

THE JOURNAL

A Shepherdess International Resource for Ministry Spouses

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A Life of Praise

Cultivating a Heart of Celebration

Saved to Serve

Courage Is Not the Absence of Fear...

Disagreeing Without Falling Apart

Lessons on Loss

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SPECIAL PROMISES

“The thought that Christ died to obtain for us the gift of everlasting life, is enough to call forth from our hearts the most sincere and fervent gratitude, and from our lips the most enthusiastic praise.”

Sons & Daughters of God, p. 238

“In the future life the mysteries that here have annoyed and disappointed us will be made plain. We shall see that our seemingly unanswered prayers and disappointed hopes have been among our greatest blessings.”

Ministry of Healing, p. 474

“The fact that we are called upon to endure trial shows that the Lord Jesus sees in us something precious which He desires to develop. If He saw in us nothing whereby He might glorify His name, He would not spend time in refining us. He does not cast worthless stones into His furnace.

It is valuable ore that He refines.”

Testimonies to the Church, vol. 5, p. 317

“We do not pray any too much, but we are too sparing of giving thanks. If the loving kindness of God called forth more thanksgiving and praise, we would have far more power in prayer.”

Testimonies to the Church, vol. 5, p. 317

“No tongue can express, no finite mind can conceive, the blessing that results from appreciating the goodness and love of God.... Then let us educate our hearts and lips to speak the praise of God for His matchless love.”

Ministry of Healing, p. 253



SHARING THE JOURNEY

My mind races when I try to have my time with God in the morning. My Bible lies open in my lap as thoughts and worries about the many things that need to get done block my concentration. My joy in spending time with Jesus has faded.

Do you ever feel that way? I certainly have lately.

There are so many things to do. Moving 3,000 miles across the country, overseas trips, packing and unpacking—I can't seem to catch up or settle in. Plus, so many things keep going wrong. I am convinced the evil one does not like this ministerial work my husband and I have been called to do.

Can you relate? What do you do?

Almost everyone I talk to is stressed and busy. I have been so overwhelmed with all the problems, all the things to be done, that all I could do was pray, "Lord, help me! I don't think I can handle one more problem, and I can't even concentrate on reading Your Word!"

Then a Bible text came to mind: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say rejoice! . . . Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. 4:4-6).

Well, I had sure been letting God know what I needed—over and over again—in my one-way conversations. But I realized I had not been rejoicing, and I certainly had not been thanking Him. Although I knew better, I was so caught up in my own problems and so overwhelmed with my responsibilities that I forgot.

So, once again, I started praising God and thanking Him for who He is and for what He is doing in my life. Yes, I continued to bring my supplications to Him, but now I was thanking Him for taking care of my problems and my job. I named every concern and thanked God for giving me the ability to do each thing—even though I felt totally inadequate.

I also started praising God for the good things He was doing in my life and even rejoicing over the trials and problems that seemed never-ending.

And you know what happened? Just what Philippians 4:7 says will happen: "And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

**I HAD SURE
BEEN LETTING
GOD KNOW
WHAT I
NEEDED—
OVER AND
OVER AGAIN.**

Now I could focus on God and enjoy Him. Once again I could concentrate while reading my Bible. When my mind would start to worry, I would start thanking God for taking care of all that concerns me (see Ps. 18:32).

Why do I forget this so easily? I am thankful for God's mercy and grace, His understanding and faithfulness!



The new year has been busy for my husband and me. We were in the West-Central Africa Division for 10 days for their first-ever ministerial meeting. Over 2,000 pastoral couples and leaders attended. What a thrilling experience! A week later, we traveled to the South Pacific Division for two weeks; we visited New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Australia, and Fiji. Our eyes have been opened to all that God is doing around the world. Church members and leaders everywhere are uniting together, praying at 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. for the Holy Spirit to bring revival and reformation into our lives.

I CAN'T EVEN CONCENTRATE ON READING YOUR WORD!

As you read this *Journal*, I hope and pray that (1) you will gain new insights for supporting your walk with God and (2) you will gain a better understanding of the

power that is unleashed when we choose to give God praise and thanksgiving during life's good and bad experiences. In this issue, you'll find an article about reaching out to someone who has lost a loved one, an article about disagreeing with your spouse, and an article about dealing with fear. There is also a special feature about Vivian Cisneros, a pastor's wife in the South American Division.

Let me know your thoughts about how this *Journal* could better meet your needs. You can reach me at pagejanet@gc.adventist.org.

Praying for you!



JANET PAGE, General Conference ministerial associate for Shepherdess International and Prayer Ministries, is passionate about knowing Jesus, prayer, and reaching people for Him. As Prayer, Shepherdess and Women's Ministries coordinator for the Pennsylvania and Central California Conferences in North America, Janet has seen God work to change lives in miraculous ways when His people come together in prayer. Often a speaker for weekend retreats, she loves sharing her favorite subject—Jesus and spending time with Him. She also travels with her husband Jerry, speaking at leadership events around the world. She has two sons, two daughter-in-laws, and two young grandsons.

CULTIVATING A HEART OF CELEBRATION

by Mary Barrett



In the past, when we had a problem in our family, my initial response was to panic and pray. My husband's response has always been to praise and pray! However, I thought he was taking things just a little too far when he wanted to thank God for the bully at school who was intimidating our eldest daughter, Rima.

Rima has always been small for her age. Kathy, the girl who was bullying Rima, was big, tough, and rough. She had such a reputation that everyone was frightened of her. No one wanted to mess with Kathy. And this was the girl my husband wanted me to thank God for? To be honest, I wanted to forget about the praising and jump straight to the praying bit. However, deep in my heart, I knew the time had come for my prayers to change. I needed to praise as much as I petitioned. So that's what we did. Jonathan and I thanked God for the bully who was causing Rima such anguish and praised God that He could do something about it.

It was not easy. Most days Rima went to school crying and came home crying. And every day, Jonathan and I would fall to our knees, depending on God to remedy the situation. But we were not prepared for the way in which God responded to our praise. A few days later, Rima came home full of smiles. The problem had been solved.

Kathy had been showing a photograph to the class; the picture was of her cousin Jodie and her Aunt Sarah. As Rima looked at the picture, she cried out, "But that is *my* cousin and *my* aunt, too!" We found out that Rima and Kathy are cousins. My husband's sister and Kathy's uncle are Jodie's parents. (The amazing part of this story is that my husband is a pastor, and we had only recently

moved to a tiny village in England where his sister's ex-partner lived.)

After that, Rima never had a problem at school, since Kathy didn't beat up on family. No one else gave Rima a hard time either, because the school bully was now Rima's bodyguard against other bullies.

That was the first experience I had with what can happen when we praise God, release a situation into His hands, and depend totally upon Him to work. It is amazing what God can do when we present our requests to Him with praise and thanksgiving.

IT IS AMAZING
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THANKSGIVING.

WHAT IS PRAISE?

In the Old Testament, the word *praise* (as defined in *Vine's Expository Dictionary*) is described as "glory, praise, song of praiseworthy deeds." In the New Testament, the dictionary says praise is "primarily a tale, a narration." Praise, therefore, means to talk or sing about the greatness of God.

Praise means talking to God about what excites us about Him. It means opening our hearts and telling God what we like, love, adore, and admire about Him. It is telling God that we feel good about Him and value and appreciate Him.

Praise is those special moments in our lives when we take our eyes off ourselves and completely and utterly give devotion and honor to God. It is opening our hearts, bending our knees, bowing our heads, or raising our hands when we acknowledge His greatness, graciousness, and goodness. True praise is when we yearn to focus on the attributes of God in our conversations with Him, rather than focusing on what we want from Him.

