



Ask Him

*It is not the capabilities you now possess
or ever will have that will give you success.*

It is that which the Lord can do for you.

*We need to have far less confidence
in what man can do
and far more confidence in what God can do
for every believing soul.*

He longs to have you reach after Him by faith.

He longs to have you expect great things from Him.

*He longs to give you understanding
in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. . . .*

He can give tact and skill.

Put your talents into the work,

Ask God for wisdom,

And it will be given you.

—Christ Object Lessons, page 146

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Between the Covers

In this issue, Carol McKean touches a vital area upon which we all need to focus—"Too Much Church." When all is said and done, it is our families we want in heaven with us. Keeping our priorities straight is difficult in the pastoral family. Carol brings the reality of the situation to our attention.

Gloria Castrejon reminds all of us that petty complaining and self-pity is unbecoming as well as dangerous. Satan loves to sponsor a "pity party" and all too often, I accept the invitation.

Living with a leader is not always easy. Dcvi Titus identifies practical areas where we can communicate better and understand our spouses and the traits that have made them leaders.

Happy reading,



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A Parable of Discontent

Gloria A. Castrejón



Gloria A. Castrejón is mother of three children. She is a Spanish Literature Professor, and has authored numerous articles and poems. She currently serves the Inter-American Division in the translation department. She has accompanied her husband, Jaime, in their ministry for more than 30 years. He now serves as Ministerial Secretary for the Inter-American Division. She enjoys reading, writing, painting, and crafts.

—Via Shepherdess International

An old tale tells the story of a quarry worker who, tired of working under the blazing sun, wished to become the sun so he would no longer have to toil under its burning rays. His wish was granted, and the quarry worker reigned over the skies, transformed in his very nature. But not for long; his pride was sorely wounded when a small cloud managed to obstruct his rays. The quarry worker then wished himself a cloud, only to later find himself at the mercy of the wind. The tale continues, and our character is transformed into many different things, only to become disappointed with the drawbacks of each transformation. Eventually, he realizes that his original state was not as terrible as he once thought, and he wishes at last to be returned to his humble first form of a quarry worker.

An analogy between this tale and the life of a pastor's wife is not altogether perfect—after all, there is no such thing as a particular "nature" inherent in being a pastor's wife. It is rather a condition defined relationally or functionally; that is, we have come to this way of life through marriage to someone who has joined the ministry following his vocation, a calling, a personal

desire to serve, or for all of these reasons. Our vocation calls us to love and support those whose lives we've joined, through the ups and downs of this ministry. How, and to what degree we may play a role in the ministry depends on a multitude of factors, yet one thing is certain: we cannot escape it, it is automatic. We are pastors' wives for as long as we are united in marriage to men who have been called to the ministry.

To be sure, we all know that pastors' wives endure many discomforts and frustrations. Indeed, it would seem that over the years, the negative aspects of our lives have become so sharply and widely drawn that a nearly encyclopedic collection of stereotypes and grotesque caricatures, which purportedly represent the life of pastors' wives, are commonplace assumptions.

It is possible that a profound lack of understanding regarding the many hazards in the life of pastors' wives may have provoked a strong response in an effort to raise awareness about the special nature of this role, a response that in some cases may have emphasized extreme situations attempting to bring balance to the picture. But while such emphases may help complement representations of ministerial life

toward a more accurate view, we must remember the contingency of the situations they represent as parts of a whole, a whole that is, in the end, more balanced.

First, we live in a world which is far from perfect. There is no job or career on earth whose pursuit will necessarily bring about paradise. All career choices inherently involve tasks, joys, demands and sometimes anguish. All career choices have their pros and cons, rewards and disappointments. Our lives as pastors' wives are no different in that sense. The Christian life, seen as a profession or a task of existence, is also constantly exposed to attacking darts which, in the best of cases, simply crash against the spiritual armor Paul speaks of, but which sometimes penetrate even our "joints and marrow."

After all, a pastor's wife should above all be a Christian, regardless of her profession or calling, and in that sense as vulnerable or as strong as any other wife and mother on earth. And who ever said the Christian life was a bed of roses (without thorns)?

The analogy is a two-edged blade; it can make us feel distraught and abandoned by God, especially when we see the options others enjoy and that we may wish for ourselves. Yet it may be helpful to consider that other professions also have their downside; indeed, some which we would never choose.

A few years ago I listened to a radio interview with a pastor's wife from another faith. She seemed to think herself the most unfortunate person on earth because only once a month did she have the pleasure of her husband's company during

church service. Certainly, this was a sad fact but perhaps not as tragic, compared to other discomforts that come with pastoral life, or even those experienced in other professions. And yet this pastor's wife told her story with such passion and anguish that one would think she was talking about the loss of someone's soul or a fatal

obsessive focus on our difficulties could prove even more damaging. To dwell incessantly on ourselves and our problems rather than to contemplate He who is the source of all grace and love may trap us in a destructive rut of self-absorption and egocentrism.

A Christian life is one marked by unselfish giving and commitment to others, no matter how emphatically some may deny this. Our Lord said, "who-soever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mark 8:34) and also "come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28-30). In other words, those who follow the Lord will encounter difficulties; such is the mark of true discipleship. We cannot expect to live without difficulties, yet in our challenges we will find joy because the grace of God envelops His servants and gives us peace and comfort on our journey. God sustains us with His power and anoints our brows with joy, turning each challenge into a blessing of spiritual growth.

Perhaps as we count our blessings and consider our present and future advantages and special gifts we could arrive at the conclusion that our experiences as a whole are overwhelmingly positive. Perhaps we will stop wishing for any of the special privileges or choices that wives outside the ministry enjoy. Let us look upon them with respect and even at times with compassion, not allowing ourselves to be blinded by the vision of a mountain, a cloud, or the blazing sun, but cherishing what we are and what we have to the glory of God. ❀

*This table, devoid of worthy candles;
without a finely crafted tablecloth,
nor gold in the trim of crystal goblets;
offers only the rustic hollow of a clay pot.
And yet, in the feast ascribed
to the full richness of Your Name,
flows the sweet nectar
of your infinite love toward mankind.
May the well of your right hand,
its harsh marks now faded into scars,
give us our daily bread; and
as the taste of your sweetness touches our lips
may we forget the bitterness of our trials.
Who would dare to refuse the challenge
of crossing the thorned, burning valley,
if at every step the divine balm flows to soothe?
How sweet the call of your trumpet
when it beckons exultantly to your feast!
And you wash our journey's dust,
and anoint us with the oil of your hand.
... This table, so rough and rustic,
this heavenly morsel, seasoned ...
illuminates in the aura of your holy light
the humble reality of clay.*

—Gloria A. Castrejón

car accident. I believe that while a cold, stoic attitude or a willful denial of the negative aspects of our experiences may have damaging consequences, a tendency to exaggerate our problems or an

Don't be a Spiritual Casualty

Sandy Sheppard



Sandy Sheppard is a free lance writer, pastoral wife, and mother of three children. Her husband, Rick, pastors Trinity United Methodist Church in Cass City, Michigan. Sandy enjoys calligraphy, cooking, reading, and long walks.

