

THE JOURNAL

A RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY SPOUSES

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The Gift of Self-Discipline



ON THE COVER

Living in the ministry fishbowl brings special challenges to our relationships—both inside and outside the family. Achieve success with tools for self-discipline and character growth.



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My Addiction

GROWING UP, I WAS ADDICTED to TV. When it came to media, I had no self-discipline. As a teen girl, I had faint thoughts about spending time with Jesus instead of watching TV every night, but I loved my shows. In comparison, reading the Bible seemed dull and boring.

When my husband asked me to marry him, I said, “Yes, but only if you promise that we will never own a TV.” People felt sorry for our poor TV-free house and kept offering to give us one.

When Jerry was a church departmental director, our son and I traveled with him as much as possible. We stayed in a lot of hotels, and of course, there was the TV—staring me in the face. After little Tyson fell asleep, on came the TV. The next morning I’d feel so disgusted with myself.

Then I heard someone say, “Why would you entertain yourself by watching the sins that nailed Jesus to the cross?” How could I keep doing this? But my real life could be so boring!

One day I knelt by my bed and prayed, “Lord, I don’t want to keep giving in to this deep craving for TV and movies. Please take away my overwhelming desire. I’m so miserable.” A faint thought from God drifted through my mind: *I want you to decide, from this day on, that you won’t watch it anymore.*

“I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me. A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will not know wickedness.”

Psalm 101:3, 4, NKJV

I got up from my knees, determined never to turn on the TV again, and the craving totally left me. I felt peace, and I haven’t had the desire since.

Visiting friends and family was tough though. I shared my struggle with a friend, and we began praying together. One winter we were going to visit family, and I knew I’d be tempted. Our visit coincided with abnormally cold weather, which resulted in a very weak electrical current. There wasn’t enough power to run television for a whole week!

Once, as I ate dinner with church members, the husband and wife shared their struggle with wasting endless hours watching TV. They wanted to get more involved in church outreach but had no time because they watched so much TV.

We prayed together, asking God to help them change. For a while they did. Then, little by little, they slipped back into wasting every evening in front of the television. So we started praying intensely for them.

One night, after watching whatever was on until 11:00 p.m., the husband said, “I wish the TV would just blow up.”

The next morning when he and the children left for work and school, the TV was still on. The wife heard a loud noise and ran into the living room. Smoke

poured out of the TV, and it wouldn’t turn on.

She called her husband at work and said, “Remember last night when you wished the TV would blow up? Well, it just did!”

Television, movies, video games, and uncontrolled time on the Internet will take a toll on families both spiritually and intellectually. If this is a problem in your home, I encourage you to pray much for God to change it. It is much harder to develop a love for the Bible and prayer when we constantly fill our minds with worldly standards and entertainment.

In Philippians 4:8 Paul tells us how to live filled with Jesus’ presence: “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (NIV).

I’m praying for you as you discover more and more the joy and peace that comes from living each day for Jesus. **J**

Janet Page serves as associate ministerial secretary for pastoral spouses, families, and prayer.



Drinking From the Same Cup

PART 2

PEOPLE TRAVELED FAR TO HEAR John the Baptist speak. His ministry had touched the lives of thousands, from poor, struggling Jewish men and women, to hardened Roman soldiers, and even to King Herod himself. Then, at the height of his manhood and ministry, he found himself rotting in jail, robbed of his usefulness, tortured in spirit, and battling the whispers of demons: “God has forsaken you. If Jesus really is the Messiah, if He is good, then why isn’t He delivering you from suffering? How could He allow this to happen to you?”

Seeking psychological calm, mental guidance, and help in coping, John sent his friends to Jesus. Through them, Jesus gave John what he needed—a revelation of Himself and of the true nature of His kingdom. He would bring all suffering and injustice to an end, but first He must win the hearts of men and women through a revelation of the self-sacrificing love of God, a love that was willing to suffer for them.

John saw that Jesus’ mission could win from the nation’s leaders only hatred and condemnation. As John had paved the way for Christ’s ministry, introducing Him to the masses and now suffering unjustly, he realized that he was but drinking of the cup that Christ Himself must drain to the last drop. With this, John surrendered himself to God for life or for death, as should best serve the interests of the cause he loved. John the Baptist realized that he was sharing in something bigger than himself. It became an honor for him to become a partaker.

When we understand that we are suffering *with* the One who loves us above all others, that He is with us, and that nothing shall separate us from His love, that trials will only bring us closer to our suffering Savior, then the bitter can become sweet. “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, *I will be with you*; and through the rivers, *they shall not overflow you*. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned” (Isa. 43:1, 2, NKJV).

I will be with you. When you love someone, being with that person is the dominant desire. “The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart” (Ps. 34:18, NKJV).

The waters shall *not overflow you*. Have you ever seen surfers riding monstrous tsunami-size waves? Comparable to jumping off a cliff, they courageously drop onto nearly 100-foot swells. The wave begins to curl and then crash. For a moment the surfer is hidden. He has been riding the tube and now is sliding



out of the tunnel. Then it appears that the whole wave has crashed, and again he is lost to sight. The waters must have overflowed him. But no, out of the mountains of mist and spray a speck appears. He is in front of that wave! He is still standing!

Surfer Dave Kalama describes surfing such waves, being next to that much raw power, as a spiritual experience. “A wave,” he says, “is essentially energy passing through the ocean until it breaks and disperses. To be that close to that much energy being released can be humbling.”¹ We too will be humbled and awed as we draw near to the power and energy of God. To be close is what we desire. Yet, waiting for all seekers is an antagonistic power, attempting in every way to thwart such intimacy.

Paul wrote, “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Phil. 1:29, KJV). Did Paul mean we are to passively accept suffering as a part of life? Absolutely not. The Bible also says, “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour [through temptation, trials, and suffering]. *Resist him*, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings” (1 Pet. 5:9, NIV, adapted). Resist. Fight it. The call is to do whatever we can to alleviate suffering, not only in our own lives but in the lives of all of our brothers and sisters around the world who are suffering as well.

In dealing with the pain, remember that you have options. You can numb the pain with a chemical of choice. You can blame yourself until you are good for nothing. You can grow angry and bitter, which will result in the decaying of your soul. You can grow apathetic and icy, stuffing the

pain in a corner, and therefore being less of who you really are. Or you can discover a level of intimacy with a Companion and Friend like no other. He will meet you in the darkness and gently lead you back to the light. There will come a day when you will look back and “remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you *stood your ground* in a great contest in the face of suffering” (Heb. 10:32, NIV, 1984). “And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast” (1 Pet. 5:10, NIV, 1984). After you have endured, you will be immovable. Strong, firm, and steadfast will be your relationship with Christ.

Remembering his days of suffering in the Auschwitz Nazi prison camp, Viktor Frankl wrote, “When a man finds that it is his destiny to suffer, he will have to accept his suffering as his task; his single and unique task. . . . His unique opportunity lies in the way in which he bears his burden. . . . Suffering had become a task on which we did not want to turn our backs. We had realized its hidden opportunities. . . .”²

How you bear your suffering depends upon where you focus at such times. Too often we tightly shut our eyes, waiting for the pain to pass. But if we will keep them open, groping in the darkness after Him, searching for His provision during such times, He has promised that He will be found in us. We will find Him near, very near, drinking from the same cup. **J**

¹ Nicole Davis, “Surfing into Jaws,” *Adventure Magazine*, Jul. 2002. http://www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/0207/q_n_a.html.

² Victor Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), p. 86.

Risë Rafferty has worked for *Light Bearers* for over 20 years as a writer and public speaker. Her passion to help others realize that God has an amazing plan for them physically and spiritually is seen in her monthly *ALIVE* articles on various health topics. Risë has enjoyed sharing messages of physical, emotional, and relational health with various audiences. She is married to James Rafferty. She is also a proud mother of two amazing kids.

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.”

Phil. 1:29, KJV

A Heart That Fantasizes

FROM CHILDHOOD, I ALWAYS had a vivid imagination.

With little outside influences from TV or movies, my sister and I developed plays and stories, sermons and programs. We didn't need video games—we just had our imaginations!

As I grew into my teens and young adulthood, Satan took that imagination, which was a gift from God, and began to feed me stories and movies that transformed my healthy imagination into a fantasy, romance world.

Anytime I had a pang of conscience, he would spin another of his wonderful lies: “Everyone else is watching this movie, and they're all good Christian girls.” Or, “It's not a romance novel; it's a Christian novel with just a little romantic story interwoven.”

I would decide not to read fiction anymore and would keep that promise for months and sometimes years. But the stories lived on in my mind. Try as I might, they were very hard to ignore, hard to forget.

Years passed, and I earnestly sought to follow Jesus.

God led Greg and me together in marriage. We didn't have much money, but we had each other and our commitment to God. Early on, we bought a little thirteen-inch TV. I was concerned because of my attraction to romantic stories and movies, but I rationalized that everyone else in our church watched TV, and they were good Christians. In fact, they preached, taught, and lived the Christian walk better than I did.