Praise is a powerful experience where we can feel the most incredible joy throbbing inside us and at the same time feel the most incredible ease. It is a time when our relationship with God can be as it was intended—when the created worship the Creator.

WHY SHOULD WE PRAISE GOD?

Praise allows us to experience God's presence in our lives. Psalm 22:3 declares, "Yet You are holy, O You are enthroned upon the praises of Israel." God inhabits the praises of Israel. In other words, God literally lives among those who praise Him! That is an incredible thought, isn't it? When we approach God with words of heartfelt praise, we are entering into the very presence of God and inviting Him to enter our world. And when God enters into our world, Satan, who cannot tolerate God's presence, exits.

HOW CAN PRAISING GOD IMPACT OUR LIVES?

One of the great things about praising God is that in His graciousness and generosity, God blesses us when we praise Him. Let's look at how praising God can make an impact in different areas of our lives.

1. Praise keeps our relationship with God vibrant.

Psalm 50:23 says, "He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God." *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 130 tells us, "If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God, as we would talk with our friends. He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus."

I love that quote. When we make an effort to praise God, our relationship with God will be fresh and vibrant. We will find that we will have more and more to praise Him for. That makes our relationship with God exciting; it will not be routine or predictable, but it will be all that we long for it to be.

2. Praise limits what Satan can do in our lives.

Psalm 8:2 tells us, "From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger." If Satan is bombarding your life, the best thing you can do is praise God—and keep on praising Him until Satan flees and you see a change in your circumstances. By praising God, you are declaring in a powerful way that you trust God no matter what. Praise is the strongest weapon you can use to fight the spiritual battle against the devil.

When you are going through a tough time, don't keep focusing on what Satan is doing in your life by telling

everyone about it. Instead, talk about what you believe God can do for you. Praise God that He is the One who ultimately calls the shots, that He has the greatest power over your life, and that no one or nothing can stand up against Him. Be determined to praise God, read His Word, and believe in Him no matter what. God, who has 1,000 ways of dealing with just one of your problems, will provide you with the perfect solution.

3. Praise makes a difference in our attitudes.

In Psalm 138:2, we read, "I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word."

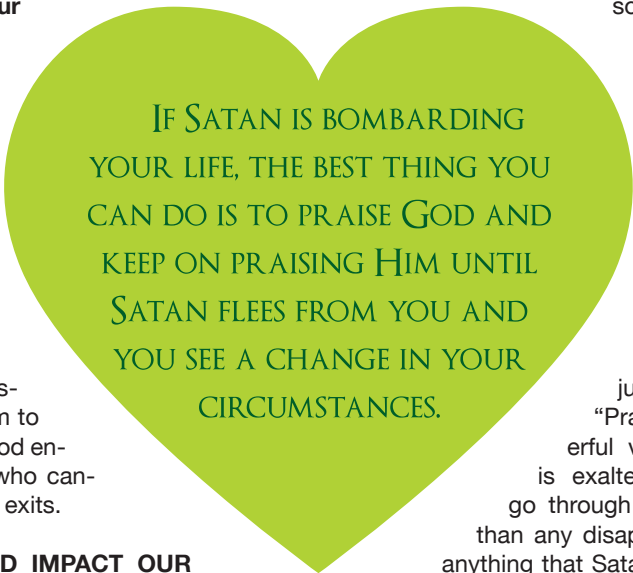
Doesn't this scripture just make you want to shout "Praise the Lord"? This powerful verse reminds us that God is exalted above anything we will go through—that He is more powerful than any disappointment, any struggle, or anything that Satan is using to keep you from trusting God.

Recently something happened to one of our daughters, and I remember feeling disheartened because she was hurting spiritually and emotionally. For several mornings I awoke with an overwhelming sense of sadness. I wanted to make right that which was wrong, but I wasn't sure what to do. One morning, I decided to let God deal with the problem. So I praised Him! I praised God that He is a God of justice, that He will never let my daughter down, that He is able to turn a bad experience into something good. After I praised God, not only did I feel better, I also wanted to forgive those who had caused my daughter's pain. Praising God changes our attitudes.

4. Praise frees us from worry. In Philippians 4:19, we read, "Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns...a sense of God's wholeness...will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life" (*The Message Bible*).

Satan uses worry to bind us so that we cannot fully experience the goodness of God. Praise releases us from that. Praise God that He is able to supply everything you need and more! Praise God that He is everything you need! But beware: your praise needs to be sincere. Praise is not a tool to get what we want from God. Our hearts genuinely and honestly need to be praising Him.

Don't let your worries get you down. Years after Thomas Edison's death, his desk was opened, and a card was found among his papers. It read, "When down in the mouth, remember Jonah; he came out all right." Whatever your worries, keep praising God and you will come out all right, too!



IF SATAN IS BOMBARDING
YOUR LIFE, THE BEST THING YOU
CAN DO IS TO PRAISE GOD AND
KEEP ON PRAISING HIM UNTIL
SATAN FLEES FROM YOU AND
YOU SEE A CHANGE IN YOUR
CIRCUMSTANCES.

5. Praise makes us more Christlike. Romans 8:29 tells us that God desires that we should be like His Son; indeed, that should be the first thing we long for in our lives. We were created to become like Christ. But often our primary goal is power, prosperity, or popularity. Praise makes us pay attention to what is important: God and all that He represents. As we praise, we change. Listen to this: “One of the things that I have noticed happening in my life is that when I worship God for one of His attributes, I see that attribute released into my life.”¹

If you would like to improve some area of your life, praise God in that area. As you do so, you will change. Whatever you worship God for will be cultivated in your life.

WE HAVE TO BE DETERMINED TO PRAISE

Philippians 4:4 urges us to “Rejoice [delight, gladden yourselves in Him] in the Lord always. Again I say, Rejoice” (*Amplified Bible*).

A family had two primary school-aged children. One of the lads was always grumpy and complaining—a real pessimist. The other was always bright and cheerful and could never see anything wrong with anything—a real optimist. The parents were a bit worried about how the boys would cope in life. One day the father decided to purchase every popular toy he could find, and then he gave them to his grumpy, pessimistic son. The father also had a truckload of manure delivered to the shed for the optimist son. That afternoon, the parents found the pessimistic boy sitting in his room sobbing because he was afraid he would break the toys if he played with them. When the parents went out to the shed, they saw the optimistic boy having a great time burrowing around in the pile of manure. “What are you doing?” the dad asked. The son responded, “Oh, Dad, I just know there’s a horse in here somewhere!”

What would happen in our lives if we had the same kind of dedication and determination to praise God in everything? Make a decision to rejoice in the Lord always. Remember that whatever you are going through, God can use your struggles to fulfill the plans He has for your life. Rejoice in that! Rejoice in Him—His love, care, and compassion toward you and His ability to bring good from the problems that plague your life.

When Job went through that awful time of darkness, he was determined to keep praising God. He praised God for being good, loving, and all-powerful; for noticing every detail of his life; for being in control; for having a plan for his life; and for the fact that God would save him. Praise didn’t make Job’s ordeal end immediately, but it did help him to keep focusing on God.

HOW CAN WE PRAISE GOD?

1. Pause and praise. “Seven times a day and all day long do I praise You because of Your righteous decrees” (Ps. 119:164). Praise God from the moment you get out

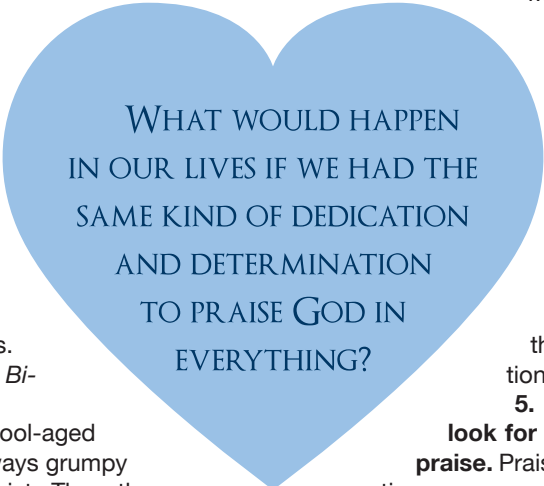
of bed, and then look for moments throughout the day to focus on God.

