faith and just got started.

As the show gained in popularity Jennifer marched forward. She never failed to create new workouts and healthy eating plans for her viewers. She even offered low calorie and delicious recipe options on her show and website. Rise Up with Jennifer Brindley was a place where people could get healthy physically and spiritually. Over the years Jennifer received many reports from viewers on how Rise Up helped them get fit again. All the while, Jennifer never forgot to give God the glory and she included scripture in every episode.

When Jennifer called me a few weeks ago to say that God was leading her to step away from Rise Up, I was immediately saddened. I was comforted though by hearing how Jennifer was trusting God for her next season. When I asked Jennifer what that next season would be she said.... I don't know yet. I am just confident that He's asking me to discontinue Rise Up and wait on Him.

As she said those words, I remember the petite young woman that visited the studio about 15 years ago. She entered my office with a God given dream that seemed impossible. Yet she obeyed God and just got started. Her willingness to get started resulted in 15 years of daily television that blessed viewers with health and fitness. Getting started is seldom easy but when approached with a desire to honor God and help people it is always worth it. As Jennifer steps away from Rise Up and listens for what God has next, I have no doubt her next season will be her best yet. After all she has learned first-hand the value of just getting started. The timing may not seem right – the conditions may be less than ideal – but when God speaks – dive in by faith and get started.

Today's Secret from the Studio: Getting started is seldom easy but when approached with a desire to honor God and help people it is always worth it.

— Monica Schmelter is the host of Bridges on Christian Television Network. She says she learns something interesting from every guest and enjoys sharing Secrets from the Studio. To Watch Bridges on Demand, go to monicaschmelter.com





Christianity and the Law

There are few areas of the law that present more perplexing questions for courts than the adjudication of church conflicts. Cases that involve controversies over the internal governance of a church, ownership or control of church property, pastoral leadership or financial management of a church can be challenging because they often turn on a question of jurisdiction.

The word jurisdiction is a combination of two Latin words: “juris” which means “of right”, and “diction” which means “to speak”. Taken together, jurisdiction means the right of a court to speak to, or judge a case or controversy. Over the centuries, and particularly since the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation, there has been intense debate surrounding the proper role of civil courts in deciding cases involving church controversies. During the settlement of the American colonies there was a great proliferation of several religious sects and denominations, many of which fled Europe because of persecution. When the founders drafted our Constitution and Bill of Rights, one of their first priorities was to provide protection for religious freedom and church autonomy. The First Amendment was the first time in human history that a government carved out an express right of

individuals to worship freely without fear of government reprisal or interference.

The ideal of religious liberty enshrined in the First Amendment is a dual protection which students of the Constitution recognize as consisting of two separate clauses of that Amendment: The “establishment clause” provides “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion. The “free exercise clause” finishes out this sentence with the phrase: “or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Both of these clauses serve as important protections for both individuals and churches from government intrusion into the affairs of religion.

Christianity is split between top-down Catholic-Orthodox episcopal hierarchies and Calvinist-Evangelical bottom-up congregational forms of church governance. In modern culture, churches do not always consist of merely a sanctuary and a baptistry. Quite often they have complex, corporate structures with branching faith-based affiliations like a church school, college, hospital, healthcare center, retreat or orphanage. Each of these church extensions are inextricably intertwined with the ministry, doctrine, culture and

spirit of their sponsoring church.

Like their secular counterparts, church-run organizations are not immune from internal legal conflicts. What distinguishes them from non-sectarian corporations is that these conflicts often involve doctrine-based issues. In my book *A Call To Order*, I address how churches can better protect themselves against the threat of civil lawsuits, and what to do if faced with a lawsuit over some internal church split or other legal issue. Some careful pro-active planning and drafting of bylaws and a mission statement or other internal governing documents can provide courts with direction and a religious-neutral approach to resolving such church disputes, while insulating churches from costly and unnecessary litigation.

If you are interested in reading more on this topic, or know a pastor or religious leader whom you believe may benefit from this book, you may find it on-line at Barnes & Noble or Amazon.

— Larry L. Crain
www.crainlaw.legal



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SPECIAL FEATURE

Defending Truth Conference to Help Christians Stand Up for Their Faith

In today's society, many people are confused and misled by a world that is searching for the Truth. Too often our voices remain silent, stifled by uncertainty. What should our response as Christians be?

We hope you will make plans to join us for the 2023 Defending Truth Apologetics Conference to learn how to reach others and defend your faith respectfully from leading Christian apologists including Frank Turek (<https://crossexamined.org/dr-frank-turek/>), J. Warner Wallace (www.coldcasechristianity.com), and Alisa Childers (<https://alisachilders.com/>). Together, these Christian leaders will help you learn to confidently defend your faith and explore important truths about cultural issues.

"Apologetics is defined as 'a formal argumentation in defense of something, such as a position or system,' and is often thought of by Christians as an evangelism tool used by really smart people to argue with other really smart people. But, in reality, apologetics is a discipleship tool with which every Christian should be familiar," says Troy Miller, President & CEO of NRBTv. "Today's culture is crying out for answers to the questions that define a person's view on life, economics, science, politics, freedom, and, of course, sin," he adds. "We live in a time when it is more important than ever for Christians to know what they believe and to be able to effectively communicate their faith."

The theme for this year's conference is "Defending Truth in a Culture of Lies." The event will be held Friday, September 8 and Saturday, September 9 in Lebanon, TN at The Journey Church. This conference will help enable people in all stages of life to share their faith and give reasonable answers for what

they believe to colleagues in the workplace, friends in the neighborhood, or family members. It's an event you won't want to miss!

Registration is now open!

General admission registration is only \$75 for adults and \$20 for students. Additionally, we are excited to offer Nashville Christian Family readers an exclusive discount. Use promo code NASHVILLECHRISTIAN for an additional 10% discount on all tickets. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.nrbtv.org/dtc. To learn more about NRBTv, visit <http://nrbtv.org>. We hope to see you there! Christy Roberts, Manager of Marketing and Events, nrbtv.org

— Christy Roberts, Manager of Marketing and Events, nrbtv.org

NRBTv a Christian TV channel headquartered in Nashville, TN, and seen nationwide on DIRECTV channel 378 and select broadcast affiliates. The channel is also streamed worldwide on Roku, Amazon Fire TV and Apple TV (4th gen) streaming players, via a free mobile app, and online streaming. A 501(c)3 non-profit organization, NRBTv reaches a global audience 24 hours a day with thought-provoking, Christ-centered programming. For more information, visit www.nrbtv.org.



DEFENDING
Apologetics Conference

TRUTH

...IN A CULTURE OF LIES



ALISA CHILDERS



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J. WARNER WALLACE



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1240 Leeville Pike, Lebanon, TN

SPECIAL FEATURE

Why Did I Start KJV.Gifts?

Good question. In the middle of a family crisis, I personally needed some extra encouragement from the Word of God. So did the family members involved in that particular crisis. Thus, the short book, *Lord, Help!* was birthed. It contains about a hundred favorite Bible verses, give or take a few.



Over several days, as I spent time with The Lord, I pondered over things that would increase my faith. It always came back to more Bible equals more faith. I could see and hear the following question in my mind everywhere I went. "What better way to add in the Bible than putting verses on individual items we all use daily?"

Think about this: What if you could start your toddler off with a stainless steel mug with Scripture and read it to him or her every time they took a sip of milk, juice, or water?

Do you think that small thing could change their life? Or the life of an older child or even yourself? "*For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.*" ~ Isaiah 28:10

The typical person looking for a specific KJV verse on a gift item has a very good reason to choose that particular verse. Not just 'cause their friend or family member liked that verse.

Some of the reasons I've heard that makes a favorite verse a favorite verse include:

"It encourages me."

"It calms me down."

"It reminds me of Who I belong to."

"It reminds me of God's love for me."

"It helps my faith grow."

"It gives me hope when I need it the most."

"It speaks to my heart like nothing else."

"It helps me in the storms that come my way."

There was a big problem in finding that specific verse for that specific person on an item, like a mug, to use daily, personally, or as a gift, like for a secret pal gift or baby gift.

God planted the seed for KJV.Gifts in my heart. I could not get away from it so I'm running with it and designing mugs and other items with KJV verses. God also instructed me to give away the free newsletter, *The Encourager*. It's full of stories and Bible puzzles you are welcome to use.