This article appeared in Just Between Us, Summer 1993. Used with permission.

—Via Shepherdess International

I stood in front of the clothes dryer folding laundry and listening to Paul Harvey on the radio. Suddenly he caught my full attention with this statement, "According to one study, the greatest stress, the most spiritual casualties, occur among ministers' wives." I was stunned and found myself reflecting on the preceding two years of my husband Rick's ministry.

During one fall and winter we were barraged with family health problems. In seven months, our family of four chalked up 36 doctor visits, a root canal, two minor surgeries, three cancer scares (all negative) and a week-long hospitalization for our 16-month-old son who had double pneumonia.

We breathed sighs of relief when spring came, and better health with it. After a long, relaxing vacation in May we returned home, optimistically looking forward to a slower pace during the summer months. Instead, Rick conducted 14 funerals and dealt with countless tragedies.

In the fall and winter of that year there were other crises: failing marriages, the kidnaping and rape of a young woman in our

church family, and newly discovered cancers. Rick felt overwhelmed, overworked, and depressed. I had trouble dealing with constant child care but felt guilty asking for help when Rick was having trouble with his own work load. So I managed the home front and tried to keep from exerting any more pressure on him.

Then the following spring, just two days before our well-deserved vacation, an incident occurred which threatened his entire ministry. It was while we were recovering from that incident that I heard Paul Harvey's report about stress and ministers' wives. "What about the ministers themselves?" I wondered. Was it possible that our stress could be greater than theirs? This was a concept I had never before considered.

Minister's wife can be a very lonely position to hold. Expectations of a congregation can be unrealistic, whether in truth or in our own perception. Some people believe the preacher's spouse should have perfect kids, a spotless house, and talents above and beyond those of normal human beings. But alas,

we are only human.

Our feelings of isolation can be compounded by staying home with children. The pressures of raising our families combined with the heavy demand on our husbands' time and talents can leave us feeling alone. Added to this are the stresses faced by other members of our church family which are often *brought home*. Sometimes we may feel we carry the problems of the world on our shoulders.

Several times during my 14 years as a pastor's wife I have been infinitely grateful for Christian counselors. They have, perhaps, saved both my marriage and my sanity!

All of us have at one time or another felt the pressures of our calling. When the stress feels like more than we can handle alone, visiting a counselor can give us fresh insights and help us cope. Here are some practical helps for locating a counselor in your area.

Finding a Christian counseling agency may take a little effort, particularly for those who have recently moved and are unfamiliar with the area. But Christian agencies exist in most cities and are well worth the drive from rural areas for appointments.

The *local ministerial association* can be a good source of information. You can find out where the other pastors in your area refer their parishioners.

Consulting the *Yellow Pages* of the nearest large city is also a good place to start. Many agencies are listed under *Psychologists*, and often the name itself will indicate whether or not it is a Christian agency.

It may also be helpful to check with *district or conference offices* for a referral to a counselor who understands the pressures of the pastorate. These offices often

have access to names of counseling agencies which deal with clergy families.

The cost of counseling can be a real concern. However, insurance policies often cover all or part of the cost of therapy. Group policies through your denomination may offer full coverage for a certain number of counseling sessions and co-payments for additional sessions.

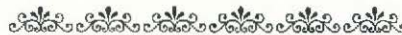
Some agencies charge on a sliding scale according to income; others may provide services free or at reduced rates to ministry families. Cost alone should not be a deterrent. Some denominations have arrangements to help subsidize counseling through specific agencies. You just need to inquire and research to find the right situation for your income.

Dr. Louis McBurney, a psychiatrist trained at the Mayo Clinic, counseled many pastors and their families. He has recognized the great need to minister to clergy families in crisis. As a result, he and his wife Melissa established a retreat and therapy center for pastors and their wives, missionaries, and church professionals. A two-week period of *getting away from it all* combines individual and group therapy sessions with rest and relaxation. Information can be obtained by writing to Marble Retreat, Marble, Colorado 81623.

Going to a counselor for help is not an admission of failure or lack of spirituality. Counseling can be a source of great comfort and an impetus to growth.

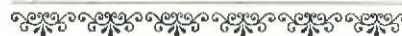
Much has been written recently on *clergy burnout* but we clergy spouses are at risk too. We not only deal with our own stress, but we also attempt to support our husbands as they deal with theirs.

Counseling can help us do both. ❁



*All may possess
a cheerful
countenance,
a gentle voice,
a courteous manner,
and these are
elements of power.*

—Ellen G. White
Education, p. 240



My Own Strength

Joyce Neergaard



Joyce Neergaard is a registered nurse working with Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Middle East Region as Assistant for Project Development. She also serves as Shepherdess Coordinator of the Middle East Union. She enjoys leading Bible studies with teenagers, presenting health promotion seminars to the community, and singing.

This article appeared in the Shepherdess Newsletter of the Middle East, Third Quarter 1994. Used with permission.

—Via Shepherdess International

Those of us with a lot of energy sometimes forget that we do not generate that vigor ourselves. We may be tired at the end of a long, hard day, but a good rest at night refreshes us and we are ready to go again. This revival does not just happen. It is the direct result of the restorative and healing power of our Maker.

These days I have been made acutely aware of what energy depletion means. My husband has been ill with a stamina-sapping condition, Hepatitis A. His liver was so affected that an enzyme level that should have been 30 was over 3,000! As Jim has been recovering, he finds that overdoing it one day sets him back to "below zero" energy level for two or three days. He is struggling to learn to set realistic limits on his activities. He is improving and we thank God daily for His healing power. My husband's experience has reminded me that I have no physical strength apart from my Omnipotent Creator.

The lesson of God's sustaining power is one I need to learn

again and again, especially regarding my spiritual life. Often I think I am doing okay in my spiritual growth because I may be able to hold my tongue on this occasion or show a kindness on that. But many times I fall into the trap of trying to rely on my own spiritual muscle to live the Christian life—and of course, I fail. I need to realize that I do not *have* any power. My only stamina comes from giving myself over completely to Jesus. He is my strength.

Jesus told the apostle Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9, NKJV).

When I give my weakness to Jesus, He fills in the energy-power gap and lives His life *through* me. Any good that I do comes from God working through me. Therefore, God is gloried and praise goes to Him.

My strength, physical and spiritual, comes from the Lord. I must rely on Him every day, every hour, every minute. Today I relearned the lesson.

Teach me again Lord, tomorrow. ❁

Too Much Church?