2. Scripture cards or praise cards. Have a few praise books or scripture cards scattered around your house. Whenever you get a chance, glance at the cards and use them to praise God. Try keeping a jar of Scrabble tiles handy; throughout the day, pick up a letter and praise God for one of His attributes that begins with that letter. Aim to empty the jar by the end of the day.

3. Praise and petition. Matthew 8:2 and 9:18 are just two Bible passages that describe how people worshipped or praised God. At times it is good for us to bow on our knees or prostrate ourselves before God.

4. God’s names. Make a list of God’s many names and focus on them. Each name tells us about a different aspect of His character; select the name that matches the petition you are going to make.

5. As you read your Bible, look for things for which you can offer praise. Praise God with scripture. Stop every time you come to a verse or passage for which you can praise God. It makes Bible reading come alive, and it is a great way to adore God.



CONCLUSION

If you ever struggle to praise God, remember Ellen G. White’s counsel: “Shall all our devotional exercises consist in asking and receiving? Shall we be always thinking of our wants and never of the benefits we receive? Shall we be recipients of His mercies and never express our gratitude to God, never praise Him for what He has done for us? We do not pray any too much, but we are too sparing of giving thanks. If the loving-kindness of God called forth more thanksgiving and praise, **we would have far more power in prayer.** We would abound more and more in the love of God and have more bestowed to praise Him for. You who complain that God does not hear your prayers, change your present order and mingle praise with your petitions. When you consider His goodness and mercies you will find that He will consider your wants. Pray, pray earnestly and without ceasing, but do not forget to praise.”²

Let’s aim to become people of prayer *and* people of praise!



¹ Joyce Meyers, *The Battle Belongs to the Lord*, 70.
² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:317.



MARY BARRETT works as an associate pastor at Stanborough Park Church in Watford, England. She is married to a pastor and has two grown-up daughters. Mary has authored 5 books, and when she gets time, she plans to write another one! Mary enjoys spending time with family and friends, walking, swimming, cross-stitching and gardening.

PRAISING GOD



1. GRATITUDE AND PRAISE SHOULD BE CULTIVATED (2 Chron 20:1-30).

“When the ten lepers were healed, only one returned to find Jesus and give Him glory. Let us not be like the unthinking nine, whose hearts were untouched by the mercy of God.”¹ “Let us educate our hearts and lips to speak the praise of God for His matchless love.”²

NOTE: Ellen White suggested to publishing house employees that “as often as once a week a praise meeting should be held.”³ At camp meetings a simple service of thanksgiving should be held daily.”⁴

2. THE POWER OF PRAISE (2 Chron. 20:1-30).

“Begin to educate your tongues to praise Him and train your hearts to make melody to God; and when the evil one begins to settle his gloom about you, sing praise to God. When things go crossways at your homes, strike up a song about the matchless charms of the Son of God, and I tell you, when you touch this strain, Satan will leave you.”⁵

“Unbelievers are often converted as they listen to pure words of praise and gratitude to God.”⁶ “No more effective means [telling about and praising God for blessings received] can be employed for winning souls to Christ.”⁷

“Let there be singing in the home, of songs that are sweet and pure, and there will be fewer words of censure, and more of cheerfulness and hope and joy. Let there be singing in the school, and the pupils will be drawn closer to God, to their teachers, and to one another.”⁸

3. SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF PRAISE (Prov. 17:27).

- Increase of joy⁹

- More bestowed to praise God¹⁰
- Banishment of discouragement¹¹
- Steady increase of courage, hope, and faith¹²
- Far more power in prayer¹³
- Greater realization of God’s love¹⁴
- Health of body and soul promoted¹⁵

NOTE: “No tongue can express, no finite mind can conceive, the blessing that results from appreciating the goodness and love of God.”¹⁶

4. A FEW OF THE MANY THINGS TO PRAISE GOD FOR (Lam. 3:22, 23).

- The gift of God’s Son¹⁷
- God’s goodness and mercies¹⁸
- The fresh blessings of each new day¹⁹
- God’s peace in our hearts²⁰
- The protection given by angels²¹
- The water we drink purchased by Christ’s blood²²
- Temporal blessings and comforts²³
- The matchless charms of Christ²⁴
- The bread we eat the cross of Calvary stamped on every loaf²⁵
- Being kept through the night²⁶
- God’s acceptance of the humble²⁷
- The second coming of Jesus²⁸

NOTE: “The thought that Christ died to obtain for us the gift of everlasting life, is enough to call forth from our hearts the most sincere and fervent gratitude, and from our lips the most enthusiastic praise.”²⁹ “The greatness of this gift was to furnish men with a theme of thanksgiving and praise that would last through time and eternity.”³⁰

Memorize stanzas 1, 3, and 6 of “When Morning Gilds the Skies...”³¹

Develop a plan for “educating” your heart and lips to praise God (see Daniel 6:10).



LET EVERYTHING THAT BREATHES PRAISE THE LORD! PRAISE THE LORD!

Ps. 150:6



“Here are my directions: pray much for others; plead for God’s mercy upon them; give thanks for all He is going to do for them” (1 Tim. 2:1, LB).

“Let us praise God for an opportunity to live for the glory of His name. Let the fresh blessings of each new day awaken praise in our hearts for these tokens of His loving care. When you open your eyes in the morning, thank God that He has kept you through the night. Thank Him for His peace in your heart. Morning, noon, and night, let gratitude as a sweet perfume ascend to heaven.”³²

“No tongue can express, no finite mind can conceive, the blessing that results from appreciating the goodness and love of God...Then let us educate our hearts and lips to speak the praise of God for His matchless love.”³³

BENEFITS WHICH RESULT FROM PRAISING GOD

- 1. Praise increases faith, hope, and courage.** “If more praising of God were engaged in now, hope and courage and faith would steadily increase.”³⁴
- 2. Praise increases our power in prayer.** “We do not pray any too much, but we are too sparing of giving thanks. If the loving kindness of God called forth more thanksgiving and praise, we would have far more power in prayer.”³⁵
- 3. Praise increases our love for God.** “If the loving kindness of God called forth more thanksgiving and praise, we.... would abound more and more in the love of God.”³⁶
- 4. Praise increases our power in witnessing.** “Far more than we do, we need to speak of the precious chapters in our experience. After a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, our joy in the Lord and our efficiency in His service would be greatly increased by recounting His goodness and His wonderful works in behalf of His children... Such a testimony will have an influence upon others. No more effective means can be employed for winning souls to Christ.”³⁷
- 5. Praise results in greater blessings being bestowed.** “If the loving kindness of God called

forth more thanksgiving and praise, we would... have more bestowed to praise Him for.”³⁸

- 6. Praise promotes health.** “Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise.”³⁹
- 7. Praise brings us nearer to heaven.** “The soul may ascend nearer heaven on the wings of praise. God is worshiped with song and music in the courts above, and as we express our gratitude, we are approximating to the worship of the heavenly hosts.”⁴⁰