After all, what could be better than relaxing in your favorite spot, sipping a cup of coffee in your favorite verse mug, and reading a Christian novel at the same time?

Be blessed in the name of Jesus. I know I am!

— Linda Culbreth, Christian author and designer
www.KJV.Gifts

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Darlene Kemp
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The Next Generation of Skilled Trade Workers

In an era where not everyone aspires to pursue a traditional college education, there is a promising alternative for those who possess a passion for hands-on work and a desire to contribute to lasting legacies. Mastering the skilled trades offers an exciting and rewarding career path for individuals who thrive in practical endeavors.



Stepping up to revitalize the trades is Lee Company's team of esteemed Career Coaches. Having risen through the ranks as skilled technicians themselves, they are uniquely positioned to extol the virtues of a career in the trades.

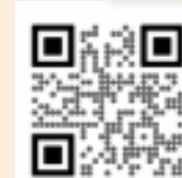
Drawing from their own experiences, they paint vivid portraits of lifelong success, both intrinsically and extrinsically rewarding.

Fields such as HVAC, welding, electrical work, and plumbing have, over time, lost some of the admiration they once held. They have been overshadowed by the prevailing belief that a college degree is the only path to a successful career. However, concerted nationwide efforts are currently underway to reintroduce the trades as a viable and incredibly fulfilling career choice for our youth. Recognizing the importance of this endeavor, the goal is to highlight the abundant opportunities within the trades and prevent potential consequences such as a shortage of skilled talent and hindered growth within the construction industry.

The primary objective of these Career Coaches is twofold: to raise awareness of the trades as a prosperous career option and to identify the finest talent to join Lee Company as future technicians and mechanics. They engage with classrooms, enlighten parents, facilitate hands-on career exploration experiences, and provide invaluable mentorship to students navigating one of the most pivotal decisions of their lives: choosing a career path. The Career Coaches place particular emphasis on evaluating candidates' affinity for practical work and their eagerness to acquire new skills, recognizing these attributes as crucial indicators of potential future success within Lee Company.

As we unveil the next generation of skilled trade workers, it is imperative that we dispel misconceptions surrounding the trades and reignite interest among our youth. Lee Company's dedicated Career Coaches are at the forefront of this movement, actively bridging the gap and fostering a renewed appreciation for the trades. By empowering individuals with the knowledge and opportunities to embark on fulfilling careers, we can ensure a thriving future for both the trades and those who shape them.

To receive more information about the trades, simply scan the QR code. Our Career Coaches are eager to connect with individuals considering this path, offering guidance, insights, and resources to aid in their journey towards a fulfilling and rewarding career in the trades.



— *Kim Hitchcock, Director of Workforce & Pipeline Development*

HEALTHY LIVING

Friction, A Pathway To Better Habits

We've all been in a situation in which we have made the wrong decision. We wanted to make the right choice, but in the moment, it felt impossible to discern, hard to do, the list goes on. You will notice, most of the time when we could have made a better decision, it's as a result of not being set up for success. Whether it's not making the best decision on what we should eat, missing a workout, or not getting enough water for the day, they all have one thing in common. We were not prepared!

I truly believe that most people who are trying to make a change in their health would choose a healthy meal they have prepared over McDonald's if they were side by side. (As long as the healthy meal doesn't taste like cardboard.) The problem is, we don't have a choice to make when we don't prepare. If we don't prep a healthy meal, then it's that much easier to make a less-healthy decision. When we are left without clear-cut, healthy choices, most will revert back to their old habits. By preparing we make the right choice, the easy one.

Let's take Amazon, for example. Why have they grown into one of the biggest companies in the world? One word... Friction. They have taken the friction out of the buying decision. They have 2-day shipping that satisfies our culture's need for immediate gratification. They have a membership program that remembers all of your information, so you don't have to put it in every time you check out. They have a feature where you can check out with one click of a button. Their package tracking system is unrivaled. You know exactly when you will get your package and where it is currently. This makes us feel in control. They have made the right choice, an easy decision for you. They have a system that overcomes any objections we would have in making the decision to purchase with them.



We can do the same thing when it comes to setting ourselves up for a day, week, and lifetime of healthy living. You can reduce the friction in your life so that in the moment, you make the right decision. The less friction you have to make the right decision, the more likely you are to make that decision. Think about the things that tend to get in the way of making the healthy choice. Preparing for your day/week is how you reduce friction in your lifestyle. If everything is prepped and ready to go for

your day, you won't be put in a situation where it feels impossible to make the right decision.

What are some practical steps I can take?

Reflect - Look back on the times where you didn't feel like you made the best decision or the particular times of day that it's hardest to make the good decision.

Find - Find the reason(s) that decision was so hard to make in the moment. It could be a mindset you didn't think about beforehand, it could be that you physically didn't have everything you needed in the moment, it could even be that you were too tired to make the right decision.

Overcome - Overcome those barriers by setting in place a plan that will set you up for success during those situations. Preparation is necessary for success. If you plan and prepare for those times where it can be a challenge to make the right decision, you will make the right choice, the easy decision. You got this! You were created to be healthy!

— *Ashton Tate is the founder of Glory to Glory Fitness and the creator of The F.O.R.M. Curriculum. He works with schools all over the country to help students build a solid foundation in their health. www.FormCurriculum.com*



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Freedom Ball Features the Award-Winning Film *Sight*

On Thursday, September 7th at 5:30pm the Freedom Ball will take place at Boone Center at Trevecca University, hosted by Drs. Ming Wang and Rice Brooks. The film *Sight*, based on Dr. Wang's autobiography *From Darkness to Sight*, co-starring Greg Kinnear, will be featured. The film has recently won Best Picture at the 2023 50th ICVM International Christian Film Award.

The proceeds of the Ball (\$25/seat, \$250/table of 10 seats, with) go to the 501c(3) non-profit Wang Foundation for Sight Restoration, which to date has helped patients from over 40 states in the U.S. and 55 countries with all sight restoration surgeries performed free-of-charge. To RSVP for the Freedom Ball contact Ella Morrissey, ella@wangvisioninstitute.com, 615-525-3314.

Universal Studios will release *Sight* in theaters across the U.S. on October 27. The film, starring Oscar-nominated and Emmy-winning Greg Kinnear and Terry Chen (*Almost Famous*, *Falling*), is based on the true story of Dr. Ming Wang, a poor Chinese immigrant, who defies all odds to become a world-renowned eye surgeon in the United States. Set in 1970's rural China, a young Ming faces persecution and despair at every turn, but through the support of his dedicated family and his own unwavering determination, he finds his way to America, attends Harvard and MIT and helps develop an innovative technology that restores sight in millions. Taking on the seemingly impossible challenge of helping a blind orphan, the resilient Dr. Wang must reconcile



with his own traumatic past and face the harsh reality that the strength of his own will can only go so far.

Dr. Ming Wang, Harvard & MIT (MD, magna cum laude); PhD (laser physics), is a world-renowned laser eye surgeon, philanthropist, and a co-founder with Dr. Rice Brooks of the non-profit Common Ground Network. As a teenager, Ming fought valiantly to escape China's Cultural Revolution – during which millions of innocent youth were deported to remote areas to face a life sentence of hard labor and poverty. He came to America with only \$50 and earned two doctorate degrees, one in laser physics and one in medicine, and graduated with the highest honors from Harvard Medical School and MIT. The amniotic membrane contact lens, which Dr. Wang has invented (and holds two U.S. patents), has been used by tens of thousands of eye doctors throughout the world in nearly every nation, and millions have had their eyesight restored.

Wang Foundation for Sight Restoration has helped patients from over 40 states in the U.S. and 55 countries, with all sight restoration surgeries performed free-of-charge. Dr. Wang was named the Kiwanis Nashvillian of the Year for his lifelong dedication to help blind orphaned children from around the world. To reach Dr. Ming Wang email drwang@wangvisioninstitute.com or visit www.drmingwang.com

— Leona Walthorn

PARENT WITH PURPOSE

Help for Back-to-School Anxiety

An article in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* found that anxiety in kids ages 3-17 has increased over the last five years. However, there are tools to ease the path toward a less stressful start of the school year.