Carol McKean



Carol McKean is employed by the Trans-Tasman Union Conference, (based in Sydney, Australia) as Children's Ministries Director. She has two boys Cameron, 12, and Lachlan, 9.

This article appeared in the South Pacific Division Recorder, February 13, 1993. Used with permission.

—Via Shepherdess International

I sacrificed my family in their growing years for the work of the church."

Brian Winton drummed his fingers irritably on the table as he glanced at the clock for the 10th time in five minutes. How could Emma and Sarah spend so long in the bathroom on Sabbath mornings? His teenage daughters seemed to have a policy of turning the day of rest into a time of confrontation.

Sullen silence marked the drive to church. Carla, his wife, made only token attempts to make bright conversation, for her mind had slipped into Primary Sabbath school mode. Brian's main concern was for his role as senior deacon. He must check the windows, the toilets, the PA system and he wondered whether all his team would be there for their appointed duties.

"I know no one is indispensable, but Brian and Carla certainly come close," the pastor had remarked at the nominating committee meeting. Brian was a member of the nominating com-

mittee and, at the time, the statement had caused a small glow of satisfaction.

But Brian had increasingly felt the pressure of his church responsibilities. Besides being the senior deacon, he also served as the Pathfinder leader and he and Carla held a midweek Bible study group in their home. Sometimes it seemed that their home no longer belonged to them; people were always coming and going for meals and meetings.

The usual hectic Sabbath morning routine passed by until the Wintons were back in their car and heading for home. Emma and Sarah bubbled with excitement.

"Dad," Sarah said, "will you take us to the Entertainment Center tomorrow night? The Giants are playing the Wildcats and it should be a good game . . ."

"Yeah," Emma cut in. "All of the kids are going, and we'll meet for a drink afterwards. It'll be great."

"This isn't a Sabbath topic," answered Brian reprovingly. "And you all know that the board and business meeting is tomor-

row night."

"Dad, you always say that," sighed Sarah.

"Come on, Dad, the church can do without you this once," Emma snapped. "They just use you anyway."

Suddenly the conversation turned sour. It was as if the dam had broken. All the pent-up fury and frustration of the two teenagers rolled over their parents, until Brian thought his own two daughters had become the Wildcats.

As the car rolled to a stop Sarah defiantly imitated her father's voice, "This isn't a Sabbath topic, you know. But as soon as I'm old enough I'm getting out of this, and then you'd better believe there won't ever be any Sabbath topics talked."

Both rear doors slammed as the girls got out of the car.

Lives of overwhelming services does not put people in the religious hall of fame.

Their stunned parents were too dismayed to move. Where had they gone wrong?

Brian and Carla had made the mistake of placing the church above the needs of their family. They had become "churchaholics." All the good that they had been doing for their church had lost its significance as they considered what was happening to their girls.

A compulsive churchaholic is a person obsessed with the need to do more and more through church work. Just as workaholics use work to avoid the responsibilities and problems of relationships, so do churchaholics. Interpersonal relationships are developed as a result of service to the church organization.

At any sign of conflict, the compulsive churchaholic retreats

into church work. Here intimacy can be avoided by spending increasing amounts of time giving apparent, dedicated service in the belief that God applauds their efforts.

The activity of religion becomes a drug. It appears to such admirable work that it makes this addiction more deceptive than most. Real addicts can't find fulfillment at home with their families; instead, their very reason for existences seems to center around times of church worship. The opening church doors signify the opening of their hearts to the

Every family needs to work out limits for that family's participation in the church that are appropriate for their stage of marriage and family development.

backup routines in which they engage.

Religious addicts are requested to serve and keep serving the church. They respond by becoming involved in numerous groups, committees and meetings. They willingly sign up and sacrifice their family and friends to meet the system's needs. In the belief that they are serving God they allow their egos free rein, and in

the worst and wrong sense, zeal for the house of God consumes them (John 2:17).

Leading lives of overwhelming service that excludes all else, including family love and support, does not put addicts in the religious hall of fame. Rather, it puts them in hospital or breaks relationships.

One diligent church worker reported, "I sacrificed my family in their growing years for the work of the church. I felt guilty choosing the family over the church. Consequently I missed seeing my children in some school activities and sporting events. I learned too late that the church can and does survive well without me."

The Christian faith is one of self-sacrifice, but carried to an extreme it can become a compulsive act rather than an abundant life of compassion and witness.

Frequently it takes a crisis in the churchaholic's life to show such a person it is time to make a few changes. These addicts are generally very hard on themselves and everyone else. They are driven by all-or-none thinking.

But by acknowledging that there is an imbalance in their lives, they will be able to surrender the process of change to God. Without such a relationship with God there is no power to change.

We're all part of the body of Christ. Hurts that occur within one family also injure the larger





body of Christ. If, for example, the deacon's family is hurting and the solution is time off from his duties, then it is not a drain on the congregation, but should be mutually helpful. Besides, the congregation should see that tasks are shared and adjusted.

Every family needs to work out limits for that family's participation in the church that are appropriate for their stage of marriage and family development. Each family member's ideas as to the level of time commitment to the church are important. Without such communication, children may have little recourse except to build up resentment, bitterness and distrust.

The following specific suggestions can help toward solving the problem:

1. Prayer and mediation

On a daily basis we all need time for prayer, meditation and contemplation. The tragedy is that so often the busier we are in doing good things for our church, the more we neglect our personal devotions.

2. Time off

This may mean strenuous physical exercise or a day of inac-

tivity to recharge physical, emotional and spiritual batteries. It must involve a change of pace. In our home this is Sunday.

3. Bonding with your children

Spending special time with your children is essential if they are to know that they're important to you. Unique times of going for walks, taking them individually or collectively for ice-creams and special treats are low-cost, but important gestures. Most children are satisfied simply by having undivided, undistracted time with parents.

4. Family vacation

This calls for more than just

If you have become so preoccupied with your work that your family is being destroyed, recommit your life to one of balance.

time off. Holidays are a retreat for spiritual rebuilding and rebonding with the family. Participation in family activities requires emotional involvement, not just time and ideas.

5. Learn to say no

The measure of one's spiritual and personal maturity is the ability to say no occasionally—even to situations where you may be able to help. Learning to say no is a measure of maturity rather than defeat. The mature person is able to keep life, work and love in perspective.

Christ has shown us the way to live a balanced religious life.

He took time to eat. He took time to rest. He took time to pray. He took time to spend alone with His disciple family. And He spent time alone, getting away from crowds. He couldn't go on until His own needs were met.

Likewise Christ desires for each of us a place of rest and a time to regain perspective. If you don't have that time because you're driven to meet the needs of everyone else, take a second look at where you are.