Greg enjoyed the news and weather, but I soon latched on to something else—soap operas! They were a good romance novel come to life. The stories danced right from the screen into my mind, to be replayed and reworked in countless different ways. I was hooked.

I hid my addiction from Greg as best I could. In fact, I thought he didn't know until one evening when he shared how God had called him to be the priest of our

home, how he was accountable to God for the salvation of our family. Then he mentioned my cherished sin—soap operas. I was stunned! I knew that what I was watching was wrong. I knew those shows were leading me away from Jesus. But I was addicted! Try as I might, I couldn't tear myself away.

Greg knew all of this, and God gave him the wisdom, courage, and love to make the right decision for our home. Through the years, I've never forgotten his words. "Jilly, God is asking me as priest of our home to disconnect secular TV." He knew I didn't have the strength to make that choice on my own, so he led in that decision. We knelt down and prayed, seeking forgiveness as a couple, asking for strength to throw out our TV antenna, pleading for purity of heart and life.

That decision we made together almost ten years ago was one of the best decisions of our lives. It started me on that path to purity and peace, holiness and oneness with my Savior. I've never regretted it. And I've always blessed my husband for having the strength to make the difficult decision I couldn't seem to make for myself.

I believe Satan lays special traps for women in this area of purity. While men are visually stimulated—and therefore especially vulnerable to pornography or visual images—women are emotionally stimulated. Just as porn tempts many men, romantic novels, TV programs, and movies are a trap for many women. They may look different, but the end result is the same: a heart pulled away from beholding Jesus, a mind filled with romantic fantasies, a soul polluted with lust, a longing for what isn't ours.

I don't know where you are in your journey to purity of heart and life. Whether you're just beginning this journey or are miles down the road, take heart! Jesus loves you and longs to set you free. I know what it's like to say, "Lord, take my heart. I'm

choosing You!" and the next instant be bombarded with an inappropriate or impure thought from my past. For some people, Jesus gives instant release, immediate deliverance. But it didn't work that way for me. It was an intense battle, an earnest hand-to-hand combat, but Jesus gained the victory. Here's how it worked for me—and how it can for you too:

Step 1: I sought forgiveness. Go to your heavenly Father. After all, He already knows your struggles, your heart's issues, and your lustful thoughts. Ask Him for forgiveness, for the cleansing blood of Jesus. Now get up off your knees, believing you're the purified bride of the King, cleansed, sanctified, and ready for service! Don't waste time doing penance. Simply come as you are, ask for forgiveness, and then go forth in His strength!

Step 2: I surrendered my heart, my thought life, and my emotions. This isn't a once-in-a-lifetime surrender. Steps 2, 3, and 4 are where my battle took place. I would surrender my romantic fantasy to God, only to have it pop back up almost immediately. When a fantasy comes back to you, don't dwell on it! Cry out to God for help! He promises, "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear" (Isa. 65:24, NKJV). Cling to Him. Surrender, re-surrender, and then surrender again! Each time it gets easier. Each time it takes longer before those lustful thoughts resurface.

Step 3: I beheld Jesus. Of all the steps, I believe this is one of the most important. After all, how can we sweep our house and keep it clean without replacing what we pushed out with something—or Someone—else (Matt. 12:43-45)? Look to Jesus! See Him in His purity. Study His life. Spend time in His Word and with others who are seeking Him. Behold Him as you work, as you drive, as you talk, and your life will be transformed into His image.

"Before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear."

Isa. 65:24, NKJV

God looks at you and says, "I have a beautiful plan for your life. You're going to be a princess! You might be wallowing in the mud right now, but I want to transform you into a dazzling woman, radiant with My glory and My purity." That's what Jesus can do! Just behold Him.

Step 4: I guarded the avenues of my mind. This is key! We can't strive for purity of heart and life while we constantly feed our romantic fantasies. What we feed grows, and what we starve dies (Gal. 5:24). Paul tells us to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts" (Rom. 13:14, NKJV). Practically speaking, how do we accomplish that? By removing the temptation, as far as possible, from our homes. Are you struggling with watching programs on TV that are feeding your romantic fantasies? Get rid of your TV! Is a book from your bookshelf tempting you? Throw it away! Does one of your magazines pull at the lust in your heart? Cancel your subscription!

I know this seems harsh, *but it works*. I used to say I was strong enough in Jesus to keep those books in my home, but I wasn't. I wouldn't read them for a long time, but then, in a weak moment, I'd look in their direction. How much easier to remove that temptation from your home!

Sometimes, it's hard to decide what is acceptable to listen to, watch, and read. So submit everything to the test of God's Word. Compare it with Philippians 4:8. Ask yourself, *Is it true? Honest? Pure?* As you go down the list, you'll find that many will automatically be eliminated. Be open to the Holy Spirit's work in your heart and life. The more you seek His face and desire to follow Him, the more sensitive you will become to His voice. Open your heart to Him, and your mind will be transformed!

Step 5: I became accountable. If you're married and your husband is open to God and to talking with you about it, then share with him. Share your frustrations, your struggles, and your need

for prayer. If you're single, or uncomfortable sharing with your husband, then find a trusted female friend to pray with, share with, and be accountable to. There's power in united prayer!

Step 6: I stopped comparing myself to others.

Recently, I complained to my friend about one of the fifth graders at our school and the movie he'd seen. What rankled me was that a ten-year-old was watching something that I knew would draw *me* back into that romantic fantasyland. Why did I have to be so strict? Why couldn't I watch it too?

My sister listened and then gently reminded me that I don't need to compare myself with others. God only asks me to look at my *own* heart. He knows the way my heart works, He knows my past struggles with impurity, so He has a special guard over my heart—and that's OK. That's not only OK, it's a blessing!

I don't know where your heart is right now. Lust is a serious topic. I know it's also a difficult one. Keep an open mind and heart to the work the Holy Spirit wants to do in your life. Know that no matter where you've been or how far you've fallen, Jesus longs to stand you up as His purified, cleansed daughter. You're a princess! Guard your heart. Let our Father hold it in His hands and keep it pure for you so you can stand before the world as a spectacle "both to angels and to men" of His power, His grace, and His glory (1 Cor. 4:9)! **J**

Note: This article is a condensed version of the chapter "A Heart That Fantasizes" from her new book.

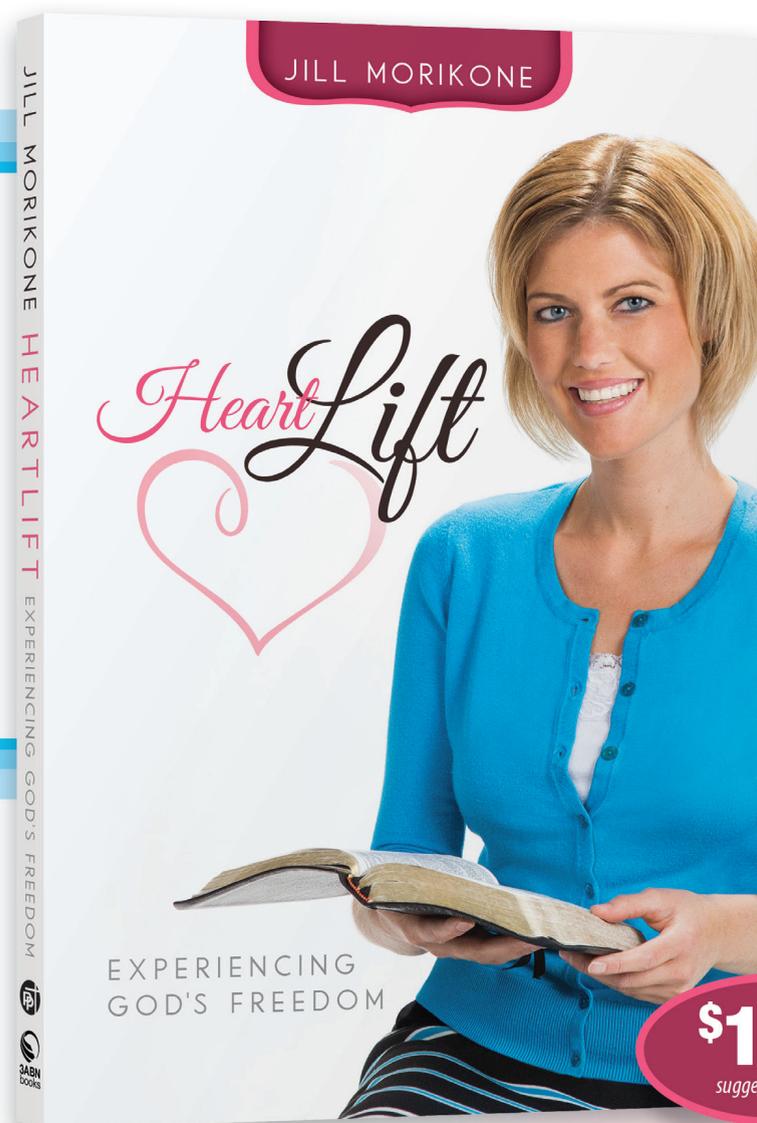
Jill Morikone is an author, speaker, and pianist. She works as administrative assistant to the president at Three Angels Broadcasting Network. Jill's column, "Journeys with Jesus," appears in the Adventist Review, and she recently completed a book for women entitled HeartLift: Experiencing God's Freedom.