Reset rhythms and routines. The schedule has probably slid to late nights and mornings. Know that your teenager won't wake up raring to go the first day of school if they've been up past midnight the night before. Start setting alarms to wake up earlier. Work together as a family to set expectations. What are the new screen times? What is the curfew? What is expected of homework?

Re-evaluate how you want to spend time together. Does your teenager need to play two sports and guitar in the praise band? Does your tween need to spend two hours on social media and video games? At the very least, guard family dinner time, especially on weekends. Lots of good conversations happen around the table. Use this time to determine how school is going.

Resume healthy habits. Encourage outside play after school to relieve stress and allow a child to move the large muscles that don't get used much

during the day. Focus on serving healthy fruits and vegetables as snacks and with meals. Decrease sugar in all meals and drinks. Less sweets will keep the body healthy, less hyped, and teachers will thank you.

Remember to pray over your child, staff, teachers, and school board. Pray for godly wisdom for those in charge. Ask God to protect the comings and goings of each family. Pray that the Spirit would guard your child's heart and mind. Ask God to make your child a bold ambassador for Christ in the school hallways and rooms. Consider joining a prayer group such as Moms in Prayer (www.momsinprayer.com) to keep accountable, share your burdens, and meet other like-minded moms.

Reassess throughout the year. Do you still notice anxious symptoms in your child such as clinginess, trouble sleeping, not eating, or difficulty concentrating? Caris Snider, author of *Anxiety Elephants for Tweens*, offers these tips for kids: practice deep breaths throughout the day, jot down three things



they are thankful for, and encourage them to share their worries. If your child continues to show symptoms, you may want to consider professional help.

Relax the boundaries for your teenager. You can pull back the reins anytime but know they'll make mis-

takes and offer grace when warranted. Practice listening to not only what they say but what they are not saying. Body language and eye contact will clue you in. You're preparing them for college and adulthood.

Through prayer and preparation, you can subdue back-to-school anxiety in your child this year.

— Sally Cressman writes about faith, family, and home on her website, www.sallycressman.com. You'll receive FREE "Tips to Ease Back-to-School Anxiety" when you sign up. Connect with her on Instagram at [@sacressman](https://www.instagram.com/sacressman).





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Celebrating A Modern Persian Heroine

Marziyeh Amirizadeh, Marzi, is not a Persian queen but when you read her story, you might legitimately get confused with the actual Biblical heroine Queen Esther. Unlike Esther, an orphan in Persia expelled from Judea following the Babylonian conquest and exile of the Jewish people, Marzi is a native of Persia. Today that's Iran. She lives in the United States, her adopted country where, like Esther, she has risen to the occasion "for such a time as this." Like Esther, who put her life on the line to approach the King to save her people, Marzi also put her life on the line. She did not go before the modern "King," the ayatollahs, to save her people from imminent death, but rather worked stealthily behind the scenes, against the ayatollahs, to affirm her faith, and for the well-being of Iran.



Moslem man is a Moslem, and that children born as such in Iran are registered as Moslems. She was forced to study Islam, but never avowed it, never embraced it, so she could never disavow it. Marzi enraged the judge, in whose hands her life was at stake, by recounting how God spoke to her against the judge's (and Islam's) belief that God only speaks to prophets and holy people. Some of her captors admired her faith and standing up to the many forms of intimidation and threats of not renouncing her Christian-

ity, even while challenging the underpinning of Islam.

But she didn't stop there. Marzi shared her faith in Jesus with her accusers, captors, and interrogators. She turned prison into her ministry. She challenged Iranian extremist beliefs. If Allah was really God, why could she not have a personal relationship with him? Why could Allah not speak to her directly? Why did Allah not understand prayers in her native Farsi rather than the required Arabic? If their god were truly God, he would surely be multi-lingual and receive prayers in all languages. There were many "whys" in her search for faith, and then her affirmation of it.

Marzi is an Iranian born Christian who fled the land of her birth, the land in which she came to faith. Just doing so put her life at risk. In Islam, Jews and Christians are granted the status of dhimmi, a protected second-class citizen. But in Iran, the reality is somewhat less "favorable." Jews and Christians are persecuted, as is anyone who doesn't fit into the narrowly defined version of extremist Shia Islam that's hijacked Iran since 1979. Sunnis, Kurds, Bahais, and other religious and ethnic minorities are all in the regime's cross-hairs.



Marzi with Jonathan Feldstein.

Coming to faith as a Christian in Iran is not something to be taken for granted. As much as there are morality police guarding how people dress and behave in public, simply being a Christian and affirming that publicly can be dangerous and life threatening. Marzi knows all too well. She was arrested, interrogated, brought to trial, and received a death sentence for what the Iranians called "apostasy."

But Marzi is not just brave like Esther, she's smart too. In her interrogations and even at trial, when accused of converting from Islam to Christianity, Marzi simply said, "No." She was never a Moslem, despite the Islamic practice that a child born of a

Marzi was always searching for a personal relationship with God, to find the truth. She learned that their god is distant, with whom you cannot have a relationship, is always ready to punish you, even inflicting torture, for the most minor infractions. She never accepted Allah, revered in Islam, as the true God.

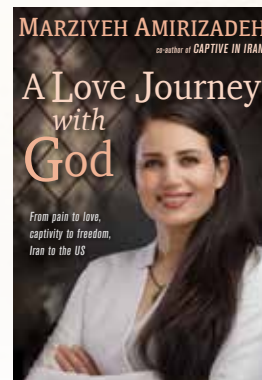
She understood they were lying, and was thirsty to get to know God. Eventually, God spoke to Marzi in a dream, revealing the true face of Islam, and God's love for her and all people. A God of love was comforting, made sense, and upended their god of fear. After this, God made Himself present in her life, and became her rock.

In coming to faith in the land whose Islamic leaders brand Israel "the Zionist entity" and "the little

Satan," Marzi also had a spiritual awakening about Israel and the Jewish people, how important they were to her faith and very existence as a Christian. This alone could have earned her another death sentence. Even in our conversation for the Inspiration from Zion podcast, she notes dispassionately, would be used by Iranian extremists to demonstrate her "spying" for Israel.

But Marzi does not do anything in half measures. Though Iran is the land of her birth, and the United States is where she's now a citizen and where she has completed two degrees, and even run for elected office, Israel was a dream, always on her radar. This year she fulfilled her dream and visited the Land of the Bible, the Land in which her faith was born, where Jesus lived. Visiting Israel aroused a special love for God's people, and inspired in her own faith. She came to Israel to share a message, that just as she was arrested and sentenced to death, and only a miracle saved her, and the Iranian threat to Israel is very real, God will also protect Israel as He has protected her.

2500 years ago, Esther beseeched the Jewish people to pray and fast for her, that she should be able to use her position to save the Jewish people from the death decree forced by the evil Haman. Today, Marzi represents Esther's bravery and boldness, is very much a bridge between Jews and Christians, an advocate for women's rights, religious freedom, and freeing Iran from the evil of the ayatollahs. We must join her in prayers for Iran, that the Iranian people will be saved from its evil rulers today, just as the Jews of ancient Persia were saved 2500 years ago.



Marzi's most recent book, *A Love Journey with God*, is an inspiring read, recounting the evil of Islam in Iran, her coming to faith, arrest and imprisonment, and her journey to freedom.

— Jonathan Feldstein,
Founder and President,
Genesis 123 Foundation
www.genesis123.co

This is Part One of Marzi's story, part two will follow in the September issue.

MONEY MATTERS

How to Sell Your House for the Most Money with the Least Stress

The decision to sell your home can be one of the most exciting and stressful decisions a homeowner can make. Whether you're upsizing, downsizing, or relocating, selling your home is often about balancing the desire to get the highest price while bringing the lowest stress to you and your family. Maximizing the value of your home can be a fairly straightforward process if you follow a few simple guidelines.



Fix Up the Outside

Now is the time to tackle any repair projects that need to be addressed on the exterior of your home. Do a thorough walk around your property and evaluate anything that requires washing, patching, painting, and/or sealing. Consider hiring a professional to check out the areas you can't access- the roof and the crawl space. You only get one chance at a first impression. Create curb appeal by trimming shrubs and hedges, planting flowers, and getting rid of any clutter or cobwebs around the front entrance. Painting the front door a fun, current color can be an hour well spent with your kids and spouse.