If you're angry, exhausted and depressed, take the time to back away and find the rest that God wants for you. If you have become so preoccupied with your work that your family is being destroyed, recommit your life to one of balance.

Ask others around you, such as your spouse or children, if they think you have become fanatical in your church activity. Many need others to point it out for them or they will continue and believe that they are honoring God.

A healthy faith and a healthy believer are characterized by the capacity for balanced love. As faith grows, every aspect of the believer's life is improved. In the balanced practice of faith, families grow closer together; friendships become stronger; and conflict is more easily resolved.

"If you are guided by the Spirit you will not fulfil the desires of your lower nature. . . . the harvest of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness" (Gal. 5:16, 22, 23, NEB). ❀



Living With a Leader

Devi Titus



Devi Titus is one of America's recognized Christian conference speakers and authors. She founded and edited Virtue magazine, a successful Christian alternative to secular women's magazines. She is a pastor's wife, trainer, publisher, mother, decorator, editor, writer, speaker, producer, homemaker, and grandmother. Her goal is to motivate women and men to move towards godliness in every area of their life.

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—Via Shepherdess International

Leadership presents itself in many forms. In personality and style it is as varied as the people who fill the lead position in churches and ministries across the country. Yet there are certain characteristics that leaders share.

My husband is a strong leader who has an introverted, melancholy temperament. He never seeks to be the life of the party nor wastes time with trivial pursuits. He carefully plans his strategy, is comfortable with solitude, is companioned by mediation and speaks seldom but boldly—when he has something to say.

Now, I am a leader too—but one of a different kind. I like to be noticed when entering a room, and solitude for any length of time, for me, is lonely. I speak about any subject as an expert whether I know about it or not.

People are my life. I love to be involved. When Larry and I relax for an evening of reading, I always interrupt his absorbed state, reading aloud the important points in my book.

Though we are opposite in personality and approach, we still share common characteristics with all leaders. Understanding these distinctives has made living together a lot more pleasant.

1. Leaders have followers. Life with a leader always in-

cludes other people. A common way to deal with a leader's "other people" is to become possessive and try to limit his or her relationships. Another is to isolate yourself and remain uninvolved and non-participatory in the leader's activities.

Both of these options should be rejected since they only exacerbate the problem. Though you must schedule times alone with your spouse, the only true solution is to appreciate that your leader has others who are willing to follow and to participate as much as possible in the leadership area of his or her life.

2. Leaders have time demands. Schedules and deadlines are all part of the system a leader creates to reach his or her goals. Therefore, a spouse should seek to keep accurate calendars of dates and times so he or she can approach each day with a feeling of preparedness rather than chaos.

Communicate daily concerning your schedules and make adjustments for togetherness whenever possible. Don't allow time demands to cause you to lead separate lives.

3. Leaders are focused. There is little room for spontaneity when living with a leader. Leaders are focused on their goals; schedules predetermine their activities. When you talk to

focused people, you usually have only portion of their attention—their minds are always preoccupied, their attention span short, much like a child.

Don't take this personally. Rather, use several brief intervals of conversation rather than pursuing a lengthy dissertation. This way you are more likely to keep your leader's interest.

4. Leaders work with staff.

Leaders are accustomed to giving direction to a group of people working with them to implement their vision. They are in authority, and those on their team usually do not question that fact.

However, when leaders come home, they often continue to treat family as staff. It helps to give a leader time for transition from the work environment to the family environment. You can help by creating a soft, warm ambiance—unlike the office—with music, candles, fragrance or other environmental props, avoiding noise and confusion.


5. Leaders carry stress.

Leadership has stress points that are not always definable. Some things can be talked about but others are not quite so clear.

Pressures and concerns that cannot be talked about can alter his or her mood. Don't pile on more, but help carry the load.

6. Leaders can be wrong, too. As my mother always said, "What's so bad about being wrong?" Yet leaders feel such a responsibility to others that it is sometimes difficult for them to accept that they could be wrong, especially if their mistake could hurt those who they are leading.

Therefore, they tend to want to cover their mistakes or justify them. Give your leader room to say, "I am wrong" without fear or rejection or criticism. This attitude does wonders for providing the confidence to try again. ❀



Pastor's Wife

A lady of talent, a lady of love.
Devout, sincere, a true witness of God's love.
Tactful, gentle, humble, and refined—
Sweetness, goodness, and understanding combined.

But she is also made of flesh like you,
With human weaknesses and passions too;
With a woman's need for love and gratitude
And a woman's scorn for the base and crude.

But how often she is misunderstood,
This gentle creature, so kind and good.
Who knows the many tears she's shed
When weary and worn, she seeks her bed.

But who knows the anxious thoughts and fears
When sickness in her home appears?
When the bills run high and problems arise,
Who sees the torment in her eyes?

But who knows the lonely hours that come
When her husband is called away from home?
God knows, for very often He hears her pleas
As she seeks for comfort upon her knees.

But, oh, my friends, she's not made out of gold,
Give her a sympathetic hand to hold.
A word of comfort, a word of praise
Will help her through her gloomy days.

—Elisient Maeve Vernon



Hidden Treasure

Carol L. Bruning



Carol Bruning is an educator employed by Jefferson Community College, teaching English courses. She is the author of over 100 articles. She is married to Chaplain (MAJ) Frank Bruning, U.S. Army, who recently returned from the mission to Haiti. They have two children, Jonathan, 12, and Elizabeth, 10.

This article appeared *Home Life*, September 1994. Used with permission.

—Via Shepherdess International

The deacon's wife must have suspected my housekeeping endeavors lacked proper priority. As footsteps echoed through the empty parsonage, she turned away from the rest of the search committee. "You'd never believe this place when preacher Thomas and his family moved out. His wife, bless her, was so busy caring for others, I don't think she ever managed to get her housework done. Why, we had to paint every room, and it took us three full days to clean the oven!"

She didn't intend it as gossip. It wasn't mean spirited or unkind. The message she offered was clear: Keep the parsonage clean!

Throughout our tenure in the parsonage, and in the years since, I've followed her admonition in my own quirky style. It's not that we're total slobs. Housecleaning has never become a daily routine, much less a spiritual experience. Oh, we keep the laundry done—never mind I don't fold under-

wear. Frank vacuums once a week with fervor, and I can load a dishwasher with the best of them.

Once a month or so, I get the nesting instinct. I haul out the cleanser and wash every surface with the zeal of a newly ordained missionary. The rest of the time, I'd rather call on a sick friend or write a card to a new widow than dig the popcorn kernels, pencils, and pennies from the crevices of the sofa.

Every drawer a junk drawer

"No place for anything and nothing in its place" is her philosophy.

Unfortunately, they'll never hold me up as a shining example of great moments in housekeeping history. Instead, my basic philosophy is: No place for anything and nothing in its place. Every household has a junk drawer. We have

six in every bedroom, five in the kitchen, and three in our home office. *Every* drawer is a junk drawer.