- ¹ *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5. 1855-1909. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948, p. 315.
- ² *The Ministry of Healing*. 1905. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1942, p. 253.
- ³ *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 4. p. 461.
- ⁴ *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 62.
- ⁵ *The Review and Herald*. August 5, 1900.
- ⁶ *Messages to Young People*. 1930. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1930, p. 424.
- ⁷ *Christ's Object Lessons*. 1900. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1941, p. 300.
- ⁸ *Education*. 1903. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1952, p. 168.
- ⁹ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 253.
- ¹⁰ *Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 5, p. 317.
- ¹¹ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 254.
- ¹² *Prophets and Kings*. 1917. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1943, p. 202.
- ¹³ *Testimonies to the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 317.
- ¹⁴ *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 317.
- ¹⁵ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 251.
- ¹⁶ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 253.
- ¹⁷ *Sons and Daughters of God*. 1955. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1955, p. 243.
- ¹⁸ *Testimonies for the Church*. Vol. 4, p. 461.
- ¹⁹ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 253.
- ²⁰ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 253.
- ²¹ *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol.6, p. 63
- ²² *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 660.
- ²³ *Child Guidance*. 1954. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1954, p. 148.
- ²⁴ *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 593.
- ²⁵ *The Desire of Ages*. 1898. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940, p. 660.
- ²⁶ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 253.
- ²⁷ *Fundamentals of Christian Education*. 1923. Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1923, p. 370.
- ²⁸ *Evangelism*. 1946. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1970, p. 218.
- ²⁹ *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 238.
- ³⁰ *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 243.
- ³¹ *Church Hymnal*, p. 43
- ³² *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 253.
- ³³ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 253.
- ³⁴ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 202.
- ³⁵ *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 317.
- ³⁶ *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 317.
- ³⁷ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 300.
- ³⁸ *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 317.
- ³⁹ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 251.
- ⁴⁰ *Steps to Christ*. 1892. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1956, p. 104.

PRAISE GOD IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES!



1. "The soul may ascend nearer Heaven on the wings of praise."¹
2. "In the future life the mysteries that here have annoyed and disappointed us will be made plain. We shall see that our seemingly unanswered prayers and disappointed hopes have been among our greatest blessings."²
3. "The way of the Lord's helping we may not know; but this we do know: He will never fail those who put their trust in Him."³
4. "Could Christians realize how many times the Lord has ordered their way that the purposes of the enemy concerning them might not be accomplished, they would not stumble along complainingly. Their faith would be stayed on God, and no trial would have power to move them."⁴
5. "The fact that we are called upon to endure trial shows that the Lord Jesus sees in us something precious which He desires to develop. If He saw in us nothing whereby He might glorify His name, He would not spend time in refining us. He does not cast worthless stones into His furnace. It is valuable ore that He refines."⁵
6. "All that has perplexed us in the providences of God will in the world to come be made plain. The things hard to be understood will then find explanation. The mysteries of grace will unfold before us. Where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken promises, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. We shall know that infinite love ordered the experiences that seemed most trying."⁶
7. "Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish and a plain path before their feet."⁷
8. "To all who are reaching out to feel the guiding hand of God, the moment of greatest discouragement is the time when divine help is nearest. They will look back with thankfulness upon the darkest part of their way. 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly' (2 Peter 2:9). From every temptation and every trial He will bring them forth with firmer faith and a richer experience."⁸
9. The Father's presence encircled Christ, and nothing befell Him but that which infinite love permitted for the blessing of the world. Here was His source of comfort, and it is for us. He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. Whatever comes to him comes from the Savior, who surrounds him with His presence. Nothing can touch him except by the Lord's permission. All our sufferings and sorrows, all our temptations and trials, all our sadness and griefs, all our persecutions, privations, in short, all things work together for our good. All experiences and circumstances are God's workmen whereby good is brought to us."⁹

10. "Moses had a deep sense of the personal presence of God....The presence of God was sufficient to carry him through the most trying situations in which a man could be placed. Moses did not merely think of God; he saw Him. God was the constant vision before him; he never lost sight of His face. He saw Jesus as his Savior, and he believed that the Savior's merits would be imputed to him. This faith was to Moses no guesswork; it was a reality. This is the kind of faith we need, faith that will endure the test. Oh, how often we yield to temptation because we do not keep our eye upon Jesus! Our faith is not continuous because, through self-indulgence, we sin, and then we cannot endure 'as seeing Him who is invisible.'

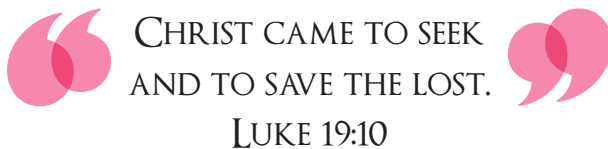
"My brother, make Christ your daily, hourly companion, and you will not complain that you have no faith. Contemplate Christ. View His character. Talk of Him. The less you exalt self, the more you will see in Jesus to exalt. God has a work for you to do, keep the Lord ever before you."¹⁰

11. "Begin to educate your tongues to praise Him and train your hearts to make melody to God; and when the evil one begins to settle his gloom about you, sing praise to God. When things go crossways at your homes, strike up a song about the matchless charms of the Son of God, and I tell you, when you touch this strain, Satan will leave you."¹¹

12. "Unbelievers are often converted as they listen to pure words of praise and gratitude to God."¹² "No more effective means [telling about and praising God for blessings received] can be employed for winning souls to Christ."¹³

FOR FORGIVENESS

- 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He will forgive us, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- Matt. 11:28-30 Come to Christ with your burdens.
- John 6:37 Whoever comes to Christ will not be cast out.
- 1 Tim. 1:15 Christ came to save sinners.

 CHRIST CAME TO SEEK
AND TO SAVE THE LOST.
LUKE 19:10

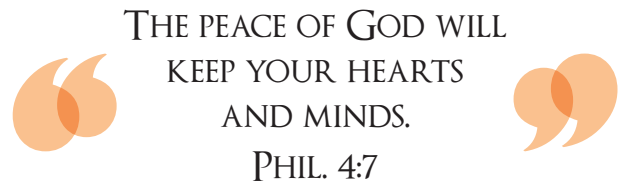
- Rom. 8:1 No condemnation to those in Christ.
- Isa. 1:18 Your sins can be made as white as snow.
- Isa. 38:17 He casts our sins behind His back.
- Isa. 44:22 God sweeps away your transgressions.

FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Luke 11:13 We will be given the Holy Spirit if we ask.
- John 14:26 The Holy Spirit teaches us and brings things to our remembrance.
- John 16:8 He convicts of sin.
- John 15:26 He testifies of Christ.
- John 16:7 He comes as the Counselor.
- Eph. 3:16 He strengthens you.
- Rom. 8:26 He helps in our weakness.

FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

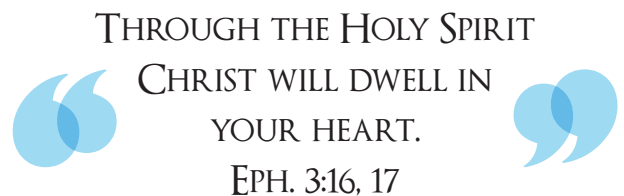
- Phil. 4:19 God will supply your every need.
- Matt. 6:33 Seek first the kingdom of God, and all your needs will be taken care of.
- 2 Cor. 9:6 He who sows bountifully will reap bountifully.
- 1 Cor. 10:13 God will not allow you to be tempted beyond your strength.
- Rom. 8:32 Through Christ we have "all things."
- Jude 24 He is able to keep you from falling.
- 2 Cor. 12:9 God's grace is sufficient for you.

 THE PEACE OF GOD WILL
KEEP YOUR HEARTS
AND MINDS.
PHIL. 4:7

- Isa. 26:3, 4 God will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are stayed on Him.

FOR CHRISTLIKENESS

- 2 Cor. 5:17 If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
- Ezek. 36:26, 27 God promises to give you a new heart.
- 2 Cor. 6:16 God will dwell in you.

 THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT
CHRIST WILL DWELL IN
YOUR HEART.
EPH. 3:16, 17



- 2 Peter 1:4 Through Christ's promises you can become a partaker of the divine nature.
- 2 Cor. 10:4, 5 Every thought can be made captive to Christ.

- 2 Cor. 3:18 By beholding the Lord we are changed into His likeness.
- Phil. 1:6 God will complete the work He began in you.

FOR WISDOM AND STRENGTH

- James 1:5, 6 Wisdom will be given if you ask in faith.
- Prov. 3:5, 6 Rely on God for guidance.
- Ps. 32:8 God will teach you the way to go.
- Ex. 33:14 God's presence will go with you and give you rest.
- Isa. 58:11 He will guide you continually.
- Heb. 4:15, 16 Come with confidence to the throne of grace.
- James 4:7 Resist the devil, and he will flee.
- James 5:14, 15 The prayer of faith will save the sick.
- James 5:16-18 Prayer has great power.
- 1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxieties on Him.
- 1 John 5:14, 15 You can know He hears when you ask.
- Phil. 4:13 I can do all things in Christ.
- Jer. 1:7 He will give you words to speak.
- Prov. 14:26 In the fear of the Lord you can have strong confidence.

GOD WILL STRENGTHEN,

 **GOD WILL HELP,
GOD WILL UPHOLD** 
(ISA. 41:10).

- Isa. 41:13 The Lord your God will hold your right hand.

FOR OTHERS

- Ezek. 11:19, 20 God promises to give others a new heart that they may keep His laws.
- 1 John 5:16 God promises to give spiritual life to those for whom you pray.
- John 12:32 Christ uplifted on the cross draws people to Him.
- Acts 5:31 Repentance is a gift.
- John 16:8 The Holy Spirit convicts of sin.
- Heb. 4:12 God's Word reaches the heart.
- Jer. 32:40, KJV I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.
- Jer. 33:3 If we call, God will answer with great things.
- Isa. 49:24, 25 God promises to deliver those who are captives of Satan.

ALL-INCLUSIVE

- Ps. 34:10 If you seek the Lord, you will not lack any good thing.
- Ps. 37:3-5 Delight in the Lord, and He will give the desires of your heart. Commit your way to Him, and He will act.
- Ps. 84:11 God will withhold no good thing from you if you walk uprightly.
- Eph. 3:20 He is able to do far more than we ask.
- Luke 1:37 With God nothing is impossible.



**BELIEVE, AND YOU
WILL RECEIVE
(MARK 11:24).**



- Rom. 8:28 In everything God works for good.
- John 16:24 Ask and receive so that your joy may be full.
- John 15:7 If you abide in Christ, you can ask whatever you will and it shall be done.
- John 15:16 Anything you ask in Christ's name the Father will give to you.
- Luke 11:9 Ask and you will be given.
- Matt. 28:20 I am with you always.

PLUS: "All His biddings are enablings!" He never asks us to do anything without giving us the power to do it. Therefore, every command in the Bible is also a promise!¹⁴



¹ *Steps to Christ*. 1892. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1956, p. 104.

² *The Ministry of Healing*. 1905. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1942, p. 474.

³ *Prophets and Kings*. 1917. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1943, p. 576.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ *The Ministry of Healing*. p. 471.

⁶ *Testimonies for the Church*. Vol 9. 1855-1909. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948, p. 286.

⁷ *The Ministry of Healing*. p. 481.

⁸ *The Desire of Ages*. 1898. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940, p. 528.

⁹ *The Ministry of Healing*. 488-489.

¹⁰ *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 651-653.

¹¹ *Review and Herald*, August 5, 1900.

¹² *Messages to Young People*. 1930. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1930, p. 424.

¹³ *Christ's Object Lessons*. 1900. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1941, p. 300.

¹⁴ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 333.



SAVED TO SERVE



Vivian with her husband, Pastor Ricardo Pablo Cisneros

back to Him. After a while, Vivian began to realize the emptiness of the life she was pursuing.

“I was so sad and feeling so alone,” she recalled. “I begged the Lord for mercy, and once more He heard me and took me in His strong, loving arms. I came back to the Lord and surrendered myself to Him.”

Desiring a Christian education, Vivian enrolled at the Adventist university in Sao Paulo—*Centro Universitario Adventista de Sao Paulo* (UNASP). During that time, Vivian told the Lord that (1) she wanted to be a missionary, and (2) because of this, she was not interested in a serious relationship or marriage.

Unbeknownst to Vivian, another university student was praying the same prayer. Ricardo Pablo Cisneros, from Peru, was on the same campus telling the Lord that he wanted to be a missionary and that because of this, he thought it would be better not to marry.

Shortly after these prayers, Vivian and Ricardo met. Vivian says, “When I heard about Ricardo’s prayer, I thought, ‘What? How could he have made the ex-

Vivian Padulla Cisneros should have been dead—twice. When she was 10, she was involved in an accident with a gun owned by her neighbor. Nearly dying from the incident, Vivian credits her guardian angel for saving her life. As an adult, Vivian again had a close brush with death in Peru when she and her husband, Pastor Ricardo

was, Vivian recalled with a smile, “a patient woman because we were naughty kids!”

When she was nine years old, Vivian was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. “God touched my heart, and I listened to His voice,” she said. However, a few years later, Vivian set her sights on the world.

“When I was a teenager, I sent in a photo to be a ‘Top

I WAS ENJOYING THAT LIFE—BUT I WAS BLIND IN MY SPIRITUAL LIFE.

Pablo Cisneros, were in a car accident that crushed much of the left side of Vivian’s body. Vivian again credits her angel for saving her life.

Vivian was born in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on April 16, 1970, into a devoutly religious family. Her mother stayed home with Vivian and her brother and sister and

Model’ in Sao Paulo and was soon participating in fashion shows, television programs, and so on. These activities took me away from Jesus. I was enjoying that life—but I was blind in my spiritual life.”

Vivian’s mother continued to pray for her daughter every day, asking God to draw Vivian

act same request to Jesus?”

The two began dating one month later, and before long, Vivian realized that Ricardo was the ideal man for her. They were married on January 25, 1996, in Sao Paulo.

Although Vivian and Ricardo did not cross any seas to serve as missionaries, they have



The Cisneros Family—Ricardo and Vivian with their children, Paola, 12, and Pablo, 4.

served as a pastoral couple in Brazil since their marriage. Currently, Ricardo oversees a district of seven churches near the beautiful city of Jacarei, located approximately 37 miles (60 km) northeast of Sao Paulo. In addition, both Vivian and Ricardo have made frequent appearances on “Novo Tempo” and “Nuevo Tiempo,” the Portuguese and Spanish Hope TV channels that are broadcast from Jacarei.

Being able to speak Spanish (in addition to her native Portuguese) is a miracle for Vivian. “I never studied Spanish,” she states, “and when we were in that bad car accident in Peru, I was not able to communicate with the [Spanish-speaking] nurse and doctor at the hospital. So I prayed to the Lord to help me, and the next day I woke up speaking Spanish perfectly! It was a miracle, and since that time I have been able to speak Spanish.”

Vivian is currently completing a graduate degree in marriage and family counseling. She is especially grateful to one of her teachers who made accommodations for Vivian’s Sabbath ob-

SO I PRAYED
TO THE LORD
I WOKE UP
SPEAKING SPANISH
PERFECTLY!

servance. “I told the teacher that I’m an Adventist and that I can’t go to the university on Saturday because I don’t want to compromise my beliefs, so this teacher comes in on Mondays to give the class just for me.”