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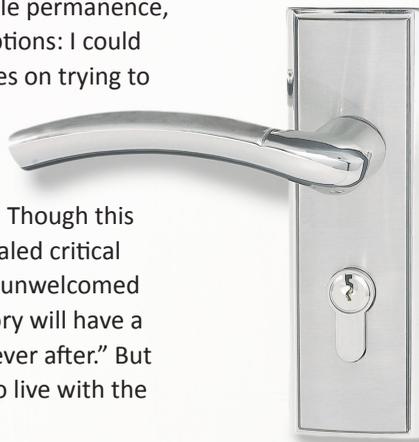
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Living with the Intruder

Who are you? Why are you here? What do you want from me?

These questions were still unanswered as I tried to compose myself in the presence of the intruder. It was a time when many dreams tumbled over each other in the rush toward reality, and I thought I was in control of most aspects of my life. I was married and madly in love, college was behind me for a while, and I had just given birth to my first child.

Then, out of nowhere, this intruder arrived, unwelcomed and uninvited. It barged in, settled at the center of my space with undeniable permanence, and made itself at home. I had two options: I could stop all activities and focus my energies on trying to evict it, or I could rearrange my life until it finally decided to leave. I tried getting rid of it, which left me exhausted, frustrated, and depressed. Though this option proved futile, the process revealed critical information, such as the name of this unwelcomed life guest. I hope that someday my story will have a fairy tale ending and I'll "live happily ever after." But until then, my survival means I have to live with the intruder.



INTRUDER IDENTIFIED

Can you imagine living with a health disorder that is little-understood by doctors, often thought to be a figment of your imagination, yet affects almost every aspect of your life? While baffling the medical world, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) has wreaked havoc in the lives of more than half a million North Americans (statistics are not available for other continents), with 70 to 80 percent of them being

women. CFS does not discriminate by race or ethnicity. It is also known as chronic fatigue immune dysfunction syndrome (CFIDS), and outside of the United States it is often called myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines CFS as “a debilitating and complex disorder characterized by profound fatigue that is not improved by bed rest and that may be worsened by physical or mental activity. In addition to these key defining characteristics, patients report various nonspecific symptoms, including weakness, muscle pain, impaired memory and/or mental concentration, insomnia, and post-exertional fatigue lasting more than 24 hours.”

I was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome eighteen years ago and have lived with it for longer. I know first-hand the pain, frustration, and fears associated with its limitations. When I finally learned what it was, I felt bittersweet relief. Finally, someone put a name to what everyone had said was only in my head. To hear the doctor accurately describing my symptoms made me almost want to celebrate. However, that excitement was short-lived, followed by the sobering recognition that there is no cure.

CHALLENGES

Doctors have come a long way in understanding the physical symptoms of CFS/ME, but here are a few things that sometimes get overlooked:

1. Looking great but feeling bad

The absence of common indicators of illness, such as fever, rash, or swelling, sometimes makes observers think a patient is lazy or faking it. Those who do believe you may suggest simple “solutions,” ranging from more rest

and exercise to positive thinking. These may help slightly, but having onlookers reduce one’s suffering to a “minor inconvenience” can be irritating. The patient feels the need to convince the onlooker but feels even worse at the unspoken response: “Yeah, right, it’s all in your head.” CFS patients need acknowledgement of reality, not pity. These suggestions may help you take control on bad days:

- **Accept that you are not feeling well.** Sometimes we push our down-side to match our up-side, and sooner or later we are up-side-down. Don’t give in to the idea that it may just be in your head; trust your intuition.
- **Pace yourself** based on how you feel, not on how others think you should be feeling. Sometimes short siestas between activities will give enough energy to complete a project.
- **Accept your limitations.** The fact that your limitations may be temporary does not make them less real. Do what you can and defer what you cannot.

2. Loneliness

CFS has often been described as “the lonely plague” because you feel separated from those who care by towering walls of ignorance. You may want to explain your ordeal to those willing to listen, but the wide cross-section of symptoms makes it difficult to paint an accurate picture. It is nearly impossible for someone who has never experienced it to truly understand. Each flare may come with a new combination of symptoms, making life even more challenging. Rattling off long lists of seemingly-unrelated symptoms may make you sound like a hypochondriac. However, we are social beings, and we connect with each other by sharing feelings and needs. Inability to do this will leave you isolated and lonely. I’ve learned some ideas that may be used on up-days by both those who support and those who suffer, to make the journey less isolating.

- **Journal your symptoms and feelings.** Writing how you feel allows you to put your symptoms in words without the pressure of

It is nearly impossible for someone who has never experienced it to truly understand.

*He promised in 2 Corinthians 12:9 that His
“power is made perfect in weakness.”*

being accurate. After doing this for a while, you will feel more confident to express them to a care provider or a friend.

- **Raise public awareness.** Sensitivity to the needs of CFS patients can be heightened through posters and panel discussions at local libraries, schools, and church groups.
- **Find related books and videos and make them available to friends and family members.** Hearing the story from someone else usually strengthens the case.
- **Ask for help.** Many times we are left alone simply because our friends feel helpless, not knowing what they can do. Identify simple ways by which they can offer support.
- **Find a support group.** Because it is a highly under-diagnosed condition, you may not know anyone else with CFS, but you can find support groups online or through your doctor.

3. Fear

There are days when I am extremely fearful that my vulnerability will be exposed. I try hard to cope and live a normal life, but occasionally I have unwelcome displays of what I try so hard to hide. I remember once attending a meeting and giving a presentation with great confidence. Near the end of my lecture, I suddenly forgot a critical word, then the whole phrase, and then the whole thought eluded me. I panicked! I'd lost my memory and stood helplessly silent as tears trickled down my cheeks. I have never forgotten that day, and ever so often I cringe at the thought of it

happening again. Other possibilities that conjure fear include:

- falling due to sudden weakness in your legs
- irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) at the most inconvenient time
- losing your job due to incompetence
- being a lousy mom because of unpredictable mood swings
- losing friends because it takes so much effort to understand your fluctuations
- and the list goes on

As a motivational speaker and minister's wife, I find it disconcerting to live with an unpredictable illness. However, I have learned to trust God's strength for me when I am at my weakest. He promised in 2 Corinthians 12:9 that His "power is made perfect in weakness." Some of my best performances have occurred during a CFS flare, because I had to depend on God wholeheartedly to work through me! Another good thing is that CFS comes in spurts, leaving some symptom-free periods to gather strength and build precious memories before the next attack.

For now, I still live with the intruder. Though I still resent its presence, I've learned the art of cohabiting. Though I now see life through a different window, and freedom has a new meaning, it is still *my* life—the intruder is only a tenant; I am still the landlord. 7

Patrice Williams-Gordon has been married to Danhugh Gordon for 22 years and absolutely enjoys sharing in his ministry. Together with their two teenage girls, they have served in Jamaica and the Bahamas. Additionally, through Hope TV, freelance writing, and extensive speaking at retreats and seminars, Patrice has been able to influence the world for Christ. She enjoys speaking, reading, travelling, and laughing.

HOW DO YOU DEFINE “FAMILY”? WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL MOST UNIFIED WITH YOUR SPOUSE AS A MINISTRY PARTNER?



We like to hear your answers to questions like this. To participate, join our Facebook group online at www.facebook.com/groups/ministerialspouses/. Your answer could be featured in an upcoming issue of The Journal. Responses may be edited to fit the space.

TOBI FEGAN PAWSON

I feel most unified in ministry with my husband when I go along with him for visitations, whether it's at a church member's home or in the hospital. Being side by side with him on the front lines of ministry makes me really feel connected to him as a ministry partner.

KATIE MILLER

My parents adopted me, so I see family a little differently than most. It's not “blood” that draws me close, but as Jesus said, “These are my brothers and sisters.” I see my hubby and daughters as my closest family, but anyone I come across is also my brother and sister, some closer than others.

I am called to ministry, and I like serving with my handsome hubby: visiting, Bible studies, going door to door, reading with him for growth—these are just some of the ways I feel united with him.

SARAH K. ASAFTEI

For me, family takes on several layers—my immediate sacred circle of husband and children, my extended blood relatives, and my “tribe” of chosen family who are not actually related but sometimes feel even closer than kin.

Talking and praying together at the end of the day makes me feel that we are united in ministry and sharing each other's burdens.