It's downright demoralizing. A good friend, also a preacher's wife, has arranged, labeled, and

card-cataloged their bookshelves and video library. Hunting for something at our house, however, is truly an adventure. One can never imagine what might fall from a shelf or spring from under a bed. Every day reveals some long forgotten and misplaced treasures.

The surface appearance of our house seems neat and orderly. Should a curious church member drop by to discuss the nursery volunteers' schedule, she'd see a sparkling kitchen, replete with an immaculate stove. That is, as long as she doesn't see the charred crisps of a long forgotten, but enjoyed cherry pie, etched indelibly in the oven's bottom. I'm a hide-and-forget housekeeper.

No, I don't suffer from a borderline personality disorder associated with maladapted preachers' wives. Hiding may explain, but not excuse, human inadequacies or failures. Adam and Eve hid in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:8). Moses hid after murdering the Egyptian (Ex. 2:12). Sin and its guilt are not the only reasons for hiding. Even King Saul, when God chose him to rule the nation of Israel, responded to the honor by hiding (1 Sam. 10:22). Hiding is a normal, human response.

I may be able to explain why we do it, but I know we cannot camouflage the reality of our lifestyle from the Lord. I cannot conceal my petty resentments and snide remarks and imagine that I am a perfect Christian any more than I can shut the hall closet and pretend that pile of coats, jackets, and hats on the floor isn't really there. As our omniscient Father, God certainly knows all about my sins and clumsy attempts to cloak the shame (Ps. 69:5). I have to own up to those dust bunnies under all the furniture in my life and do some spiritual mopping up.

Some days that commercial slogan, "Calgon, take me away!" can be so inviting. When the going gets too tough, God allows us to hide. He even provides an escape route for faithful Christian (1 Cor. 10:13). Because we are so special (Ps. 17:8), He offers us a chance to regroup in His "secret

My mother, my efficient, immaculate alter-ego, always told me, "Nothing is ever lost, only misplaced." As Christians, this old saying is especially relevant.

pavilion" (Ps. 27:5). We can retreat, as even Jesus did (John 8:59), from the strife of everyday life. When we hide in the sheltered sanctuary of His personal chambers, He even allows us to "close the doors" (Ps. 31:20).

Search is always on

"Honey, where'd you put it?" is the bane of my existence. Most

of my family members have stopped asking such foolish questions. Instead, they wander aimlessly through the house. With a bewildered expression, they look through Mt. Everest-sized piles of paper and under cushions. Eventually, they uncover whatever it was they were seeking in the first place. Maybe, they find something even better.

My mother—my efficient, immaculate alter-ego—always told me, "Nothing is ever lost, only misplaced." As Christians, this old saying is especially relevant. We have the opportunity to hide in the Word. When we search for the lost keys, combs, and glasses of our spiritual life, we can turn up those spiritual treasures when we need them the most. When we read and meditate upon His words, we find answers that illuminate our paths (Ps. 119:105).

I doubt that I'll ever totally reform my hide-and-forget style of living. I'm pretty comfortable after 20 years of married life in this helter-skelter, spontaneous sort of existence. I can usually rationalize my behavior. I simply tell myself: *I'm like Mary; I'd rather be at Jesus' feet.* That works most of the time. At least it did until the president of the Dorcas Circle came to visit us last week and asked to hang her coat in the hall closet. ❁



Praise Him, Praise Him, Praise Him

Darlyn Kelle

Praise. A simple word, really. In human context it evokes an image of the warm glow which spreads from our face to our toes when someone notices and appreciates our efforts.

Praise can spruce up one's sagging esteem more effectively than a shopping spree, a successful diet, or a met deadline. We love genuine praise and with good reason. It tells us we are loved. It says who we are is important and that we make a difference in this world. It reassures us that our work or choices have value, not only in our estimation (a fragile appraisal at times), but also in the eyes of others. Praise validates that part of us which is productive, creative, lovely. It can surprise us into an awareness of self we hadn't seen, through the eyes of another's perception of our gifts, skills, and attributes.

Lately I have been pondering praise. I know how receiving praise affects me (I get the most delicious warm fuzzies!), and I am aware that I have innumerable opportunities to bestow the gift of praise on others. It pains me to think how many joys I diverted by silence. But what I've been mulling over specifically has to do with God.

You see, we are called to praise Him. Over and over—urged, reminded, commanded, invited. Throughout Scripture it is demonstrated, modeled by countless fellow believers like David, Hannah, Mary, Paul, Noah, and Elizabeth. We are to praise God at all times, under all circumstances, with all our being. If that sounds like a tall order, bear in mind this life is, after all, a prep school for the one to come, in which we will each be specialists in praise.

Just a simple study on praise opens endless vistas of information. There are, by my count, 284 references to praise in the concordance. And the texts are found in 31 of the 66 books of the Bible. From sheer numbers alone, we can conclude this subject is one God cared deeply about teaching us.

Examples of praise include thanksgiving, psalms, confession, commendation, glory, and excellency.

Did you know there were so many kinds of praise? Or, for that matter, that there are so many reasons to praise? To bless or declare blessed, stretch out the hand, confess, glorify or sing.

In only a brief study on praise, one's mind is filled with reasons to praise God and a variety of

This article appeared in Royal News, January-March 1992, Northern New England Conference. Used with permission.

—Via Shepherdess International

ways to do so. Take a concordance for a moment and look up a few texts in one small section on praise. Read the words of each verse aloud and let them travel back into the recesses of your mind. Do they not touch a spark of wonder and elicit a new sense of direction for thanksgiving?

Take for example, a random text, Isaiah 63:7 (NIV), "I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us—yes, the many good things he has done for the house of Israel."

How that jogs one's memory of personal kindnesses and deeds God has shared! It stirs us to come to Him in thanksgiving for such memories. In a chain reaction, faith is energized by recognition of God's providence in the past. What tremendous benefits praise offers!

From the beginning of time, song has captured our deepest emotions and raised our highest expressions of worship. From the angel's adoration to the lisping notes of a toddler's first song, melody has played a role in offered praise to our Creator. Most of us love music. When we raise our voices in song around the house, in the shower, as we garden or fold the clothes, these notes offer our simple homage to Him who loves us.

I once was a house guest in the home of a woman who cooked, cleaned up after, and generally cared for as many as a dozen people at a time. Despite the ensuing stress of uneven schedules, an incessantly ringing

phone, personality conflicts and huge work load, Lois often broke into song while kneading bread or scrubbing the bathroom. She hummed while washing dishes and whistled as she vacuumed. One day I asked her how she could be so cheerful under the circumstances. "I just think about Jesus and how much He loves me, and my singing keeps me focused on Him. It's my way of express-

There must be dozens of ideas you can add to this shortlist. We rarely contemplate broadening our praise list!