Fix Up the Inside

Now is the time to complete all those fix-it projects that you have been putting off in your home. Also, fresh paint in a current color is the least expensive way to instantly update the look of your home. A good realtor can provide paint colors that will work best in your spaces. And don't forget the flooring. Polish and deep clean all the floors, shampoo any carpets, or consider replacing any flooring that are too worn to clean.

Stage to Sell

Once a potential buyer enters your home, the goal is for them to see your home, not your things, and to envision themselves living there. Getting rid of clutter is one of the most effective ways to make the inside of your home inviting. Plus you can get a head start on moving by going ahead and packing early. The home you sell is different than the home you live in. Your realtor may offer professional staging services which will ensure that your home is professional photo ready. Fresh décor, modern lighting, and good design are all part of the staging process.

Price Properly

A good realtor will run the numbers on your property and present you with a CMA or Comparative Market Analysis. This will give you a picture of your market and where your home should be price-positioned in the current market. It is also important to consider both the most likely buyer as well as the competition. Proper pricing is key to getting top dollar with the least amount of stress in any real estate market.

If you would like more tips on getting a property ready to sell, or if you are interested in the current value of your home talked to a licensed REALTOR®

— Sarah Milligan, 615-545-1133
www.sarahmilligan.com or
sarah@wilsongrouponrealestate.com



As a second generation REALTOR®, Sarah Milligan knows the ins and outs of the real estate business. She is a top producing REALTOR® helping buyers, sellers, and investors in and around Nashville since 2007.

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Lives Changed Through the Programs of The Salvation Army: Meet Carla

Carla came to The Salvation Army LIFNAV/ Supportive Housing program after losing her section 8 voucher which led to eviction. "I have been living here in Murfreesboro for six years. Everything was going good. Then I lost my Section 8. The sheriff came to my house and like you, got four days to get out. You're going to be evicted. I started panicking, so I'm like, this can't be happening. I was trying to do multiple things at the multiple times because my son he has a disability. The most difficult thing is trying to find another place to stay with that on your mind."



It was at that time she was referred to the Salvation Army. "I had once again no idea what the exactly the Salvation Army did. I filled out for an application. From there, I think they called me 3 days later to move in." Case managers were able to work with her to get her into gap housing and then work with her to find a new permanent home for her and her son. They were also able to refer her to other resources to help her family. "My son, he's in therapy now. It's been a total miracle. They have really helped me. From the top to the bottom."

— Misty Ratcliff, Development and Communications Manager, The Salvation Army, Nashville Area Command, www.salvationarmynashville.org

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BODY & SOUL

Can You Be a Christian and Not Believe in Satan?

In today's world, declaring who you are has become a real thing, even to the extreme of contradicting what science says you are. Many would like us to believe fully whatever they say as a fact or truth. Since the very beginning, people have tried to convince others that they represented something or someone, when the facts would prove otherwise.

Shortly after Jesus rose from the dead, many people wanted to be Christian, not just in word, not just to be popular; they wanted to identify as Christian and were willing to die for that title. Saying you were Christian, wasn't enough, it required actions; one had to be baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, vow that Jesus is the living Christ, son of God, and that you are willing to follow His teachings.

Do we, as Christians, still take these actions and are we serious about why we believe what we believe? Let's examine the truth. Pew Research, did a poll of Americans in 2021, right after the pandemic. On one of the main tenants of the Christian faith, eight percent of Christians did not believe in heaven and twenty one percent did not believe in hell. (Can one exist without the other?) Of the seventy nine percent that believed in hell, twenty eight percent did not believe in Satan. (God runs heaven, Satan runs hell...Right?)

These numbers are a stark reality that some Christians believe what they want to believe, not what Christ taught. Consider that over ninety percent of



Christians believe that the Gospels are the word of God. If this is true, then when Jesus said, that we should only fear the one who can destroy our soul and body in "hell"; who do they think he was talking about?

"Jesus said to the Twelve: Fear no one. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." Matthew, 10:26-28

First, to call yourself a Christian, we must believe that Jesus is God. As God, we must acknowledge that what He said came from a place of knowledge; He knows the truth. By giving us the truth, he demands us to fear no one, and to shout the truth to everyone on our journey to heaven. Most importantly, to be Christian we should understand that to contradict God is never a wise decision.

If this is my last post, I want all to know there was only one purpose for all that I have written; to have made a positive difference in the lives of others.

— Anthony "Tony" Boquet, the author of *"The Bloodline of Wisdom, The Awakening of a Modern Solutionary"*

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A man with long hair and a woman in a Salvation Army uniform are sitting on the ground, facing each other and talking. The man is on the left, and the woman is on the right. They are both looking at each other. The background is dark and out of focus.

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Tammy and Jay Daughtry:

A Roadmap of Hope for CoParenting

CoParenting International celebrates two decades of impact in 2023. Dedicated to being a voice for children impacted by divorce, as well as serving single parents, stepparents, and blended families with relationship education, communication resources, and support, it offers hope that children won't live in a post-divorce war between their parents.

“At *CoParenting International*, we lower conflict to support shared children who live between mom's house and dad's house apart. Passionately supporting life-long marriage, *CoParenting International* helps break the repetitive cycle of divorce as well as bring hope-filled, respectful engagement between divorced parents so that children can enjoy their childhood, thrive between two homes, and grow up believing that marriage matters.”

Tammy and Jay Daughtry

Passion for helping children and parents stems from Tammy Daughtry's experiences with the child “handoff” on Friday and Sunday nights as she grew up. Some handoffs were very difficult because of the conflict between her divorced parents.

Tammy is a therapy and relationship expert, working with celebrities, athletes, Navy Seals, Army chaplains, and Air National Guard Family Readiness leaders as well as therapists, school administrators, social workers, and family courts. She also works in person with individuals and families in the Nashville area as well as nationwide via Zoom. Military parents who face divorce during deployment thank her from other countries because they find hope through her position as a co-parent and a very strong advocate for fathers. Tammy cheers for dads and their importance in their children's lives and has helped hundreds of divorced dads keep pursuing their fatherhood regardless of difficult circumstances.

Jay Daughtry is a former pastor and youth leader who sadly lost his childhood sweetheart in a tragic car accident in 2006—life-altering grief—after twenty-one years of marriage. Jay has called Nashville home since 2006. His passion for hurting families comes authentically as he, too, is an adult child of divorce and was a widower and single father for over three years before remarrying. The challenge of rearing a blended family of four children is one he

says was “only achieved through God's grace and challenging couple and parenting moments behind closed doors.” He is also creative with a long history in leading worship, songwriting, sharing the joy of music through playing guitar and singing, and finding deep fulfillment as a coparenting trainer.

“We enjoy traveling to Ireland as part of our love of music and songwriting as well as spending time with our five amazing grandchildren in our house of love and chaos. There's a passing on of wisdom that comes between generations. We enjoy that in our three-generation family home. As parents, sometimes we focus so much on ‘we've got to raise these kids’ that we miss the one-step-removed parenting present in a grandparent perspective. Random conversations can even lead to radical conversions. In making hard decisions, it's always important to wait on the witness of peace from Christ because confusion and distraction and frustration are the enemy's tools. Sadly, most of our culture has lost this generational blessing.”

Faith Journeys

When Tammy was fifteen, God used two people to prepare her heart in coming to Christ: Ori, a summer camp counselor, and Chip, a young man who lived in another town. They had a powerful influence and created a strong curiosity about Jesus. Being a high extrovert, Tammy never met a stranger, including a young lady down the street who was shoveling snow one afternoon. The new friend, Melody, invited her to church, and that very night,

October 17, 1984, Tammy gave her life to Christ. She was a high-school sophomore and ready to change the world. She started the first Fellowship of Christian Athletes at her high school in Denver and planned her first city-wide event for New Year's Eve in 1986. Tammy reflects on the significant friendships she had with Erica and Carolyn and the blessing their families were to her growing-up years. Tammy also has been deeply impacted by the faith of her grandparents and parents, the Gallegos and Grasmick families, who pointed her toward a relationship with God, and by her life-long mentors, Steve and Cora Alley. “The Alleys came into my life in 1987 as my college professors in California and are still two of my closest friends; they have shown me what Christ-centered marriage walks and talks like: focusing on trying to out-serve your partner every day.” Tammy thanks

God for giving her a marriage with Jay (“Mr. Wonderful”) that is delightful, enjoyable, and full of laughter and unconditional love, much like she watched with Steve and Cora.