In addition to her studies, Vivian enjoys being home with their two children, Paola, 12, and Pablo, 4, and being active in her church through small-group Bible

studies, singing, preaching, and making special Sabbath meals to share with others.

Although she enjoys serving others, Vivian knows that it “is difficult sometimes to be a pastor’s wife. In fact, alone it is impossible, but with Jesus it is a privilege.”

In seeking to encourage other pastoral spouses, Vivian says, “Don’t look in front of you; look up to Jesus. He knows what you and I feel, and He has promised that He will return. This shows His love for us.”

Vivian believes it is important to “be a friend of Jesus. To be a friend means reading His Holy Bible, studying His Word, and talking with Him every day. Our minds need to be connected to heaven.”



SABBATH MEAL: LASAGNA



For my favorite Sabbath meal, I like to prepare two kinds of lasagna: one with green sauce and one with red sauce. The green sauce is made with creamed spinach and mixed with milk. The red sauce is made with tomatoes, garlic, and onions. I don’t mix the sauces; I prepare them separately. Then I assemble the two lasagnas in layers—sauce, pasta, cheese, sauce, pasta, cheese—until all items have been added. I bake the lasagnas for approximately 30 minutes. As an accompaniment, I prepare a delicious salad of lettuce, tomatoes, hearts of palm, eggs, and olives.

On Sabbath our dinner table looks so beautiful: red lasagna, green lasagna, and salad!

This is one of Vivian’s favorite recipes.



GINA WAHLEN enjoys meeting people from around the world and has lived in many wonderful places, such as Russia, England, the Philippines, California, and Nebraska. She currently lives in Maryland, where she writes about people, adventures, and God. She and her husband, Clinton, have been married for nearly 26 years and have one son, Daniel, 19, and one daughter, Heather, 13.



COURAGE IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF FEAR...

Bernie Webber tied a long leather belt around his waist and fastened himself to the wheelman's shelter. He glanced at the three young Coast Guard sailors who had volunteered to accompany him on this rescue mission. What lay ahead for each of them? Would they be successful? Would they come back alive?

The sky was turning from slate gray to black in the heavy storm. Visibility decreased as thick snow continued to fall and darkness settled in. As the four men looked across the bar through which their small boat must pass, they caught a glimpse of the seas ahead of them and could not believe the height of the waves. The monstrous storm of 1952 was churning the ocean into waves 60–75 feet high. Webber was now forced to make a decision that could likely cost the lives of himself and his crewmen. No one would criticize him for returning to the safety of the Cape Cod pier. He cleared his head of the dangers ahead and thought of the men he was attempting to save. He could picture them trapped inside the stern portion of the *Pendleton*, a giant tanker vessel which had been split in half by the vicious storm and was now being tossed about in the waves and wind off the northeastern shore of the United States. Webber, his crew of three young men, and their small rescue boat were the doomed sailors' only hope for survival.

As he peered out at the threatening scene before him, Webber wondered if Providence had placed him in this time and in this place. While their rescue boat tossed and turned along a canyon of waves, Webber and his crew began to sing. They sang with fear but also with determination through the snow and freezing sea spray.

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.*

As the men sang the verses of the hymn, they braced themselves for the collision they knew was coming. As they crossed the bar into the Atlantic Ocean, they were hit by gigantic waves. A mountain of bitterly cold water lifted their vessel and tossed it into the air. All the men were temporarily airborne. They came crashing back down just as another huge wave struck. The violent waters shattered the boat's windshield and broke the compass. As the waves continued



HE GIVETH POWER TO THE FAINT, AND TO THEM THAT HAVE NO MIGHT HE INCREASETH STRENGTH. EVEN THE YOUTHS SHALL FAINT AND BE WEARY, AND THE YOUNG MEN SHALL UTTERLY FALL, BUT THEY THAT WAIT UPON THE LORD SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH.

Isa. 40:29-31, KJV



to pound the tiny ship, Webber struggled to keep it upright and straightened. With snow now blowing fully in his face and saltwater spray stinging the cuts on his face from the glass of the shattered windshield, Webber peered into the darkness and guided the boat deeper into the teeth of the storm. He attempted to make radio contact with headquarters at the Chatham Station, but there was no answer. He put the radio down and stared into the desperate eyes of his battered crew. He knew none of them would suggest quitting, but they were facing insurmountable odds against the fierce storm, the darkness, and the loss of their compass.

They continued their battle against the elements for several hours until, through the broken glass of the windshield, they became aware of a mysterious dark shape rising out of the surf; using the small beam of light from the rescue boat, they were amazed to find it was the steel hulk of the *Pendleton*. As they circled the shipwreck, they saw no sign of life and feared they had arrived too late. But then they saw a tiny figure high up on the ship's deck—a lone man waving his arms wildly. They had not come in vain! As the crew contemplated how to rescue the sailor, more figures appeared—32 men in all.¹

The story of this rescue is an amazing account of bravery, self-sacrifice, and the loss of one life. The tiny rescue boat, originally designed to carry 12 men, filled up quickly as 31 sailors struggled onboard and crawled into the survivors' shelter. As captain of the boat, Webber had to make a critical decision. Realizing that a second rescue attempt would be impossible, he decided that no man would be left behind. They would either all make it together or all die together.

With the men pinned together in very close quarters, Webber struggled to keep the tiny overweight rescue vessel upright as the fight against the elements continued. He hoped and prayed they were headed in the right direction and would arrive safely to shore somewhere.



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.

Gradually the seas began to change. The waves were not as heavy, and the boat moved through shallower waters, and suddenly Webber saw a blinking red light. He quickly realized it was coming from atop the buoy inside the Chatham Bar leading to the entrance of the bay and their home base. Webber looked at the blinking light once more in disbelief and then turned his eyes to the stormy skies above. He knew their perilous journey had been accomplished in safety solely because of heaven's help.

FEAR IS ALL AROUND US

Throughout our lives we are periodically faced with fearful situations. Perhaps you remember how nervous and frightened you were as a child on your first day in a new school. Or maybe you remember being scared the first time you sang in public or performed in a musical recital. How about when you took your first driving test? Did your knees shake? Did your stomach feel upset?

Now that we are adults, we can still sometimes feel afraid. For some, getting up in front of a congregation to give a talk or special music can cause fear of stress. Starting a new career or dealing with a job change can also be very scary. Other situations can include buying a new car or house; taking care of a sick, elderly family member; facing an unpleasant confrontation situation; moving to a new location or country; going to the dentist; taking a long trip alone—all can cause fearful anticipation.

COURAGE IS NOT DEFINED BY THOSE WHO FOUGHT AND DID NOT FALL, BUT BY THOSE WHO FOUGHT, FELL, AND ROSE AGAIN

Few of us will ever have to participate in a monumental event like Webber's sea rescue. What is so profound about the story is that the four seamen, knowing full well how dangerous the journey would be, made the decision to venture out into that historic storm anyway. Uppermost in their minds was the thought of the 32 sailors aboard the shipwreck, out in the fearful elements with no other hope of rescue. Yes, the rescuers were fearful, but because something else was more important, none of them suggested turning back and giving up.

Courage is the ability to deal with difficult, challenging, and sometimes seemingly impossible circumstances. It is the ability to face fear, pain, danger, uncertainty, and other



COURAGE IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF FEAR, BUT RATHER THE JUDGMENT THAT SOMETHING ELSE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN FEAR.

Ambrose Redmoon



threats in view of the larger, more important picture.

COURAGE IS NO GUARANTEE OF SUCCESS

A quotation from an unknown source says, "Courage is not defined by those who fought and did not fall, but by those who fought, fell, and rose again."