Now, let's be frank for a moment. Say this article on praise has come to your attention during a particularly tough time. Your husband is under serious flak from one of his churches for what is perceived as weak leadership. Your daughter is failing Algebra,

has a crush on a boy four years older, and has shut you out emotionally. You just learned your mother has been hospitalized for CAT scans and a series of diagnostic procedures. Pressure at work has been building for weeks. Prayer is much like breakfast these days—experienced on the run, when you have it all. And in the midst of all this, you are reminded not to forget to praise God! For what? you might ask.

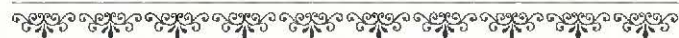
Good question. Did you ever feel like growling or wailing

in the midst of your troubles when someone brightly said, "Your car was totalled? Praise the Lord! He must have a reason . . ." Okay, maybe it was something far less traumatic, but you get the point. I remember thinking at the height of such a season in my life, "Hey, isn't it hypocritical to praise God under such circumstances? Thanks for allowing me to feel this pain? I praise You for complicating my life . . ." What I felt toward God and His cheery servant was far removed from praise.

But herein lies the mystery, and dare I say, magic of praise.



*Drop to your knees beside the wide road;
And pick up a stone to turn in your hand.
Now make one like it—seed of the earth—
Then if you succeed; tell me there's no God.
Take clay and dust; and fashion a child,
With wistful brown eyes and breath in its lungs,
Make flesh-warm lips, a brain, and red blood
Then if you succeed, tell me there's no God.*



ing love. It keeps me happy most of the time."

There are as many things to praise God for as there are people on this planet. We customarily thank Him for His protection, mercy, compassion, and the myriad provisions He makes for us. We are thankful for His death on the cross, and grateful He is our intercessor in Heaven. What else can we appreciate and revere Him for? How about for His sense of humor, awesome mind, attention to detail, unchangeableness, fairness, healing love, exquisite use of beauty, perfect timing.

Stretch your imagination.

For it is precisely in the process of praising our King that change begins. We are to exalt God; He deserves our adoration. We are to praise for it gradually changes our focus from our anxiety and stress to His majesty and loveliness. He invites us to join our voices to the unnumbered chorus, not because He needs our particular brand of praise to complete His symphony, but to unlock the gifts contained for us in such an act of worship. In the same way a crying child's sobs are turned to absorbed wonder as a parent opens a coat pocket to reveal something special, our frustrations and fears are forgotten in the captivating process of revering our Father.

Cynics may say mouthing words of praise will not restore one's mangled automobile. They would be right. Honoring God does not automatically heal the broken relationship, save a needed job, pay soaring medical bills, or help us figure out what to do next. On the other hand, the peace of mind enveloping one who turns from chaos to praise is priceless. One can afford to wait and see about the car.

Life is something special! Praise God!

Living is not merely letting time slip by. Real life and living is being in tune with the Creator and letting the love, peace and creative power of the Omnipotent throb in your soul. No one can find life entirely rich and satisfying until he can feel himself one with the Infinite. When we identify ourselves with Jesus Christ so that His will becomes our will and His work becomes our work, then His life will truly become our life and we can say with the apostle Paul, "For to me to live is Christ." ❀

Loving the Unlovable

Delba Bartolome de Chavez

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44).

A male co-teacher, who became principal when my husband was called to another administrative work, accused me in public of malversing funds. Since there was no truth in the charge, I reacted strongly to his accusations. We exchanged some cruel words.

Two weeks went by and neither my accuser nor myself made any attempt at reconciliation. As each day passed I found my resentment growing and growing. Soon I was unable to sleep or eat.

After much prayer, I took the initiative and went to see him in his office. Naturally he grew quite defensive as I told him how unjust his accusations were and how hurt I felt. Unfortunately, nothing was resolved in the encounter.

The trauma of being charged for something I had not done

settled over me like a black cloud. I secluded myself and avoided responsibilities. I became more depressed as days passed. God knew I was innocent, yet the accusations weighed heavily on my heart.

Finally, I asked the chairman of the school board to mediate. He invited the principal and me to his office. The meeting began with prayer, and we were each given a chance to relate our side of the incident.

It was at that meeting that I realized that explanations would be useless. Instead of calmly discussing the issues and solving the problem, the principal hurled more vicious remarks at me.

It was then that God spoke to me, "Love him. Forget every word he has uttered. I know you didn't do it!"

I turned to my accuser and gently told him, "Let's end this confrontation. We will never resolve the problem by throwing 'rocks' at one another."

With the chairman as witness, I apologized to the principal for the remarks I had made.

Sensing the direction our discussion had taken and perceiving my changed attitude, my accuser broke down sobbing, "Can you forgive me for all the pain I've caused you?" We both realized the long process of healing had just begun.

Christ said: "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?" (Matt. 5:46). ❀

Delba Bartolome de Chavez writes from the Philippines. She has taught in secondary schools, organized and conducted church choirs, edited the mission newsletter and writes articles for her local Shepherdess newsletter. She is an avid reader, enjoys traveling and meeting people, gardening, badminton, photography and children. She has five children: two boys, twin girls, and an adopted nephew.



Help Lord! I'm Drowning!

Dorothy Watts

I struggled to wake myself, fighting the awareness of the million things I needed to accomplish in the next 24 hours. I wanted to hang on to oblivion, the absence of pain, pressure, and everyday living. After several attempts to get my feet on the floor, I finally gave in to the demands of another day.

I picked up my long to-do-list and groaned. "I'll never get it done! I've no time for devotions this morning, Lord. I'm sure You understand." I sent up a silent prayer as I tried to decide which job to tackle first.

I fixed breakfast, dropped Ron at the office, and drove to church school to teach a class. Then I rushed to the doctor's office only to wait for nearly an hour before being seen. From there I hurried to the supermarket for groceries and picked what I

thought was the shortest line. What a mistake! Everyone in front of me had unpriced items and the clerk had to call for price checks.

I rushed home to get lunch ready, drove back to the office to pick up my husband, hurriedly ate, then did the dishes. As Ron left to return to work he said, "I need an article written by tomorrow morning. Think you could do it?"

I felt like screaming! How could I add one more thing to my list? I had not completed half of the items I needed to accomplish and it was already three o'clock. I was getting further and further behind. I went to my desk, picked up my journal and wrote out my frustration:

"How, Lord? How? I just want to hole up in front of the fireplace and do nothing, yet I must press on. I have a manuscript to finish, a Sabbath school program to get ready, a company meal to prepare. This week is getting away from me."