Jay honors his grandmother, Lillian Monroe, as the one who “assured church opportunities every weekend and planted the seeds that ultimately became my faith. Eventually, she suggested I ‘might listen to the pastor rather than be occupied with the peppermint candies or doodling.’ So, I began listening and wondering about what he was saying. I remember



Jay and Tammy Daughtry married at BB Kings Nov 28, 2009



Jay Daughtry in Ballynagree, Ireland April 2023



Daughtry Family



Daughtry/Scott Family of seven, Nov 2022



Daughtry Family: Angelia and Jackson Wedding, Dec 12, 2021

giving my heart to the Lord during VBS (Vacation Bible School). During my teen years, I fell away from my earlier commitment until interest in a pastor's daughter, Diane, enticed me back. She always invited me to come to church where her father, Oren Nelson, pastored in a little Nazarene church. Finally, this wild-eyed wrestler showed up at the church, and I'm sure no matter what the sermon topic for preaching was that day, he determined it was going to end with a call to salvation. It was a beautiful moment when the Spirit opened my heart with 'Remember? Come on back home. I've been missing you.' I made a home with that young lady and our three children for the next 21 years."

Combining Insights

With over 55% of children living in non-traditional families, the Daughtrys feel it critical to find a roadmap through the complexities of coparenting. Their mission is bringing HOPE where life hurts.

After Jay and Tammy married, Jay decided to pursue a degree similar to what Tammy had just completed: a Master's Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from Trevecca Nazarene University. In 2014, Jay graduated on a Saturday in May, and on Monday, he and Tammy opened *The Center for Modern Family Dynamics* in Nashville.

As adult children of divorce, single parents, and stepparents, Tammy and Jay have a personal passion for children impacted by divorce and remarriage. Together they developed *The Center* to provide private sessions, coaching, and support for individuals, couples, and families. Tammy is a Harper Collins/Zondervan author of *Co-parenting Works! Helping Your Children Thrive After Divorce*. The couple has extensive media experience with radio, having been guests at both *Focus on the Family* and *Family Life Radio*, as well as numerous local and national podcasts and presenting or training at professional seminars.

Together, the Daughtrys oversee *CoParenting International*. They are a blended-family couple that merged with four children in 2009 (Tammy had one child and had divorced in 2001, and Jay had three children and had become a widower in 2006). They have enjoyed the addition of two sons-in-law and five amazing grandkids. Tammy and Jay are sought-after trainers who speak on single parenting, stepparenting, understanding complex families, understanding emotional abuse, co-parenting during the holidays, and protecting the couple bond in a blended family marriage.

One Heart, Two Homes: Co-parenting Kids of Divorce to a Positive Future is now available in over 34,000 organizations via RightNow Media, RightNowMedia @ Work, and www.BrightCourse.com. This co-parenting material, giving churches a relevant resource, has 31 lessons grouped into 10 classes featuring Tammy and Jay, as well as 31 other guests who lend their voices, expertise, and life experience for single parents and stepparents who share children between two homes. For more information, visit www.CoParentingInternational.com.

Tammy and Jay co-created *One Heart, Two Homes: Coparenting Kids of Divorce to a Positive Future* (2014), now available digitally in over 30,000 organizations around the globe. "One Heart, Two Homes is designed to educate, encourage, and inspire Church Leaders, Counselors, Group Leaders, and Moms and Dads to understand and implement strategies to protect the hearts of children experiencing parental division."

Now, via the BrightCourse.com platform, *One Heart, Two Homes* is available in over 4,000 pregnancy centers around the globe. What a joy to not only advocate for choosing life but for helping fathers. This curriculum can be for home study, small groups, Sunday schools, or for counseling and is a flexible, user-friendly resource effective in myriad contexts. For those who have a passion for this work, in-depth training is offered at the *CoParenting International* website that will provide certification as a group facilitator or a full-fledged CoParenting Strategist.

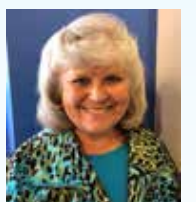
One Heart, Two Homes, including six voice actors, was translated into the Spanish language in 2022 by A & P International. All associated materials are available in Spanish due to a generous matching grant from The Father's Table in Florida. The resource tackles such tough topics as handling the hand-off, communicating through conflict, what kids need emotionally at each age/stage of life, 10 things kids of divorce wish they could tell their parents, stabilizing yourself as a single parent, and dating after divorce—realizing that dating is not a game.

Next Steps

In fall 2023 a new video project, *Unplanned Grandparenting: Casting a Vision of Hope and Grace for Your Son or Daughter When Facing an Unexpected Pregnancy*, will release in August at Care Net International. The hope is to equip and empower parents to lovingly show support and love to their child in these circumstances instead of pushing them away or pulling away from them. There are over 15 guests who share insights and guidance on the many challenges involved when facing an unexpected pregnancy. The videos will be on BrightCourse this fall with the hope of partnering with many other organizations to help support families in the journey towards life.

Considering your unique perspective, Dear Reader, the question is "How will I offer a roadmap of HOPE to complex families in my community?" Reach out to Jay and Tammy at CoparentingInternational.com for encouragement, resources, and support.

— Sheila E. Moss: author of *Living to Matter: Mothers, Singles, and the Weary and Broken; Interrupting Women: Ten Conversations with Jesus; and international publications derived from teaching Bible and Christian ethics in Africa, Ukraine, Venezuela, and England; teacher of Bible classes for 35+ years; mother of five adult children and grandmother of eleven.*



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Be Happy, Be Healthy, Be Whole

A monthly column on diet, exercise and my weight loss journey.

As I put this column together, can you hear the dogs barking? I don't mean my Shichon puppy, Jack, no; I'm talking about the dog days of summer. It's this time of year that is my most challenging when it comes to exercise ... Because it's too stinkin' hot! Can I get an "Amen!"? So if the heat is keeping you in, let's look at few tips for weight loss without the sweat.

Watch a Sad Movie to Lose Weight

Sad movies are a dieters best friend. Researchers gave two groups a milk shake. One group watched a happy movie, the other group watched a sad flick. Who sucked down more of their milkshake? The happy movie watchers — nearly 100 calories more. Conclusion: Happy movies make you eat more.

To Lose Weight, Write It Down

Trying to lose weight? Break out the pen and paper. Researchers say keeping a food diary — a detailed account of what you eat and drink and the calories it all packs — is a powerful tool in helping people lose weight. Their study involving 1,685 middle-aged men and women over six months found those who kept such a diary just about every day lost about twice as much weight as those who did not.

Look at Your Food

Looking at pictures of food on a phone is enough to satisfy hunger and could be used as a weight loss technique, according to a report in Appetite, a



research journal. People who saw the same image of a sweet food 30 times felt fuller without actually eating anything. The reason people can feel satisfied without eating anything is because thinking about something, such as eating, is like doing it.

So, how is your weight loss journey going? Need encouragement, knowledge, and accountability? Let me point you to the place I've found success – Dr Lodge and the crew at Cool Springs MD. In 2011, I met with Dr Lodge and 16 weeks later lost 65 pounds. How much weight would you like to lose? Connect with Dr Lodge and his team and they will show you how.

This monthly column is a two-way street. I would love to hear from you. What has helped you lose weight? Any tips you would like to share? I welcome your feedback, thoughts and ideas and look forward to sharing them in a future article.