LAURA LUCIO

For me, family is a combination of the protector and the protected. Family is what gives me safety and also what I yearn to keep safe. We created it: my husband, my soon-to-be-born baby. The baby makes my protective instinct so much more accentuated, I think. It's as if nothing else matters. My parents and siblings are just my heritage. But the family we made? Oh that's just it: people God puts together to resemble a piece of heaven.

I like joining my husband in church affairs as much as I can. But nothing unifies us more ministerially than when we do research together (for example, discussing together what we believe on hot topics in culture and doctrine based on the Bible, Ellen White, history, and prayer; studying out what Daniel 7 is really all about; or studying prophecies and finding new ways to share old teachings). These study conversations unify us intellectually and spiritually.

If You're Ever in a Jam, Here I Am!

*"If you're ever up a tree, phone to me;
If you're ever down a well, ring my bell;
If you ever lose your teeth, and you're out to dine, borrow mine.
It's friendship, friendship, just the perfect blend-ship.
When other friendships have been forgate—ours will still be great!"*

THESE ARE SOME WORDS from the old Cole Porter song "Friendship"—a fun and entertaining song, but also a meaningful message regarding the importance and role of friendships.

Studies show that good friends can have a positive impact on health, general well-being, and even longevity—all benefits that we rarely appreciate fully. Friendships are important for healthy social development in children, and teenagers greatly value peer relationships. However as we grow into adulthood, our lives overflow with family responsibilities, careers,

home duties, church activities, and community demands. We tend to rely more on technology to keep in touch with each other, shrinking our circle of friendships and decreasing the meaningful, face-to-face connections with those friends we still have. As a result, we can easily become isolated, detached, and lonely.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF FRIENDSHIP

"Researchers have found that having even one close friend that you confide in can extend your life by as much as 10 years," says sociologist and relationship coach Jan Yager, Ph.D., author of *Friendshifts*.



Because good friends love and care for each other, health benefits from such relationships can include these:

- **Boosting happiness and reducing stress by providing—**
 - Emotional support,
 - A ready, listening ear,
 - Opportunities for relaxing social interaction.
- **Influencing good lifestyle habits, such as—**
 - Healthful dietary choices,
 - Fun, beneficial group exercise activities,
 - A more balanced lifestyle.
- **Increasing our confidence by—**
 - Affirming our strengths and self-worth,
 - Encouraging a sense of belonging and purpose,
 - Giving opportunities for us to be helpful, caring friends in return.
- **Influencing positive outcomes to health challenges by—**
 - Encouraging early physician check-up when we complain of symptoms,
 - Enhancing quicker recovery from surgery, illness, and trauma through supportive care,
 - Lessening the emotional burden of a life-threatening disease.

FINDING NEW FRIENDS

Getting and keeping good friendships takes time and effort. But the investment is well worth it. Remember, it's not the quantity of friends that matters, but the quality.

Try some of these tactics in order to broaden your bank of friendships:

1. Attend church, work, and community events. Or find a local group with some of your interests, such as gardening, a hobby or craft activity, reading, or a sports interest.
2. Volunteer. Offer your time or talents at the local hospital, your church, a museum, or other organization. It's easy to connect with people who have mutual interests.
3. Invite folks to your home for a meal or games. Accept invitations by others as you can.

4. Take up a new interest. Join a class at the local gym, senior center, or community college.

5. Get out to walk the dog or work in the garden.

This often allows you to strike up a conversation with neighbors.

GROW YOUR FRIENDSHIPS

1. Give your friends space to change, grow, and make mistakes. Accept them with grace, kindness, and encouragement.

2. Have a positive attitude. Every act of kindness is like making a deposit into an emotional bank account. Criticism and negativity decrease the bank account and thus decrease the ties of friendship.

3. Admire your friends' talents and be happy for their good fortune. Avoid the temptation to compete.

4. Be a good listener. Use eye contact and good body language to let them know you are paying close attention. Be empathetic and don't give advice unless it is asked for.

5. Be a safe haven for your confiding friend. Keep personal information firmly confidential.

Friendship relationships can offer their own set of challenges. At times we may feel very alone, misunderstood, or even forgotten. However, there is One always available, always close by—our faithful, loving heavenly Friend. And He has promised, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Heb. 13:5, NIV).

Good friends are treasures worth hanging onto. It's never too late to build new friendships and re-establish connection with former ones. The investment we put into making new friends and strengthening old acquaintances will result in improved health and a more optimistic outlook for years to come. ❏

Rae Lee Cooper is a registered nurse. She and her husband, Lowell, have two adult married children and three adorable grandchildren. She spent most of her childhood in the Far East and then worked as a missionary with her husband in India for 16 years. She enjoys music, creative arts, cooking, and reading.

Overcoming Negative Thoughts

THE PARK WAS FULL. The sun was setting on the horizon. The heat was suffocating. Parents' voices reached me through my open car windows. Children dressed in red shirts and tight striped pants warmed up with mitts and balls. I've loved baseball since I was a child.

While my heart delighted in the scene, a negative thought interrupted my reminiscing. Jonathan, my little son, was still unable to walk. He was almost two and could barely raise his head. Even though he'd made a lot of progress, he was clearly delayed in comparison with his peers. The prognosis was uncertain, and a black cloud hovered over my head as I thought, *Jonathan will never be able to play baseball; he will never be able to run as these children do, nor feel the joy of getting to home base.*

The knot in my throat was released only by the tears running down my cheeks. I looked into the sky and cried, "God, please have mercy on my son!"

Many have experienced these moments when negative thoughts cloud our days—or even whole periods of our lives. As a counselor and pastor's wife, I have witnessed how such thoughts can destroy life.

Negative thoughts are often rooted in the past. They feed specifically on unhappy experiences we have lived through. For example:

- **Depression:** feelings of hopelessness and despair
- **Discouragement:** emotionally giving up, not seeing a solution to my problems
- **Bitterness:** anger and resentment resulting from the pain others have caused
- **Covetousness and greed:** focusing on temporal things instead of accepting and being grateful for what I have
- **Envy and jealousy:** focusing on what I do not have, causing me to compare and complain
- **Fear:** anxiety and apprehension from overwhelming situations
- **Lust:** focusing on past failures, whether forgiven or not yet acknowledged before God
- **Negative attitudes or thoughts:** being emotionally locked with the pain others have caused me, leading to bitterness or feelings of rejection
- **Selfishness:** centering on my needs and rights to the exclusion of others¹

It is vitally important to identify our thoughts, as they will determine our reactions toward others and ourselves. Thoughts create emotions, which in turn influence our behavior. Solomon described it this way: "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7, KJV). Our mind is molded by our thoughts, and in time we become what we think.

What can we do when we are attacked by negative thoughts? Some practical ideas that have helped me:

- **Worry:** being overwhelmed with future circumstances I can't control
- **Inferiority:** feelings of worthlessness, having no value, feeling rejected
- **Self-pity:** feeling sorry for myself over situations that cannot be changed
- **Focus on the positives:** Start and end your day by thanking God for the blessings around you. This will help you get a head start. Remember what Paul said to the Philippians: "Be careful for nothing; but in

everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Phil. 4:6-8, KJV).

- **Guard your five senses:** Try to keep the avenues of the soul surrounded by pure influences. What we listen to, watch, eat, touch, or smell can determine our thoughts and feelings throughout the day. Ellen White writes, “All who name the name of Christ need to watch and pray and guard the avenues of the soul, for Satan is at work to corrupt and destroy if the least advantage is given him.”²
- **Discipline your mind to memorize the Word of God:** Most soldiers at war carry a weapon to defend themselves from the enemy. As Christians, we are in a spiritual battle in a world ruled by evil. How important it is to carry “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17, KJV). Every time we are attacked with negative thought patterns, we can repeat aloud a corresponding promise. If you’re thinking, *I feel abandoned*, repeat aloud, “God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1, KJV).
- **Keep a song in your heart:** Music brings great blessings in the hardest moments. It becomes an instrument of the Holy Spirit to rekindle our faith in the darkest nights. Sometimes I have sung with tears in my eyes, and it was then that music was able to transform my fearful heart. Memorizing hymns can be a powerful weapon against the storms of life.

- **Take care of your body:** Tiredness or sickness can weaken the power of the mind, making us easy targets for Satan. Go to bed early, exercise, eat nutritiously, breathe fresh air, get out in the sun regularly—all of these strengthen the immune system and keep up our stamina. Remember Paul’s exhortation: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1, KJV).
- **Ask for professional help when needed:** Remember, if negative thoughts cause anxiety and prevent you from fulfilling your daily routine, it’s time to find professional help. If negative thoughts lead you to harm your body in any way, or if you find yourself thinking about death, wishing you were not alive, or even planning a way to end it all, seek help immediately. It’s not easy to come out of depression on your own. The good news is that, with the right help, depression has a 95 percent recovery rate.

Pray that Jesus will keep your thoughts from evil and that every day, by His grace, you will be able to say like David, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23, 24, KJV).