To make sure the Lord got my point, I drew Him a picture. I sketched an ocean scene with big waves and a stick figure with

head and outstretched arms sinking beneath the surface. I wrote the caption, each word one line lower on the page until the last word was at the very bottom, "Help, Lord! Help! I'm drowning, and I've no strength to swim!"

Then I opened my Bible to Acts 27, the story of Paul's shipwreck, where I had last stopped reading. The words of verse 44 seemed to leap out at me and I chuckled at their appropriateness: "And they escaped all safe to land."

I could hear God speaking to my frustrated heart, "Dorothy, just as I was able to see Paul safely to land, I can see you safely to the end of this task, this day, this week. You will not drown!"

Has the multitude of tasks you face as a mother and a pastor's wife caused you to want to throw up your hands and scream, "Help, Lord, I'm drowning"? Take a few minutes out, turn on some soft music, put up your feet, and let God whisper to your harried heart, "I can see you safely to the end of this task, this day, this week. I am with you. I'll not let you drown!" ❀

This article appeared in His Partners, May-June 1994, (British Columbia Conference). Used with permission.

—Via Shepherdess International

It's Not an Easy Job!

Jim Buchan



Jim Buchan and his wife, Mary, have three children and live in Columbus, Ohio. Jim serves as senior pastor of Christian Community Church East, one of the five related congregations in the Central Ohio area. Jim is also the founder and director of Focus Ministries, an outreach of encouragement and vision to pastors in all 50 states and over 70 foreign countries.

—Via Shepherdess International

Although the “excellent wife” or “virtuous woman” described in Proverbs 31:10-31 is often used as a model for how all godly women should live, it also can have a more specific application, as shown in verse 23:

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders.

The reference to husband being “known in the gates” and sitting “among the elders” is an indication commonly used in the Old Testament to describe a man of authority, a leader in the community. We can see then that the Proverbs 31 woman, in addition to the great responsibilities that any woman with a husband and children faces, must deal with an additional dimension—she is a leader’s wife.

Being the wife of man in leadership is a tremendous privilege and can bring many joys, opportunities, and blessings. But it also involves special challenges not often faced or understood by other women. Things for which other women depend on their husbands, she must often seek directly from God and from her own labor. For her husband is frequently required to attend to leadership outside the home, to “sit among the elders.”

The husband’s leadership re-

sponsibilities not only bring increased pressures to bear upon the wife’s role in the home, but she also is often expected to take on a variety of other ministries because of her husband’s position:

She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue (Prov. 31:26).

She extends her hand to the poor; and she stretches out her hands to the needy (Prov. 31:20).

Sometimes this ministry of teaching and taking care of the needy is enjoyable and fulfilling, but at other times it can seem to be based more on obligation to people than on the will of God. The expectations we have of the wife of a pastor or other leader are not necessarily valid! She has her own unique gifts, ministries and limitations, and can’t always fit the “pastor’s wife” mold we put her in.

As C. M. Ward has well said, “The role of the preacher’s wife is tough. She can’t win! If she has talent, she’s showing off. And if she lacks talent, why did he marry her? If she dresses well, she’s spending her husband’s money. If she doesn’t dress well, she’s hindering his ministry. What woman in her right mind would want to marry a preacher? A congregation does well to remember

she's the pastor's wife, not the church's wife."

A congregation's expectations on a pastor's wife are frequently even more unfair when the pastor is financially supported by the church. "With all we pay Pastor Jones, you would think his wife would be more involved in the ministry," the line goes. But some leaders' wives have all they can do caring for their husband and children—particularly when they have three or four children under the age of five!

Aside from her relationship with the Lord, nothing is more needed, or more difficult, for a pastor's wife than having friendships with other women. There are several reasons this tends to be so difficult:

- ❖ The pastor's wife is often seen on a pedestal as some sort of "professional" Christian that cannot be related to as a normal person.
- ❖ Many people subconsciously have the idea that neither the pastor nor his wife have any real problems.
- ❖ It is hard for a leader's wife to be fully honest with people about her needs because she is afraid they won't respect her anymore.
- ❖ Even when she tries to share her needs, the pastor's wife isn't always understood by those who haven't been in her position.

Despite these obstacles to close relationships, it is of the utmost importance that a pastor's wife have at least one other woman with whom she can share her heart. If this doesn't happen, it is almost inevitable that she will dry up spiritually and emotionally in time—or else she will look to her husband to meet all her

needs so that she is a constant drain on him instead of a helpmate. And, no matter how sensitive her husband is, there are some needs and feelings that only another woman can understand!

The Marriage and the Church

I once counseled a pastor and his wife who were on the brink of divorce. The ironic thing was that each of them was seen by those in the church as very loving and caring people. In fact, the trouble was precisely that—both of them poured themselves out so completely in serving their parishioners that they had nothing left for each other!

The pastor came home after a hard day of fighting the powers of darkness and really needed someone to just love him, support him, and encourage him. But his wife had been taking care of the children all day—in between handling phone calls from needy church members—and she too felt drained and in need of affection.

The pastor and wife gradually had become resentful toward each other for not meeting their needs. The wife was also getting a bad attitude toward the church for taking away their family life and sapping her husband of love that she felt was rightfully hers. Fortunately, God intervened in the nick of time. When they saw what was happening, they were able to adjust their priorities and are now more in love than ever before.

A Tribute

If there ever is someone who needs a special tribute from time to time, it is the wife of a man of God. The pastor has great burdens, but he also gets the glory and positive reinforcement of being in the limelight and hearing

things such as, "Good sermon, pastor." She is likely to experience many of the same burdens as her husband but usually receives little of the applause or appreciation.

Is there hope for the wife of the pastor? Yes! Proverbs 31 is not the picture of a burned out and defeated woman who stewes bitterly at home while her husband sits with the elders at the church leadership meetings. Rather, an example is portrayed of one who has learned to joyfully draw strength from God even when her husband isn't around to meet her needs. Yes, there are ways that an understanding husband can help shield her from some of the perils of the ministry—but ultimately it will be her relationship with the Lord that will see her through.

As one precious saint said to me several years ago, "It's not an easy job!" That's for sure. But Proverbs 31 concludes with a message of encouragement and hope for the valiant women who are called to this challenging assignment:

Her children rise up and bless her;
Her husband also, and he praises her
saying:

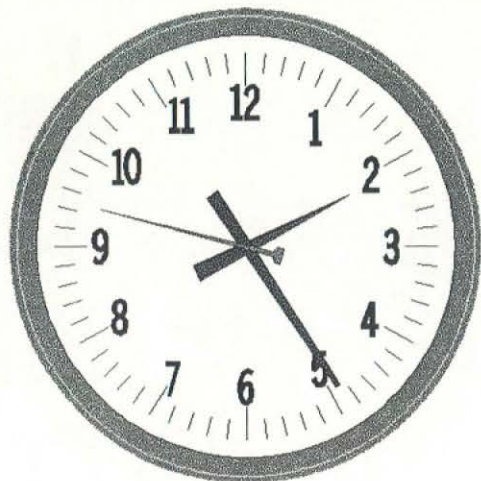
"Many daughters have done nobly,
but you excel them all."

Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the Lord,
she shall be praised.

Give her the product of her hands,
and let her works praise her in the
gates. —Prov. 31:28-31

Thank you Lord for these noble women!

P.S. If you are not a pastor's wife but happen to be reading this article, why not make a commitment that sometime in the next few days you will find a pastor's wife that you can show your appreciation to and encourage. ❖



Time—Tyrant or Opportunist

Joy Totenhofer



Joy Totenhofer is a retired pastoral wife living in Mooroolbark, Australia. She has two children, Sharman and Wesley, and seven grandchildren. From 1975-80 she was Public Relations Officer at Sydney Adventist Hospital. She also worked seven years as an assistant editor for the Signs Publishing Company, Warburton. She enjoys gardening, knitting, crafts, and especially her Maltese Terrier, "Tuppence."

This article appeared in the North New South Wales Shepherdess, March 1994. Used with permission.

—Via Shepherdess International

I recently decided to break the tyranny of time. Although time is the one talent we share equally—24 hours each day—I frequently find myself with lists longer than seem practical.

Multiple Demands

The multiplicity of things I should do, people I must see, and things I have to buy have literally eroded the time I need to maintain my physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. But what can I do about it?

I have considered the alternatives and realized that time is closely tied to space. The more space we occupy, the more time we must invest.

Larger houses demand more

time. Spacious gardens and lawns require additional hours of weeding, watering, and mowing. And if we choose to live a considerable distance from work, we must allow extra traveling time for our commute.

It is the same with holidays. In the past we took our meager changes of clothes and traveled for an hour or two to the nearest

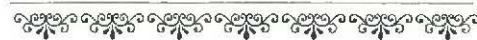
beach or mountain and spent our short vacation in leisurely pursuits.

Now, however, we pack a huge suitcase full of

outfits and fly halfway around the world. We take days to catch up on jet lag and then frantically endeavor to do all the things we want to do before we cram our suitcases with souvenirs and dash for the airport. Then we endure



*Time is too precious to waste
on fruitless enterprises.*



the long flight home that leaves no time to recover before the alarm clock and the rhythm of routine takes over.

And that's life. It flashes by like a movie on a reel. How can we escape the merry-go-round and make more time? I am learning. It is not easy to develop new habit patterns.

A Better Way

I am finding that my day begins better if I wake up earlier so I can spend some time in meditation and eat a proper breakfast instead of gulping down an orange light on my way out the door.

Recently my neighbor's little daughter came into my kitchen while I was ironing my clothes. Looking up at me she inquired, "Have you finished your ironing?"

"No," I told her, "I'm just beginning."

"Then why are you doing the handkerchiefs? You should always do them last!" she admonished me.

How right she was! That five-year old reminded me to tackle the difficult or unpleasant tasks first and then to reward myself with the easy ones later! Placing daily tasks in priority also helps. We can still eat with unpolished silver, but the dishes and the clothes need washing. It is a trap to waste time on peripherals and then miss the important items.

Even the important matter of making decisions can be time consuming. My husband and I used to spend days discussing the pros and cons of a proposition until we discovered it was more productive to write on paper two lists, advantages and disadvantages. This method has also helped our marital harmony!

Time is too precious to waste on fruitless enterprises. I make a

daily or weekly list of the items essential to achieve my aims, but I do not let that routine dominate my whole of life. There must be time to catch up!

Paul Gordon reminds us that "Time is a limited and valuable resource that must be allocated among competing objectives . . ."

Young Man of Opportunity

I do not know why Time is traditionally depicted as an old man with a beard and scythe. Rather, I like to picture Time as a youthful being, with arms laden with opportunities.

Not only is time linked to space, but it must also be allied with money. Time is money.

When we realize that we have only a limited supply of time and money, a budget for both becomes imperative.

One of the poems I best remember from my school days is by Ralph Hodgson:

*"Time, you old gypsy man,
Will you not stay?
Put up your caravan
Just for one day?
All things I'll give you
Will you be my guest . . ."*

But no one can delay the clock nor hasten it. We cannot buy time or even give it away. Time is for us to invest. And it can give us valuable returns. ❀



The Essence of Right Faith

It is the very essence of all right faith

to do the right thing at the right time.

God is the great Master Worker,

and by His providence He prepares the way for

His work to be accomplished.

He provides opportunities,

opens up lines of influence and channels of working.

If His people are watching the indications of His providence,

and stand ready to co-operate with Him,

they will see a great work accomplished.

Their efforts, rightly directed,

will produce a hundredfold greater results

than can be accomplished with the same means and facilities

in another channel where God is not so manifestly working.

—Testimonies for the Church, volume 6, page 24





Shepherdess International News

Asia Pacific Division

❖ The Central Luzon Conference Shepherdess Chapter held a day-long livelihood program on October 19 at the conference office. Guest lecturer was Rachel Agustin, an expert in Food Science and Technology, who spoke about nutrition.

❖ Central Luzon pastoral wives enjoyed flickering candles and fellowship at their annual Christmas fellowship. The program began at 8:30 a.m. on December 19 with a devotional by Pastor Edwin Martin. Games such as volleyball and table tennis were played. The women exchanged gifts from their SOS partners and took home gifts from the Conference office and departments. They were most thankful to Jesus who has guided and blessed each one of them through the year and continues to guide them into the new year.

Middle East Union

❖ November 10-13 was the retreat in Amman, Jordan for pastors and their wives. Elder Jim Neergaard presented subjects on Spiritual Leadership. Valerie Fidelia taught health topics, and Joyce Neergaard spoke on the sub-

ject of Team Ministry, Spiritual Gifts and Role Conflict. Elder William Johnsson, editor of the *Adventist Review* was a special guest on the last day.

North American Division

❖ Idaho Conference pastoral wives held their annual Shepherdess Retreat in September at the Rapid River Ranch in Riggins, Idaho. Alvy Quispe, the featured speaker for the retreat presented the theme "The Joy of Perfect Oneness." Alvy is the associate director of family life services for the Pacific Health Education Center in Bakersfield, California. She presented ideas about self-worth, identity, and how temperament affects the way people act and relate to life.

South American Division



The Matto Grosso Mission Shepherdess Chapter of the Central Brazil Union meet together to celebrate the Year of the Adventist Woman

Southern Asia Division



Margaret Nathaniel, second from right, and pastoral wives from Hosur leave for their Branch Sabbath School where they have over 200 children attending.

Your Field

❖ Please send us Shepherdess news from your field. We would love to share your activities with Shepherdess Chapters around the world.

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