Two years before the historic rescue of 1952, Bernie Webber led another rescue attempt in equally hazardous conditions. Like the *Pendleton* crew, the sailors onboard the New Bedford-based scalloper *William J. Landry* also found themselves trapped on a sinking ship off the same coast. Webber and his crew tried four times to reach the doomed vessel, but each attempt ended with their

boat capsizing in the waves and wind. Each time the group made it safely back to shore, swimming through frigid, stormy waters. In spite of their wet clothes and aching muscles, the rescuers bailed out their boat, climbed back in, and headed back out into the storm.

After the fourth attempt, with the elements intensifying and their physical reserves completely used up, they could only stand on shore and in profound grief watch as the scalloper gradually sank beneath the waves—all lives onboard lost. In spite of that bitter memory, Webber, with a heart of compassion for the desperate sailors of the *Pendleton*, felt he could do nothing but respond to the need. Influenced strongly by his minister-father, Webber had a faith which drew strength from God and kept him on track in his life of service.

LESSON FROM WEBBER'S STORY

1. When faced with a fearful decision, look at the big picture. What's really important?
2. Follow your heart when compassion, love, and conviction are calling you to act.
3. Build your courage resources by studying and reading about lives of courage, dedication, and commitment.
4. Utilize reliable sources of strength—hymns of comfort, prayer, Bible promises—during stressful, uncertain events.
5. When acts of courage result in failure, pick yourself up and find comfort in having made the effort. If necessary try again—and again.
6. Give praise and thanks to God for any and all successes.



¹ Story taken from Tougias, Michael J., and Sherman, Casey, *The Finest Hours* (Scribner, 2009).

DISAGREEING WITHOUT FALLING APART

by Karen Holford



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When Benjamin Franklin said that nothing can be certain in this life “except death and taxes,” he forgot the third inevitability—conflict. Whenever two or more people live and work together, they will have differences of opinion and disagreements about innumerable things. It is actually healthy for two people in a close relationship to disagree on a few things! A. P. Herbert, the English humorist, once said that “the idea that people can live closely together, without ever having a serious argument, suggests a lack of spirit that is only to be admired in sheep!”

Well-managed conflicts can actually bring people closer together. It encourages them to listen to each other’s needs, opinions, perspectives, hopes, and feelings. Without conflict, couples may not be motivated to deepen their relationship by enriching their understanding of one another.

But most of us don’t like conflict. We avoid it. We’d rather put up with frustration, hurt, self-denial, or depression than work through an area of disagreement with another person, even our spouse.

Let’s look at some healthy ways to handle the conflicts and differences in marriage.

IDENTIFY THE EMOTION THAT’S FUELING THE ANGER

When we’re angry, it’s usually because a feeling has overwhelmed us

WELL-MANAGED CONFLICTS CAN ACTUALLY BRING PEOPLE CLOSER TOGETHER.

and we’re finding it hard to deal with that emotion. Think about the last time you felt angry. Which emotion sparked your anger? Perhaps it was fear, frustration, disappointment, em-

barrassment, being overloaded, feeling misunderstood, sadness, or just being tired. When we can identify these emotions, we can begin to address the real feelings behind our anger.

It’s also helpful to consider the emotion that’s fuelling your husband’s anger during an argument. Try relating to him as someone who is afraid, sad, disappointed, frustrated, etc., rather than as someone who is angry.

IDENTIFY YOUR CONFLICT PATTERN (EPH. 4:26)

If you and your husband have regular arguments, try to notice when they happen, how they start, and what they’re about. For example, if you tend to argue when you’re both tired or in the car, perhaps you can plan to talk about difficult topics at some other time, do a relaxing activity when you’re tired, or listen to something uplifting when you travel. If your arguments are mostly about in-laws or finances, you may want to wait till you’re both feeling refreshed and relaxed, and then sit down together and have a deeper discussion about the issue.

IT’S ALSO IMPORTANT TO TREAT CONFLICTS LIKE DIRTY DISHES.

It's also important to treat conflicts like dirty dishes—it's best to clean them as soon as they've been used (definitely the same day), or they'll be much nastier to deal with later!

Jake and Louisa promised to have all their challenging discussions sitting at the table while holding hands and looking into each other's eyes. They found it helpful to see each other's emotions and to be holding each other gently. These simple actions created an unspoken promise to stick with the discussion and stay committed to each other.

ASSESS YOUR CONFLICT SKILLS

Ask yourself what happens when you manage a disagreement well. If you have conflicts at work or with friends, maybe you cope better with those conflicts than with conflicts at home. What are you doing and saying in these situations away from home that you aren't saying when you're with family? Do you treat the other person differently when conflicts are more peaceful and respectful? If you manage these other disagreements better than you manage arguments with your spouse, what can you learn that can help you to disagree more respectfully at home?

LISTEN WELL (JAMES 1:19)

When I talk with couples who struggle with verbal fighting, I give each person a large sheet of paper and ask them to focus on one specific conflict issue. Each spouse writes the issue in one sentence in the middle of their sheet of paper. Then they draw a circle around their sentence and five lines radiating out from the central shape to the edge of the paper. In each of the five sections, they write one of the following sentence starters:

- This issue is important to me because...
- My biggest fear, concern, or worry about this issue is...
- Some possible positive outcomes for this issue might be...
- In my family, we dealt with similar issues by...
- A significant experience I have had with this issue in the past is...

From his or her own perspective, each spouse fills out the sections with as much useful information as possible. Then I ask them to swap their sheets of paper and read what the other person has written. This simple activity helps couples begin to listen to each other and understand each other without

WHAT DO WE GAIN IF WE WIN ALL THE ARGUMENTS BUT LOSE OUR RELATIONSHIPS?

getting into the familiar arguments that tend to spiral out of control.

SHARE THE PROBLEM (MATT. 19:5-6)

In a marriage, every problem is a shared problem. When you're "one flesh," anything that affects one of you affects both of you. It isn't helpful for me to think that something is my husband's problem and that he needs to sort it out alone, or that something is my problem for me to sort out by myself. When a problem affects both of us and our relationship, we can share the responsibility for working on it. This is a wise and cooperative approach that can bring us closer together, rather than resorting to blame and fault-finding that pushes us further apart. We both need to think about what we can do differently to improve the situation.

MAKING A REQUEST INSTEAD OF A COMPLAINT (ROM. 12:16)

Whenever we nag and complain, we're being negative and critical of each other. Nagging and complaining may cause our spouses to defend themselves, which just adds fuel to the fire of an argument.

Instead of nagging or complaining, try making a simple request: "Will you please take out the garbage today?" Or try a specific, nonjudgmental statement based around the following structure:

- In this specific situation...
- When this specific thing happens...
- I feel this emotion... because I want or need...
- And it would really help me if you would do...

And, if relevant...

- Because then I would be able to help you by doing...

For example:

- When you come home late for dinner
- Without letting me know you're going to be late
- I feel frustrated because I want your dinner to be fresh, and because I need to know how to plan my time in the evening.
- It would really help me if you would let me know when you're going to be late
- Because then I could make sure your meal is nice and hot, and I can also make better use of my time.

FIGHT FOR YOUR RELATIONSHIP (ROM. 12:18, 19)

Fighting for our relationship means finding respectful ways to discuss our differences. Fighting fairly means avoiding dangerous ways of arguing that hurt each other verbally, emotionally, spiritually, or physically, such as:

- Generalizing (“You always..” or “You never..”), which invites the other person to look for exceptions in his or her behavior, to become defensive, and to generalize about you, too
- Exaggerating or making something seem worse than it is to add weight to your side of the argument
- Blaming the other person
- Yelling at the other person
- Being violent or threatening violence
- Criticizing the other person or his/her family members
- Saying cruel things
- Digging up past offenses and problems
- Walking away from the argument before it has been resolved

AIM FOR WIN-WIN SOLUTIONS (MATT. 5:9; ROM. 12:18)

What do we gain if we win all the arguments but lose our relationships? When one person wins, the other person can feel belittled, resentful, bitter, sad, rejected, misunderstood, unheard, and alone. In time these feelings can crack a Grand Canyon through a relationship. It’s more loving to look for cooperative solutions where you both feel good about yourselves and each other.