— Doug Griffin

You can email me at Doug@94FMTheFish.net or feel free to call me during my live radio show, weekdays between 3 pm – 7 pm on 94 FM The Fish. (800) 826-3637



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PARENTING POINTS

Ten Things Kids of Divorce Wish They Could Say to Their Parents

In our work with children and teens, we have collected a series of important concerns and comments. Please share this with anyone that is co-parenting between two homes. It is a wonderful list of topics to be intentional and careful with that involve the shared children. Collectively, they have a voice that we try to share with parents around the world:



1. Don't say mean things about my other parent. I want and need to love you both!
2. When you criticize my other parent, it makes me angry at YOU!
3. Don't make me pick who I want to spend time with—it's not fair and I will get hurt if you do that. And don't "keep track" of my time like I'm "on the clock." It can't always be 100% fair. Please just love me when we are together and don't make me feel bad about not spending the same amount of time with each of you.
4. Handle your financial conversations in private. I don't want to hear about it, and I don't want to be your messenger.
5. Don't use money to win my love. Be a stable and loving parent, and I will love you no matter who has the "most" money.
6. Don't keep me from seeing the other parent; if you do, I'll grow up to resent you.
7. Get a counselor to help you with your problems. I need you to be strong and stable for my well-being. I don't want to hear about your dating and your disappointments. I don't want to hear about your problems at work or how much we are struggling financially. Talk to someone else. I need you to be my parent – don't make me be yours.
8. The harder you make it on my other parent, the harder you are making it on me.
9. Laugh and smile! I want to enjoy my life and your mood impacts my mood. Find a way to be happy and enjoy your life. I need to have fun and enjoyable memories with you.
10. Don't forget—I have a divided heart now. I live between two completely different houses, rules, traditions, and attitudes. Be patient with me when I forget things or need some time to adjust from house to house. Please buy me enough stuff that I don't have to live out of a suitcase my whole life. If you want me to feel "at home" in both places, please set up a full home for me, even if I am only there a few days a month. Things like toothbrushes, shoes, clothes, my favorite cereal, and having cool décor in my room—these all help me feel welcomed and at home in both homes. Don't compete between houses or argue about these things, just help me not have to feel like a visitor when I am with either parent.

— Tammy Daughtry, Founder of CoParenting International. For more free resources please see www.CoParentingInternational.com

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Curtain Drain VS French Drain

Curtain drain is at ground level. French drain is at the bottom of footer. If you are having problems with water shed. Water running down hill on top of ground. Ditch or curtain drain may be an option. A true curtain drain should be 2x2 full of gravel. The gravel works as a filter, collecting the water and taking it away from the surface.

But if you are concerned with water in crawl space or basement a curtain drain will not take care of the problem. Water runs downhill, even under ground. In growing areas these problems may also be worse. Development disturbs water's natural and it must find a new path.

A French drain typically sits at least 8 feet below the ground, at or below the footing. The French drain is a pipe covered with filter fabric. Do you know a filter that does not need to be changed? At some point the pipe will clog. Depending on settlement and type of soil is a factor in how long a French drain will work.



This area we have a lot of clay soil so they tend to clog faster. Assume the French drain is a pipe 4" around. Now look a few years down the road and add 1" debris to 4" pipe; you only have 3" pipe for water to flow. Fast forward a little further, 2" of debris now only 2" pipe for water flow. And so on, before you know it you have more water than this narrow drainage canal can handle. Heavy rains, higher pressure - can't handle the flow.

Heartaches of French drains:

- Most common problems with French drains is root intrusion, crush or collapsed drains, and clogging.
- They don't last forever, they cannot be tested or cleaned out.
- Repairs are expensive and messy. Lots of digging. Disruption to outside of home and daily life.
- Dig down to pipe around home, under porches, decks, HVAC units. Etc. <https://youtu.be/xZaCzub5ZXw>

The solution to protect your home from these concerns is an interior waterproofing system. Depending on the foundation and amount of moisture in your space determines the best permanent solution. An Interior drainage system sits safely out of the mud zone and does not require digging around the foundation outside your home. It can be serviced from inside the home with no mess, no large equipment digging, no large cost. These systems are able to waterproof concrete block foundation walls by collecting water from the block or concrete walls and will not clog with mud or debris.

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— Devon Bagwell, Marketing Manager- trustfrontier.com, roofnashville.com

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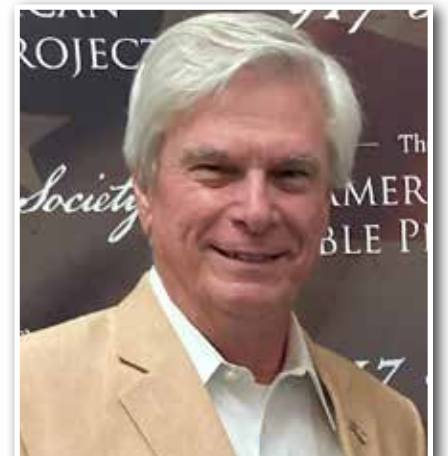
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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

"Did I cry too much on the stand?"

There were many times when I wished I could be more like my daughter. She didn't fret over the details, even the ones that would have made me crazy. Such as, wearing a thin "church sock" on one foot and a thick athletic sock on the other for an entire day at school. Or if her shirt was accidentally inside-out and backwards, so be it. I have longed for that gift, and it has served my daughter well through the years when she couldn't afford to let distracting inconsistencies take her eyes off the big picture.

My over-attention to detail and order sometimes feels like a curse. Having had a restaurant of my own in the past, I cannot walk into one without immediately counting the number of burned-out lightbulbs or straw wrappers on the floor, how many times the phone rings before someone finally answers it, and if there is a misspelled word on the menu, it jumps right off the page and screams at me.

The grocery store often falls short of my expectations. There have been a few unforgivable moments in the checkout line recently, ones that have been difficult to unsee. For instance, there was the clerk who made the mistake of grabbing too many produce items at one time and somehow thought it made sense to sling my green onions under her armpit until she could get to them. Needless to say, the green onions went into the trash on my way out the door.

So, considering the standard I try to set and maintain at Blue Monarch, one might imagine it would be hard for me to live with the natural clunkiness, chaos, and millions of moving parts that come with serving lots of women and children. I will admit, it is challenging. There is an element of surrender I must exercise every single unpredictable day, which begins with a deep breath and a prayer. I can do this. Big picture, big picture. Nevertheless, even though some details may occasionally fall through the cracks and the day rarely goes as planned, I have discovered this one thing: God acts on his own time and the miracle often happens in spite of us - in a way we never expect.

Take this incredible mother for instance. Jessie waited, and waited, and waited to be reunited with her daughter - a separation that only got more painful with each passing day, not easier. She woke up every morning to a tremendous loss - another day in her child's life she would never get back. No doubt, she must have asked herself a million times, "Should I have worn another outfit to court?", "Did I cry too much on the stand?" She probably exhausted herself, wondering what she should have done differently to get her daughter back. What detail did she overlook?

And as an organization backing her throughout this process, we poured into her circumstances and made multiple out-of-state trips, consulted with professionals, sought the best advice, submitted all the required documents, supplied letters of recommendation, presented all Jessie's accomplishments, educated the court on our

history of restoring families. We checked all the boxes, but her situation continued to drag on with little hope. There were days when this custody case seemed to take one step forward and two steps back as if there was an invisible force working against us. With a bit of weariness, we began to question what we might have overlooked or what we should have done better.

It's times like this when we are tempted to ask ourselves, "Did I not pray enough or use the right words?", "Should I have fasted more?", "Did I not get the God formula right?"



As we have often seen, one day with absolutely no warning, God made Jessie's situation come together by speaking to the heart of someone who could change the tide, someone we least expected. In the blink of an eye, this mother and her little girl were back together again.

Did we pay too much attention to the details? I don't think so because it's our duty to perform our jobs with excellence. That is the standard we uphold at Blue Monarch in everything we do, which honors God and the ones we serve.

But I suspect when God was good and ready to restore this family, it wouldn't have mattered if our socks were matching or not. He finds perfection in our imperfection anyway. Besides, you can't tell me this picture isn't already perfect in every way. Yep, I don't think I would change a thing.

Lord, please teach us to find peace in expectancy of your faithfulness. Amen.

— Susan Binkley, Founder and President, Blue Monarch,
www.blumonarch.org



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The Next Time You Offer Prayer, Consider This

Most of us have said the words, “I will be praying for you” when our friends or family are going through hardship. But how many times have we genuinely taken those prayer requests boldly to God? What would happen if rather than offering to pray privately for our friends in times of need, we instead asked if we could pray with them?

For a long time the thought of praying in front of other people made me extremely uncomfortable--even with my closest friends. Maybe you can relate. After all, at one point Jesus did chastise religious leaders for praying in public: “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (Matthew 6:5-6).