My son Jonathan is now five, and just the other day we played baseball together. Our laughter was so contagious that his sister Sophia started giggling with joy, which taught me another lesson: focus on the present, and leave the future up to God. Take one day at a time. Often, negative visions of the future don’t even come to pass, so spend your energy focusing on today’s blessings. 7

¹ John Regier, *Biblical Concepts Counseling Workbook* (Colorado Springs, 1999), p. 112.

² Ellen G. White, *Adventist Home* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Assoc., 1952), p. 402.

Fanny Gradzikiewicz is a pastor’s wife and homemaker from Texas, USA.

Start and end your day by thanking God for the blessings around you.

Leading with *Love*

CHRISTIAN PARENTS OFTEN STRUGGLE to find the best ways to discipline their children and help them learn self-control and positive behavior. But before we can help our children make good behavior choices, we need to understand their needs, we need to create an environment in which they can flourish, and we need to be living examples of God's compassion, gentleness, and forgiveness.

GOALS OF PARENTING

The main goals of good Christian discipline:

- Raising children who have an active experience of God's expectations, love, and forgiveness
- Raising children who are loving, happy, and obedient
- Raising children who know how to behave appropriately

SPARING THE ROD?

Many parents are confused about the role of the "rod" in disciplining their children. It's helpful to remember shepherds don't use their rods to beat their sheep. It would make a shepherd's job so much more difficult if the sheep were terrified of him. Rods were held alongside sheep to guide them on the right path and prevent them from slipping over cliffs. They were used to lift sheep out of ditches when they fell and to kill wild animals that threatened to harm them. The shepherd's rod and staff were used to create safe boundaries and to support, rescue, guide, comfort, and protect the sheep (Ps. 23:4).

DON'T PUNISH IN ANGER!

Punishing children by hitting and yelling can have serious long-term consequences. When parents react to disobedience with anger, or by lashing out physically to harm a child, they model a picture of God that is out of control and ruled by emotions. Jesus was kind and



compassionate, welcoming children even when He was tired. He makes it clear that it's wrong to treat children in any way that misrepresents God's loving character (Matt. 18:6, 10).

Reacting in anger or temper:

- induces fear (1 John 4:8 says perfect love casts out fear)
- builds anger, resentment, and rebellion in a child's heart
- does not model Christlike behavior or self-control, and
- gives a distorted picture of God

DISCERNING YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOR

Before you discipline your child, pause and think about any unmet needs that might be underlying their behavior, and run through a list that reflects on your responsibility as a parent. These needs, and your child's ability for self-control in response to them, will vary depending on their age and temperament.

Does your child need food, a drink, a nap, some space to burn off energy, or quiet time away from too much noise and stimulation? When a young child needs any of these vital things, it can become very difficult for them to stay calm and obedient. While it is important to help children develop strong character at all ages, punishing children for being hungry, tired, or overwhelmed can create confusion and anger in their hearts.

Also, ask yourself if your child has togetherness-with-you needs, such as these:

- your focused and loving attention
- your acceptance and forgiveness
- your comforting hugs and loving words
- your appreciation and gratitude when they've been helpful

- your encouragement and support when life is challenging
- your respect when they feel shamed
- your protection and reassurance when they feel afraid

BEHAVIOR — COMMUNICATION

Your child's behavior may be giving you an important message that you need to hear. It might be:

- I need your love and attention. Please spend some time with me.
- I'm overwhelmed by difficult feelings and too much stimulation. Please help me calm down because I don't know how to do this on my own.
- I'm confused and don't know what to do. Please guide me.
- I can't handle this situation anymore! Please change something!

You may need to respond to your child's unspoken needs rather than punishing their behavior.

BASIC BOUNDARIES

Set clear boundaries to help children manage their behavior. The amount of explanation will grow as children get older and they are able to comprehend the principles behind the boundary.

Very young children need simple, clear instructions without extra information to confuse them.

Older children need to have the principles behind the rule explained so that they can take ownership of their behavior and gain tools for making wise life choices. For example:

- Actively demonstrate the desired behavior so they can clearly see what you want them to do.
- Explain why the rule or boundary is important, as appropriate for their age.
- Check to be sure your child clearly understands the boundary (ask them what they think the rule means).



To encourage positive character development, help children notice three things they did well each day, and to think about how they managed to do them so well.

- Help younger children stay inside the rules, and warn them if they are getting close to the edge.
- Enforce the rule or boundary firmly, gently, and consistently.
- Give affirming feedback to your child when they're staying within the rules.
- The most important time to discipline is when a child has intentionally and rebelliously crossed an important boundary.

WISE AND LOVING DISCIPLINE

- Enforcing rules without showing love and compassion leads to resentment. So “connect as you redirect”—show your child warmth, love, and understanding, instead of just dealing with their behavior (Eph. 6:4).
- Soothe their emotions before responding to their behaviors (Prov. 15:1).
- Pray for wisdom to respond well (James 1:5).
- Talk calmly and privately with your child about what went wrong. Don't shame them in front of others.
- Ask “what?” happened instead of “why?” Children find this question clearer and easier to answer.
- Make sure they understand which boundary/rule was broken and why it's important not to do it again.
- Quickly show your love after they have been disciplined (Ps. 103:8-11). Don't leave them to feel alone, unforgiven, or rejected (Gen. 2:18).
- To encourage positive character development, help children notice three things they did well each day, and to think about how they managed to do them so well.
- If you want to encourage positive behavior, time-in (quality caring time with you) is often much better than time-out (leaving a child alone).

EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE

- The best disciplines are often thoughtfully linked to the disobedient act. If they took

a cookie before dinner, they don't get one afterward. If they mess something up, they have to help tidy it. If they hurt someone, they need to do something kind for them.

- Help your child to put things right again—to replace the things they break or apologize to people they've hurt. This gives them a positive self-image that shapes positive behavior.
- Give them special attention when they're behaving well. “You've played happily with your brother for ten minutes. Well done! Choose a book, and I'll read to you.”
- Try one approach to discipline for a few weeks and see what happens. If it works better, and you and your child are happier and closer, then you've made a good choice.
- Keep adjusting your disciplinary methods as your child grows. Older children can help create family rules and decide what to do when the rules have been broken. You can occasionally help them better understand God's grace in a powerful way by making the discipline less than they were expecting.

WHAT NEXT?

- Has this article given you new ideas for disciplining your children with love and grace?
- How will you put your ideas into action? 7

Karen Holford is a family therapist and parenting consultant.

TIPS TO ~~SURVIVE~~

THRIVE

DON'T BE AFRAID TO PRIORITIZE YOUR FAMILY.

It can be hard to balance the demands of your church family and the needs of your own family. While you are committed to serving others freely, don't be afraid to say "No" when necessary.

When you have small children, your ability to go to meetings and serve in church roles is different from when you are childless or your kids are grown.

Everything has its season, and you only have one family. Don't neglect chances to give them your love and attention when they need it most.

Have a survival tip that someone shared with you once upon a time, or that you have learned along the way? Send it in to share here at: development.gc.ministerial@gmail.com

Special Quotes

"How earnestly and perseveringly the artist labors to transfer to canvas a perfect likeness of his model; and how diligently the sculptor hews and chisels out the stone into a counterpart of the copy he is following. So the parents should labor to shape, polish, and refine their children after the pattern given them in Christ Jesus. As the patient artist studies, and works, and forms plans to make the results of his labors more perfect, so should the parent consider time well spent that is occupied in training the children for useful lives and fitting them for the immortal kingdom. The artist's work is small and unimportant compared with that of the parent. The one deals with lifeless material, from which he fashions forms of beauty; but the other deals with a human being whose life can be shaped for good or ill, to bless humanity or to curse it; to go out in darkness, or to live forever in a future sinless world."

Child Guidance, p. 476

"At family worship [on Sabbath] let the children take a part. Let all bring their Bibles and each read a verse or two. Then let some familiar hymn be sung, followed by prayer. For this, Christ has given a model. The Lord's Prayer was not intended to be repeated merely as a form, but it is an illustration of what our prayers should be—simple, earnest, and comprehensive. In a simple petition tell the Lord your needs and express gratitude for His mercies. Thus you invite Jesus as a welcome guest into your home and heart. In the family long prayers concerning remote objects are not in place. They make the hour of prayer a weariness, when it should be regarded as a privilege and blessing. Make the season one of interest and joy."

Child Guidance, p. 524

"Your children should be educated to be kind, thoughtful of others, gentle, easy to be entreated, and, above everything else, to respect religious things and feel the importance of the claims of God. They should be taught to respect the hour of prayer; they should be required to rise in the morning so as to be present at family worship."

Child Guidance, p. 521

The Gift of Self-Discipline

Our goal is to help our children develop godly character instead of doing what's easy.

MOST KIDS TODAY CAN'T SIT STILL, at least not in Western culture where I live. Not through church. Not in someone else's home.