This scripture admonition shaped my thought process on the importance of praying privately for years. However, at that point in my life I had also never experienced having someone pray for me, with me. My first encounter with this happened after a sermon at church one Sunday. I was telling a friend about an exciting revelation I felt God had put on my heart earlier that week when suddenly she asked if she could pray for me right then and there.

I remember it vividly because not only was she offering to pray for me in the middle of a room filled with people buzzing around us, she was suggesting we pray as a means of celebration rather than supplication. I timidly accepted, worried how awkward I would feel. I could not have been more wrong. The words she spoke over me made me feel so seen and loved by God in that moment. He taught me an invaluable lesson that day about the need for boldness and encouragement within the body of the church.

Though Jesus did preach against public prayer that is rooted in a desire to be admired or perceived as “holy,” we cannot lose sight of all the places where He stressed the importance, and truly, necessity for believers to pray together. In Matthew 18:19-20 Jesus taught, “Truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” Notice how Jesus emphasizes that it is when we gather together, not just pray separately for the same things, that His power fully manifests behind our requests. He reinforces this in Hebrews 10:24-25, “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another.” Jesus knew more than anyone how lonely and hopeless we can feel at times. This is especially true for His followers, because we have been spiritually attuned to recognize how much darkness exists in this world.

That is why He insisted that we pray and encourage one another together, not out of a need to check off some religious box, but rather so that together we may move His will forward on the earth as it is in Heaven. We need to be spiritually lifted out of our own perspective at times, and the most effective way to do this is to join with other believers in faith, hope and love –through prayer.

If you feel uneasy about the idea of praying out loud in front of other people, I would first encourage you. You are not alone; I think most people feel this way initially. However, instructions from God rarely feel natural to us



initially. Creating these habits takes time and repetition, and God provides us with so much grace as we find our footing.

Ask God to give you courage and to put friends or family members on your heart who you can pray with either over the phone or in person. When we step out in faith and rely on His strength--even as we pray--He equips us and brings beautiful fruit from our lives. Your prayers could be exactly what someone needs right now. Don't miss an opportunity for God to use you!

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

— Christen Limbaugh Bloom is the co-author of “The Resurrected Jesus” and the creator of Haplous, a Christian blog and Bible study community. Her writing focuses on practical “baby steps” individuals can take while pursuing a deeper relationship with God. Christen lives with her husband, Sam, and their son in Texas. You can follow Christen’s blog on Instagram at @haplous_official and her website at www.haplousofficial.com.

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THE HOME FRONT

Nobody Wants Ants!

After a long day, all most of us want is to get home and curl up with a tub of ice cream or that apple pie from the weekend. Well, it turns out so do sugar ants. Have you ever walked into your kitchen and found a swarm of bugs trying to crawl off with that forgotten piece of candy your toddler left on the counter? Well, those are sugar ants for you!

Sugar ants, also known as odorous house ants, are attracted to anything sweet. They can march in long lines, invading your countertops and pantry, searching for crumbs, or spilled sugar.

How Can You Tell if You Have a Sugar Ant Problem?

- **Live Ants:** Spotting a bunch of ants crawling around on your floor, in your cabinets, or on your countertops is the first obvious red flag.
- **Outdoor Nests:** These sneaky critters love to set up camp under parking lots, driveways, and sidewalks. Keep an eye out for small dirt mounds popping up from cracks in the concrete or asphalt. If they're close to your building, they'll likely find their way inside.
- **Frass:** Carpenter ants are the culprits behind this one. They love to build their nests inside walls, tunneling through damp or rotten wooden beams. And what do they leave behind? Piles of sawdust and debris called frass. Not exactly the decor you

were going for.

- **Swarmers:** When a sugar ant colony is thriving, they produce winged reproductives. So, if you spot ants with wings buzzing around your windows or doors, Houston, we've got a problem.
- **Chewing Noises:** These insects, especially carpenter and pavement ants, can make some noise. You may hear them as they go about their business of building cozy homes inside structures. The larger the population, the louder and more noticeable the chewing noises.

How To Get Rid of Sugar Ants In Your Home

Clean, Clean, Clean. First things first, it's time to channel your inner cleaning superhero. Sugar ants are always on the lookout for food sources, so keeping your kitchen and dining area squeaky clean is crucial. Regularly wipe down countertops, sweep up crumbs, and vacuum any areas where food particles might have fallen. Don't forget to clean your pet's feeding area as well because ants are not picky eaters. By eliminating their food supply, you'll make your home less appealing to these sweet-seeking critters.

Seal the Entry Points

Sugar ants are tiny and can find their way into your home through even the tiniest cracks and crevices. Take some time to inspect your windows,

doors, and other potential entry points. Seal up gaps and openings using caulk or weatherstripping. This will help prevent new ant scouts from finding their way inside.

Remove Temptation

To win the war against sugar ants, you need to eliminate any temptation in their path. Store food items in airtight containers, including sugar, honey, and other sweet treats. Don't leave fruit or food scraps uncovered on your countertops. Keep your pantry organized and regularly check for any signs of ant activity.

Professional Pest Control

Do keep in mind these tips can help limit infestations, but it is most recommended to contact a licensed pest control company. Pest control professionals have the knowledge, experience, and tools to tackle sugar ant infestations effectively. Waynes Services can identify the source of the problem, treat the affected areas, and provide you with a tailored plan to keep those pesky sugar ants at bay. A professional touch is the best way to ensure a sugar ant-free home.

— Meredith Boyd, Social Media and Marketing Specialist, www.callwaynes.com

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Cleaning Schedule for Working Moms and Dads

Raising a family and working a full-time job may leave you very little time to keep your home as clean as you'd like. Looking at dusty furniture and dirty floors each day can be frustrating. Is getting used to a messy home the only option? Not according to the cleaning pros at Molly Maid. Here are some tips and useful advice that can help keep your home tidy and clean, even if you don't have a lot of time.



you should have four bathroom cleaners, four toilet bowl cleaners, and four toilet bowl brushes. Just be sure to stow any cleaning products in child-proof cabinets. This will save you multiple trips around the house looking for the cleaner supplies you need for each room.

9 Cleaning Tips for Busy Moms and Dads

Instead of being irritated by the clutter in the living room, the food stuck on the counters, and the laundry piling up, it's time to take action! Here are some great ways to keep up with the mess before it takes over your life.

1. Create a Routine

Because everyone's schedule and family routine may be a little different, cleaning schedules for working moms and dads should be based on your family routine, work hours, and fun time. Here is an example of an effective work schedule that requires 90 minutes of cleaning and organizing a day:

Before School/Work - 30 minutes total

- Make your bed and help children (under 10 years old) make theirs.
- Clean all breakfast dishes and wipe down the counters.
- Vacuum a few high-traffic areas.

After Work - 30 minutes total

- Start a load of laundry.
- Organize homework papers and mail
- Clean up dinner dishes (load dishwasher) and wipe all counters

Before Bed - 30 minutes total

- Declutter living areas and lightly dust furniture.
- Fold and sort laundry.

2. Stock Up On Supplies in Advance

It is frustrating to get hyped up to clean your house only to discover that you are out of bathroom cleaner. Do a monthly supply inventory check of which cleaners you have and which you need to buy so when you are ready to clean, nothing will stand in your way.

3. Wash Toys With Ease

If you have young children, there are two easy ways to wash those germ-ridden toys they love. You can put all the toys in the dishwasher and wash them through a cycle. Or, wash them on a delicate cycle in the washing machine. Washing your children's toys once a week will reduce the amount of germs they accumulate and hopefully keep them from getting sick.

4. Toss Everything in a Basket

Decluttering a household is one of the biggest challenges for a busy family. If you're constantly in a rush and don't have time during the day to put things in their proper place, start a mess bin. A mess bin can be used for things like shoes, socks, toys, makeup, and other things that you don't have time to put away during the day. When things settle down, and you have more time, choose a family member to put these items into their proper place (kind of like restocking shelves). Take turns and choose a different family member for this task each time, and don't forget to reward a job well done.

5. Put Cleaning Supplies Where You Use Them

Keep cleaning supplies where they're needed, so you never have to cart them from room to room. For example, if you have four bathrooms in your house,

6. Keep a Donation Box Accessible

Most of us accumulate a lot of stuff. Kids are constantly growing out of clothes and shoes. Parents need to get rid of wardrobe items they don't wear anymore. Instead of letting these items pile up in closets or corners of bedrooms, designate a donation box when you're ready to purge. Once the box is full, bring it to a donation center in your community.