Actually, I'm not so sure that they *cannot* be still; rather, their parents don't expect them to be. Mommy and Daddy are convinced the little ones can't possibly control themselves, so parental expectations are never very high. As a result, society boasts a generation of kids running wild and a generation of exhausted, embarrassed parents.

Some people think it's unreasonable that we expect our children (ages four and three) to sit through church without being disruptive. They thought we were certifiably crazy when we started "church training" at six months old! But if we never set the expectation, it will certainly never be met. It takes a lot of consistent training, patiently enduring squirms

and wiggles and being brave enough to "walk out of church—calm them down—walk back—repeat."

Between eight and eleven months, my son was teething. He wouldn't sit. He wouldn't stand. He wouldn't play with his toys. He stopped sleeping sweetly during church. Good sleep makes happy kids, and he was exhausted from fighting naps all week. I spent every service trotting from our pew to the lobby and back.

So we began practicing at home, helping him learn to sit still each day. We started by holding him on our laps, gently but firmly, and saying, "We are going to sit still now." The first time, he screamed and kicked and hollered for about forty-five minutes. Since it was a training session, we fully anticipated this reaction. That made it easier to stay calm and pleasant. No anger. No yelling. Just quietly repeating, "We are going to sit here and be still until Mommy/Daddy says you can go."

When he calmed down, we only kept him sitting for perhaps one minute. The point was to get him to cooperate and introduce him to the idea. Nothing more.

The next day, the same time, we repeated the training. Again, calmly and gently, making sure we didn't quit before he chose to cooperate. It was more about outlasting him than anything else. This time, it only took twenty-five minutes before he quieted down. We kept him there, talking and praising him for about five minutes this time.

For a week, we did this daily. Each day his



fussing grew shorter, and each day we lengthened the sitting-still time by a few minutes after he calmed down. That next Sabbath, he was a total mess. It was his worst series of outbursts yet. I wondered why I was even bothering. I was frustrated; he was irritable. It would have been so much *easier* to let him chatter and crawl in the church lobby. But we didn't give up because our goal is to help our children develop godly character instead of doing what's easy.

The second week, instead of having him sit on our laps, we sat him beside us each day. (Partly because I was pregnant and had diminishing lap space.) We kept him there for five minutes after the fussing stopped. After a couple of days, the fussing disappeared. Then we lengthened the quiet sitting time to ten minutes, then fifteen minutes. Each day we kindly but firmly told him, "You must sit still until Mommy says you may go."

The next Sabbath, he was quiet until near the end of the sermon. No, he didn't sit still the whole time—but then I didn't expect him to. He sat for twenty-five minutes, then played on his blanket on the floor and wiggled around and drank a bottle. No screaming, fussing, or cranky outbursts. Yay!

The third Friday, he sat on the floor in his little seat playing with a stuffed animal and a book while I cleaned house and folded laundry nearby. For *forty-five* minutes! Twice he crawled out of his seat, and both times I put him back, saying, "You don't have permission to play yet, and you must wait until Mommy says you may go." He whimpered a bit but gave in.

The next day, he made it through the entire church service. We didn't have to go out even once. Sure, he wiggled and cycled several times through his "quiet toys." I was delighted we hadn't given up after the first miserable weekend!

We kept practicing at home to make sure the habit was well-established. Plenty of weekends he relapsed into old habits. But we'd seen enough to trust that the process would bring results eventually.

If a child is physically capable of doing something which is good for their character and respectful toward others, shouldn't they be taught how and then be expected to do it? We knew our babies were capable of sitting, on their own, for ten to twenty minutes at a time by the age of six or seven months. We also knew that when their interest was engaged by music, activity, or a favorite quiet toy, they could sit for even longer.



Every day our kids get loud-wiggly-goofy time and also sitting-still-being-quiet time. We also expect them to participate respectfully in daily family worship time, morning and evening, with a minimum of wiggles and shrieks (some days are better than others, of course). It may not come *naturally*, but when you practice something daily for weeks or months or years, it can become *normal*.

Daily practice gives them the vital life skill of mastering their impulses and honoring others even at a young age. We don't yell, scream, hit, or threaten them to achieve this though, for two reasons. First, because losing our temper is counterproductive, since we're trying to teach

It's not fair to expect any young child, to happily sit still each week without providing a chance to practice and prepare.

Whenever possible, we choose to train them toward self-discipline rather than punish.

them to discipline and control themselves. Second, because as parents it is our role to model the love and consistency of God to our kids. Yelling destroys that.

We aren't naïve. Some days it feels like the whole training process is a failure. If you ever meet my kids, you'll see they are energetic, exuberant, and full of energy! But when it gets discouraging, we try to remember that without gentle parental guidance they may never learn self-control and personal responsibility.

Despite what Western society typically implies, expecting a child to learn honor and self-discipline is *not* unrealistic. We didn't expect them to sit perfectly still for the entire church service at age one, but we *did* expect them to not be disruptive. For us, that means they were required to sit quietly on their own for as long as possible, then spend the rest of the service playing quietly with toys from their Sabbath bag. We also always sit somewhere in the front two rows, so they can easily see all the action; it makes for a long trip out the back door on uncooperative Sabbaths, but it's worth it.

It's not fair to expect any young child, no matter their age, to happily do something each week without providing a chance to practice and prepare. There's a significant philosophical difference between *punishment* and *training*. Whenever possible, we choose to train them toward self-discipline rather than punish.

The key is patient consistency. No means no. Yes means yes. Sit still means *sit still*. No yelling or angry threats needed. Mostly, it takes being stubborn enough to simply stick to your parental expectations.

When it gets tough, many parents give up and let kids play during church in the hall or lobby, or simply leave after Sabbath School. Or they spend the next three years in the parents' room, starving for spiritual food while the kids run amok. If this is you, don't lose courage. If all it takes is a little extra work on our part to give them the tools to become respectful and courteous adults someday, then isn't that an acceptable price to pay?

In the meantime, you're giving your children the gift of knowing where their boundaries start and stop. Of knowing that you can be trusted to mean what you say. The security that brings to their world is priceless. ■

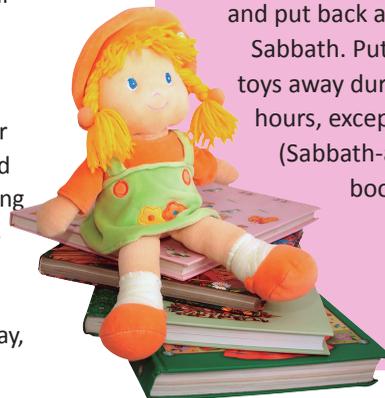
Sarah K. Asaftei is a mother of two and is married to Marius, a pastor in central Florida. She works in social media management and video production and loves international travel and photography.

Sabbath Bag Ideas

Fill a special bag with quiet, non-disruptive toys. These should be your kids' *very favorite* toys, age-appropriate, non-messy, and preferably Bible- or nature-related instead of secular. Felt-books, miniature coloring books, stickers, a favorite stuffed animal, a teething ring, cardboard books—all make great contents.

Keep a Sabbath bag for each child hanging in an extra closet. Bring it back after church and hang it up, ready to take next week.

Make Sabbath highly anticipated by keeping special toys in a box to bring out on Friday nights and put back at sunset on Sabbath. Put everyday toys away during Sabbath hours, except for special (Sabbath-appropriate) books, projects, and toys.



Dear Abigail,

My husband has a multichurch district. Each congregation has its own challenges and also great things going on. While I try to remember each church's needs, it is very difficult to switch my attention from one congregation to another each Sabbath. What makes it even harder is that the congregations are not always aware that I (and certainly my husband!) have more than one thing going at a time. In what ways can I communicate this effectively without seeming uncaring?

Juggling Helpmeet



Dear Juggling Helpmeet,

Without a doubt, ministering in a multichurch district comes with challenges. But first I want to affirm your sincere desire to meet these diverse congregational needs. It can be a real blessing to minister to unique individuals in varied church settings.

Several thoughts come to mind. Remember that you are human and that remembering *every* congregational need may simply not be possible. My husband and I keep a list of congregational needs that are categorized from "important" to "urgent." This helps us prioritize the needs and provides us with a gentle reminder in case we forget the requests.

Another idea is to provide the multichurch district with a tentative activity schedule for each of your churches. Not only is it helpful for you and your husband, but it gives each congregation a visual reminder that you do have activities/meetings at more than one church. You know the old saying: "Out of sight, out of mind." When people have a tangible list in front of them, they seem to be more understanding of your family's time management challenges.