7. Pick Up a Few Times a Day

Here is another good cleaning tip for busy moms and dads: divide your home into three working zones and spend 10 to 15 minutes a day picking up and decluttering each zone. This creates a slow and steady decluttering process rather than a major cleanup at the end of each day that will leave you exhausted.

8. Touch Something Once

The rule is a simple one: put away what you take out. Teach your children the "one touch" rule, which is the philosophy of only touching something once before putting it away. For example, if you take crackers out of the pantry to eat, put them away as soon as you're finished. This simple exercise avoids messes piling up in your home throughout the day.

9. Do Laundry Every Day

Keep up with the laundry by completing one load a day during the week and save your weekend time off for fun. After each load is clean and dry, don't wait, fold it and put it away the same day. This will keep it from piling up at the end of the week.

Whether you'd like a one-time cleaning or a weekly recurring cleaning plan, our custom cleaning plans are designed to work around your schedule and budget. Contact your local Molly Maid – 615-794-0200 or 615-603-3766, today to discuss a cleaning plan that's right for you.

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— Ashley Farrar



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homes. The Ms. Molly Foundation strives to empower communities to end the cycle of violence in the home. It's our goal to help give victims of domestic violence a second chance at happiness

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Does God Exist?

As a Christian writer and speaker, I get this question all the time. And while my approach to answering it differs based on the context and the person asking, my answer is always the same: “Yes, God exists. God is real and He has communicated Himself to human beings through mighty acts in history, through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, and through the Bible.”

Also, “If you’d like, I can provide some ‘proofs’ that confirm His existence. But—and this is important—even when you’re not absolutely certain about God, believing in God is still the most reasonable and rational decision you could make.” Let’s talk about proofs first. What’s some good evidence we have for God’s existence?

The Cause Argument

One proof has to do with the existence of the universe. How did the universe come into being? This might seem like an obvious question, but philosophers weren’t always puzzled by this, since—for centuries—most believed the universe had no beginning at all. But many scientists now believe that the universe came into being very suddenly in what is called the “Big Bang.”

Here’s the puzzle the Big Bang introduces: what caused it? Or, rather, who caused it?

This puzzle led agnostic physicist Robert Jastrow, founder of NASA’s Goddard Institute of Space Studies, to write, “A sound explanation may exist for the explosive birth of our Universe; but if it does, science cannot find out what the explanation is. The scientist’s pursuit of the past ends in the moment of creation.” The Big Bang presents a question that atheistic scientists have great difficulty answering. Jastrow’s conclusion? Theologians have long known what scientists cannot prove: there must be a Creator, a God who caused the universe to be.

The Design Argument

Another proof has to do with the order in the universe. It’s often called the “design” argument because it argues that the universe’s complex and intricate design leads us to believe that there must have been a Designer. If you find yourself admiring the Apple watch you purchased recently, complete with a sophisticated electronic infrastructure and sleek cover, you wouldn’t feel thankful to the watch for designing itself. But you might very well find yourself being grateful for Steve Jobs, who founded Apple, and for his team of designers who crafted the latest version of the Apple watch.

Lehigh University chemist Michael Behe, Notre Dame philosopher Alvin Plantinga, and many other intellectuals make this point another way, by pointing to the sheer impossibility of the universe achieving order without some external guidance. Even something as simple as the individual cell is so sophisticated that its design could not have evolved randomly.

The Moral Argument

A third proof has to do with the moral order of the universe. Most people believe that there are certain things that are absolutely wrong and other things that are absolutely right. This universal assumption of morality implies some kind of Law Giver.

Think about it. You probably think it is always and everywhere wrong to kill an innocent child in an elementary school. (Hopefully, you do.) You probably also think it is always and everywhere wrong to hate another person merely because of his or her skin color. If so, you believe in an absolute “moral law.”

But here again, we find a puzzle for atheists. If our moral ideas really are laws—not cultural assumptions or merely personal convictions—there must be something objective about them, something that stands “outside” or “over” us. You don’t gain moral authority by saying, “Because I said so.” If the moral law comes from us—either individually or collectively—it loses its authority. In order for something to be absolute and binding on all people, it must come from Somebody outside of our world. That Somebody is God.

Pascal’s Wager

I could go on. But as I mentioned to begin with, even without these proofs, belief in God remains completely rational and reasonable. This point was made, famously, by French mathematician, scientist, and philosopher Blaise Pascal.

Pascal argued that atheists cannot prove for certain that there is no God. Most thoughtful people understand this, which is why people who don’t think God exists prefer to call themselves agnostic (“We can’t really know”) rather than atheist (“There is no God”).

Because our decisions about God’s existence could never arrive at absolute certainty, Pascal recognized there would always be an element of chance. We have to wager, betting either for or against God’s existence.

Pascal argued that betting for God is the only wager that can pay off. If God doesn’t exist, then the believer and nonbeliever are in the same boat—everyone loses. But if God does exist, the stakes change dramatically: betting for Him carries enormous benefits; betting against Him carries enormous loss.

Pascal was right. Even if our “proofs” of God’s existence don’t allow us to see or touch or hear God, there is good reason to wager that He exists. I’m not much of a gambling man, but I can say this: believing in God is the best bet you’ll ever make.

— Bruce Riley Ashford, Jr., Ph D is Follow him on Twitter @BruceAshford, www.bruceashford.net

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God's Plan of Salvation

God created us to honor and serve Him

Revelation 4:11: "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist[b] and were created

Each of us has sinned against God

Romans 3:10: As it is written, "There is none righteous, no, not one"
Romans 3:23: For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

The penalty for sin is eternal separation from God and Heaven

Romans 6:23: For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Good works cannot ever earn God's forgiveness and Salvation

Titus 3:5: not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.

God loves each of us

John 3:16: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Jesus Christ died on the cross in our place, paying the penalty for our sin

Romans 5:8: But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

We each must accept Jesus Christ as our personal Savior

Romans 10:9: that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:13: For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

To accept Christ into your heart and life, pray a simple prayer

along these lines - *"Dear God, I know that I am a sinner and I am sorry for my sins. I know that Jesus died for my sins and the sins of the world. Right now, I ask Jesus into my heart and receive Him as my personal Savior. Forgive me of my sins, thank you for saving me through the blood of Jesus. Please Lord, help me live for you. In Jesus name, amen."*

All scriptures are taken from The New King James Version of the Holy Bible.

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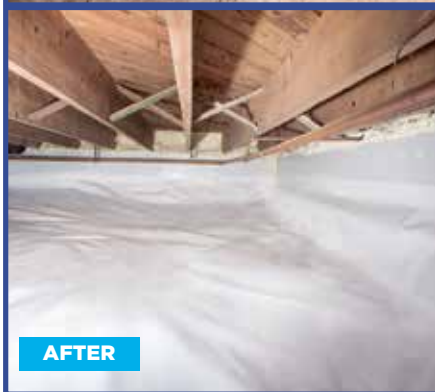


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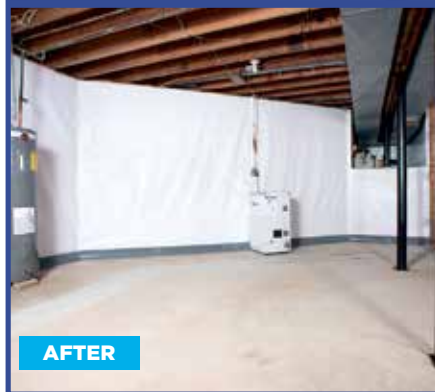


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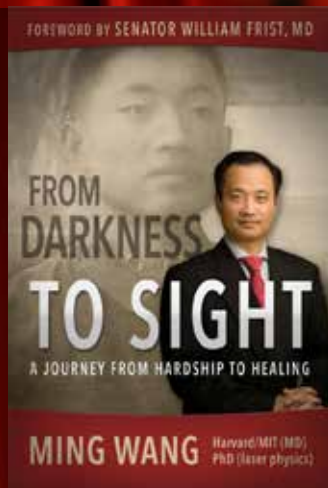
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