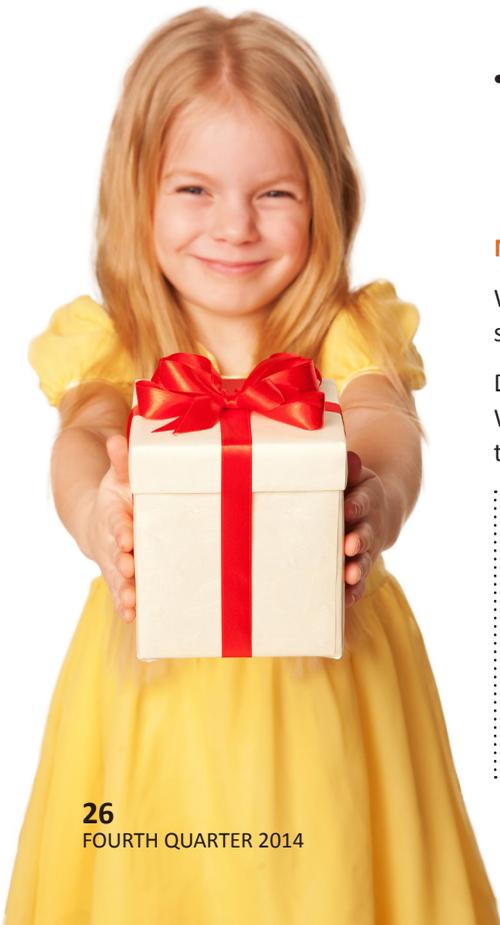
And remember to include your family time on the calendar. Your church leaders should see these appointments as well, since they are making requests for your time. May God bless you and your husband as you continue the special challenge of ministering in a multichurch district!

Sincerely,
Abigail



Giving is fun... and good for you!

DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU ACTUALLY FEEL HAPPIER WHEN YOU GIVE SOMEONE ELSE A GIFT THAN WHEN SOMEONE GIVES YOU A GIFT (ACTS 20:35)? WHY IS GIVING OFTEN MORE FUN THAN RECEIVING? TALK ABOUT THIS WITH YOUR FAMILY AND LISTEN TO WHAT EVERYONE HAS TO SAY.



PAPER PRESENTS

- At family worship time, find a stack of plain paper and your Bible.
- Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-11.
- Why is it important to give generously and happily?
- Use the paper to make a pretend present for each person in your family. Tear, fold, and scrunch the paper into different shapes, such as a plane ticket, an animal, a car, etc.
- Then give each person the present you made for them. See if they can guess what it is (they may need a few clues!) and then tell them why you'd like to give them that special present.
- This is a fun way to be generous with each other, even if you don't have any money!

MY GIFT!

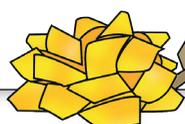
What's the best gift you ever gave to someone else?

Draw a picture of it in the box below. What did you enjoy most about giving this special present?

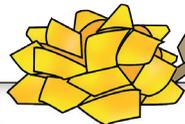


BIBLE PRESENTS

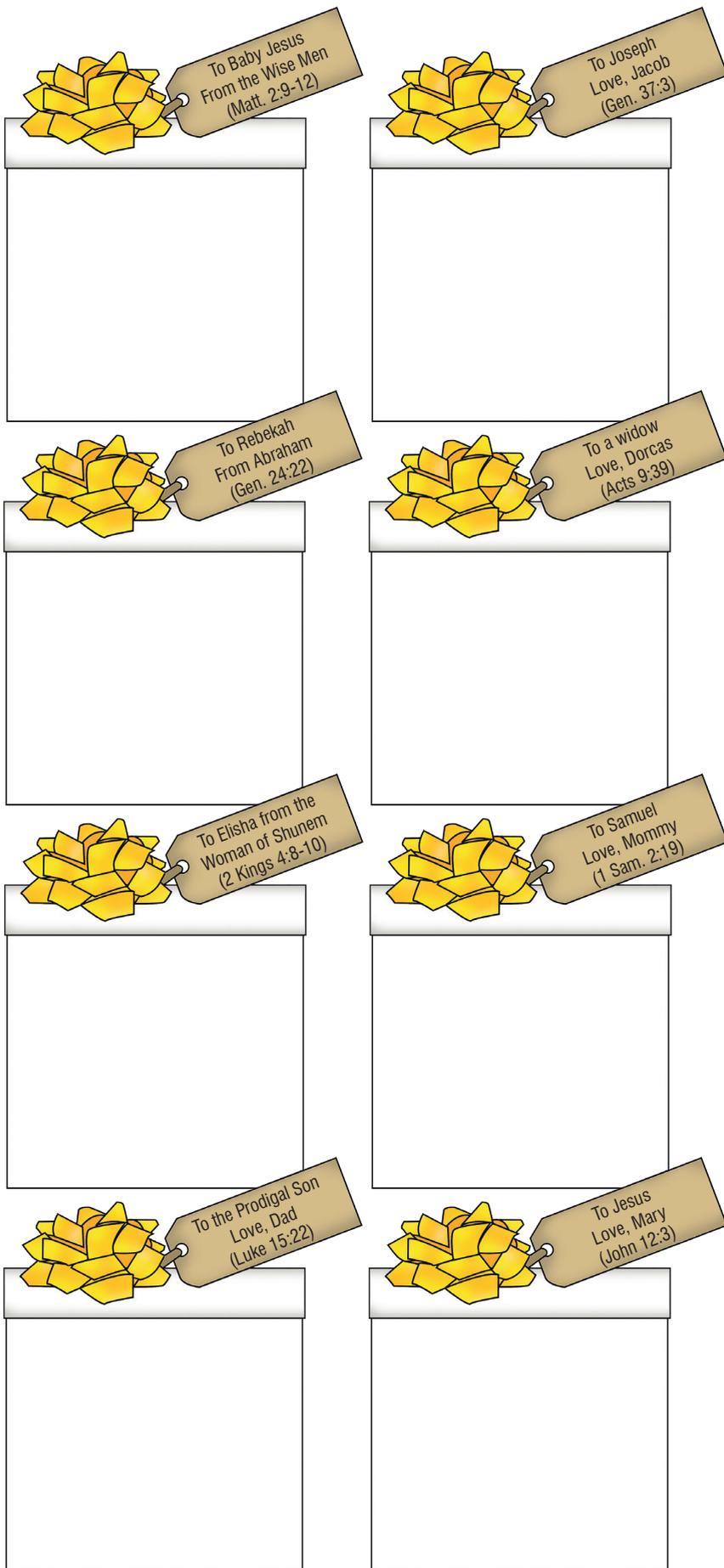
Look at the tags on the gifts below. Read the Bible verses. Draw a picture of each gift in its box, or write what the gift is instead. What do you think each giver was thinking and feeling when they gave these special gifts?



To David and your men
From Abigail
(1 Sam. 25:18, 23, 27)



To Adam and Eve
From God
(Gen. 1:29)



THE GIVING PROJECT

Giving is fun! Did you know that the happiest people in the world are not those who *have* the most but those who *give* the most away! Jesus created us to give, because sharing makes us happy. And other people are happy to receive a gift that shows how much we care.

Find a giving project that your family could do together. Some ideas:

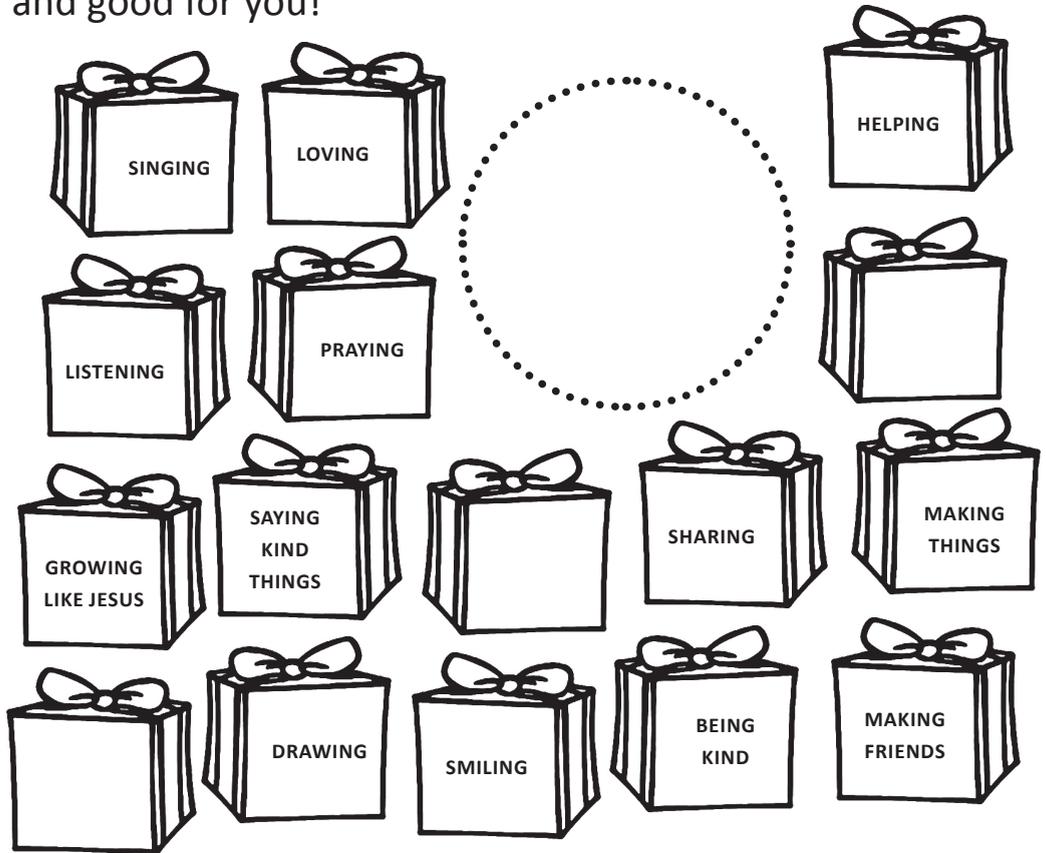
- The rice project at www.freerice.com. Every time you choose the right answer, rice is donated to hungry people. You don't even need any money!
- ADRA allows you to pack a virtual help box for a child and pay for it online. Find out how at www.kids.adra.org.
- Pay for a toilet in a poor village to keep children from getting sick. Learn more at www.toilettwinning.org.
- Make **care kits** for homeless people: warm socks, cereal bars, juice, soap, toothbrush, etc.
- Save up to buy a **brand new toy** to give to a needy or homeless child.
- Make **pretty calendars** with Bible verses and give them to seniors in a care home.
- Go without one item of **nonperishable food** for one day (or week) and donate that item to a food bank in your area.

Giving is fun . . . and good for you!

GOD'S GIFTS TO YOU!

God has given you some special gifts to help you share His love!

1. Draw a picture of yourself inside this circle, or write your name instead.
2. Then draw a line from yourself to the gifts that you use to share God's love with others.
3. Write any other gifts He's given you inside the empty boxes.



WHAT CAN I GIVE?

Even if you don't have very much, you can still make simple gifts to share with others. Ask your parents to help you with these ideas:

Hand prayers: Draw around your hand. Color the shape and write a prayer on your hand. Cut it out and stick it onto a picture, or place it in an envelope. If someone is sick or far away, ask lots of people to make hand prayers to send.

Promise box: Find a pretty box or jar. Cut many slips of paper the same size. Write a Bible promise on each one (you can find lists of Bible promises on the Internet at www.biblepromises.org).

Calendar: Buy a calendar with blank spaces for your own pictures, or print a calendar with

spaces using a computer. Design a decorated Bible verse for each page in the calendar.

Helping money box: Decorate a simple, cylindrical food container that has a plastic lid. You can use recycled giftwrap or pictures cut from magazines. Ask an adult to cut a slit in the plastic lid for coins. Make a label asking people to donate money to help others.

Candle jar: Make a pretty candle lantern. Dilute white glue with a little water and use it to paste tissue paper shapes onto the outside of a clean, empty jar. You can make stained glass designs, cut special shapes, or stick stars onto the jar. When the glue is dry it will turn transparent, and you can add another layer of glue to protect your design. Put a battery-operated tea-light or small votive candle into the jar to make a lantern.

Trail mix: Combine your favorite ingredients to make a tasty jar of trail mix to give away. Or search the Internet for other foods and recipes that you can layer in jars.

Nature treasure chest: Decorate a sturdy gift box and line it with tissue. Place some lovely natural finds in the box, such as cones, seed pods, shells, stones, and bark. Make a label to stick inside the lid, saying, "Choose something from the box, explore it carefully, and list five wonderful things about it. Add other treasures to the box when you find them."

I-spy bottle: Find a clean, clear plastic bottle with a wide mouth. Drop a tiny plastic lamb into the bottle. Add 19 other tiny things that easily get lost, such as a penny, small ticket, paper clip, button, seed, etc. Almost fill the bottle with dry rice or other small grains. Shake the bottle and see how long it takes to find the lost sheep, or to find everything you've hidden in the bottle. Give this to a child as a travel toy. 7

Karen Holford loves finding fun things to give away!

Inter-European Division

TOGETHER WE ARE DIFFERENT

At our recent retreat for ministry spouses, we didn't get around to playing games, but we didn't miss it. We sang, prayed, talked, ate together, and explored our personality profiles on the basis of the DISC Personality Test, led by Elisabeth and Hubert Kazmierczak, Shepherdess coordinator and ministerial secretary from the Austrian Union.

First we discovered qualities of God's personality, such as thoughtfulness, friendliness, generosity, patience, consistency, gentleness, and His unconditional, boundless love for everyone.

Then we discussed the personalities of several biblical characters. Next, we explored our own personalities. When someone gets to know and understand themselves better, they can then deal more sympathetically with the idiosyncrasies of others. Ideally, we can therefore deal better with different situations in life, work, and church.



Ministerial wives meet for a weekend in Strobl, Austria.



Twenty-five pastoral spouses attended a pilot training program in June 2014. The focus was on mental well-being, having a positive outlook, and choosing a life vision for Christ that focuses each person beyond their difficulties. They met once a week for fifteen classes.



East Central Korean pastors' wives share a song.



Pastors' spouses from East Central Korean Conference gather for a class.

Following is a pictorial report from meetings in Northern Asia-Pacific Division. The pastors' spouses are active in ministry.



Celebration for a new baby and Shepherdess meeting in Middlewest Korean Conference.

Northern Asia-Pacific Division

In April 2014, East Central Korean Conference met to establish a pastors' spouses choir. In May, conference spouses enjoyed a series of classes at Eden Hospital on the subject of renewed spiritual and physical health.



Korean pastoral spouses gather for a retreat in April 2014.



Okinawa pastoral spouses meet for a retreat.



Pastoral spouses meet in West Central Japan.



Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division

Mrs. Sylvia Muvuti, Mozambique Union Mission Shepherdess coordinator, offers English classes for ministry spouses and staff members. Sometimes knowing only one language is a barrier for pastors' spouses. This class enables them to follow events in the church around the world.

In Zambia, ministry spouses received training in the Copperbelt and Lusaka conferences. They heard presentations on health, learned how to pray and study the Bible, and discussed ways to have a meaningful team ministry.

Pastors' wives in Zambia are teaming up with their husbands to lead activities for Mission to the Cities, including prayer committees, Bible studies, and preaching.



Shepherdesses in Mozambique have the opportunity to learn English.



Shepherdesses from Lusaka Conference gather for training. Front and center is Patricia Papu, SID Shepherdess coordinator.

Southern Asia-Pacific Division

In August 2013, pastors' and elders' wives from Sri Lanka met at Lakpahana Adventist School. The theme involved happy marriages, nurture and discipleship, proper use of church finances, and how to become a better pastor's wife.

SHEPHERDESSES ATTEND THE 2014 SSD MINISTERIAL CONVENTION

Teresa Costella reports that more than one thousand attended the 2014 Southern Asia-Pacific ministerial convention in Bangkok, Thailand. Coming from 12 of SSD's 14 countries, Shepherdesses were thrilled to be part of the first ministerial convention since SSD was established in 1997. This event marks the first time 83 pastors' wives from Myanmar had ever gathered with Shepherdesses outside their country, and for many, it was the first time they had ever traveled internationally. The opportunity to meet and worship with their fellow sisters in the work seemed like a little glimpse of heaven with its unimaginable tapestry of nations, personalities, and stories. Shepherdess International, the world church ministry to pastoral spouses, hosted a special track of seminars with an emphasis on the challenges and unique issues these spouses face.



Myanmar pastor and spouse pray at commitment service.



Shepherdesses meet in Bangkok, Thailand.

South Pacific Division

In late April 2013, about two hundred Partners in Ministry (PIM) and Pastors' Kids (PKs) from Fiji Mission gathered at the Deuba Mission Campsite for a retreat. The PIMs were challenged to refocus on the importance of their role in ministry and to revive their relationships with Jesus, husband, family, and church. The PKs enjoyed creative activities and swimming in the crystal water of Deuba. It was a memorable occasion, as PIMs and PKs are often left out of the schedule. It had been a decade since they last had a meeting of this kind, and now the PKs want it to be an annual event.



PKs from Fiji enjoy time together.



Partners in Ministry from Fiji Mission enjoy a retreat at Deuba Mission Campsite.

Trans-European Division



The North England Conference had a special all-day workshop just for pastors' spouses in February 2014. It was coordinated by NEC Shepherdess leader Angela Jackson.



GENERAL CONFERENCE
SHEPHERDESS INTERNATIONAL
AND WOMEN'S MINISTRIES
MEETINGS FOR WOMEN

Arise and Shine,
JESUS IS COMING!



HENRY B. GONZALES CONVENTION CENTER
200 East Market Street, San Antonio TX 78203

July 6 – 9, 2015

MORNING MEETINGS from 9am – 10am
AFTERNOON SEMINARS from 2pm – 4pm

ALL WOMEN, OF ALL AGES,
are invited to attend these meetings where we will worship
together as daughters of God from every corner of the world.