STOP ARGUMENTS BEFORE THEY HAPPEN

Couples argue most frequently about finances, in-laws, how to discipline their children, sexual intimacy, and household chores. If you can find ways to talk about these potentially challenging areas before they become major conflicts, you can minimize your arguments.

Couples often avoid these difficult topics until they become so big that they’re overwhelming. Finding safe ways to talk regularly about what is going well in these areas—and discussing some of the minor challenges you’re facing—will mean that you may be able to extinguish the fire of an argument before it burns out of control.

INVITE YOUR SPOUSE TO HELP YOU (GAL. 6:2)

Early in our marriage, another ministry couple taught us the phrase that saved their marriage: “I have a problem I think you can help me with...”

This phrase has helped us, too! Whenever I was

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troubled by Bernie’s responses or behaviors, I would stop and ask myself why it bothered me so much. He was quite happy doing it his way, and I realized that the problem was usually my selfish attitude toward his behavior. So I would try to reshape my re-


sponse to him by admitting I had a problem and inviting him to help me. I might say, “Bernie, I have a problem I think you can help me with. When I need to do the laundry in a hurry, it slows me down when your clothes are inside out. So I was wondering if you could help me by making sure your socks and shirts are right side out when you put them in the laundry bag.”

Using this sentence starter always makes us laugh, and humor can be a helpful way to pour oil on the stormy waters of a difficult conversation. We like being asked to help each other—it makes us feel useful and capable, and it’s much easier for us to respond positively to this kind of suggestion.

SOOTHE EACH OTHER (PROV. 15:1; 1 COR. 4:4-8)

Discover how you can soothe each other with your words, humor, warmth, generous responses, comfort, and understanding. Couples who learn how to soothe each other’s ruffled feathers can help to heal their relationship after challenging conflicts.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRACE AND GROWTH

Every conflict in our marriage is an opportunity to show our deep and mature love. We can look at each other through God’s loving eyes and show each other God’s love and grace as we manage our differences. When we learn how to be patient, unselfish, thoughtful, forgiving, and understanding, we mature in our spiritual lives and in our ability to love each other in the way that God loves us. 



KAREN HOLFORD is a freelance writer and family therapist living in Auchtermuchty, Scotland. Her husband, Bernie Holford, is the president of the Scottish Mission. They attended three marriage retreats in the first three months of marriage and thought they would never need to know all the stuff they were being taught about conflict, but over the past 27 years, they’ve had plenty of opportunities to practice what they learned—and they’re still learning!

LESSONS ON LOSS

by Sarah K. Asaftei



In the last year, I've learned a lot about loss. About how inept most people are at offering comfort. And how we shrink from actually *sharing* another's grief.

Last summer my sister and her husband lost a child.

The thing is, their baby wasn't born yet. It was due on Christmas Eve. So, since people never saw or held it, their "comfort" tended toward comments such as "At least it wasn't a 'real' baby!" and "You're young—you have plenty of time to try again."

And so while my sister was going through the very natural stages of grief, anger, guilt, and denial (not necessarily in that order), friends who knew about her loss couldn't figure out why she hadn't "bounced back yet." Or why she couldn't just "snap out of it" and get back to life as usual.

The crazy thing is, before this happened I'd probably have offered many of the same shallow, well-intentioned platitudes. Pat phrases that offer zero empathy and sometimes border on the insulting. Empty words that show absolutely no intention of entering into that person's grief. And I wouldn't have known the difference. Like so many, I've often been wrapped up in my own life and assumed that when public signs of sadness disappeared, private grief must be finished, too.

I know better now.

Over the past months, I've watched my sister do what every young should-have-been mother does.

She hid her tears. She pushed through sleepless nights. She never advertised that some days she fought panic attacks when she saw other mothers carrying babies.

Casual observers would never guess the ache that is often expressed only in private when someone suffers a loss. Friends can seem to disappear after the initial tragedy, either giving well-meaning space or out of ignorant disregard. When the loss isn't conventional (such as with miscarriage or stillbirth), even relatives aren't guaranteed to understand. Sometimes church members remember to check in, but sometimes they forget.

And so those who have lost are often left to grieve in silence. But that's because in many cultures, especially

Western ones, we're not comfortable with grief. We don't know what to do or say.

It shouldn't be that way.

Scripture tells us to mourn with those who mourn, just as we share joy with those who rejoice (Rom. 12:15). Some cultures are definitely better at handling grief than others, but if we are truly following a biblical lifestyle, no culture should inhibit us from offering sincere comfort in times of loss.

I've learned over the past year that giving comfort doesn't necessarily mean that you know what to say. Often there are no words. Many times, anything you might say is almost guaranteed to sound trite and cliché. Nice sentences like "It's all in God's plan for your life!" or "Just believe that it was God's will!" may be

I'VE OFTEN ASSUMED THAT WHEN PUBLIC SIGNS OF SADNESS DISAPPEARED, PRIVATE GRIEF MUST BE FINISHED, TOO.

true, but they are probably not very comforting. Often those casual phrases may even aggravate the grief and inspire bitterness or anger at God instead of being reassuring—no matter how genuinely they are said.

I'D HATE FOR ANYONE TO FEEL THAT THEIR OWN PASTOR'S WIFE REFUSED TO MEANINGFULLY ENGAGE IN THEIR PAIN.

Sometimes the best thing you can do is just sit. Cry with people who are grieving. Listen. Keep their confidences. Pray with them and for them. Be available. Do *something* instead of merely offering vague help.

Most of all, remember to check in with them later. It's appalling how quickly the rest of the world seems to move on after someone suffers a loss. People may flock around for the first few days, but then life calls them back to their own interests. It means a lot when the pastor's wife bothers to call or visit or write after a few weeks or months, letting them know that they haven't been forgotten.

This past Christmas Eve, I should have been at the hospital with my sister. I should have been giving her tiny baby its first bath, just like she did for mine. We would have been rejoicing over the miracle of life, and I would have been introducing my son Tristan to his very first first-cousin. And I'm sure that another year, all that will happen. But it wasn't this time. It wasn't *this* baby.

I learned a lot about loss last year. And I hope that those lessons have not only made me a better sister but will also make me a more compassionate pastor's wife. I hope that I won't brush aside the aching grief of another church member with well-meaning platitudes and rehearsed phrases.

I can't say that grief is comfortable territory for me. But I hope these lessons will bring me deeper into the biblical mandate to truly bear each other's griefs and share each other's sorrows. Because I'd hate for anyone to feel that their own pastor's wife refused to meaningfully engage in their pain.



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for young pastors' wives.

DO YOU FIND IT HARD TO TRUST GOD?

SEE THE NEXT PAGE FOR ANSWERS



THE POWER OF WORDS

WHAT YOU SAY AND WHAT GOD SAYS. WHO WILL YOU TRUST?



YOU SAY	GOD SAYS	TEXT
"It is impossible."	"All things are possible."	Mark 10:27
"I am too tired."	"I will give you rest."	Matthew 11:28-30
"Nobody loves me."	"I love you."	John 3:16, 34
"I can't go on."	"My grace is sufficient."	2 Corinthians 12:9 and Psalm 91:15
"I cannot figure things out."	"I will direct your steps."	Proverbs 3:5-6 and Psalm 32:8
"I can't do it."	"You can do all things."	Philippians 4:13
"I am not able."	"I am able."	2 Corinthians 9:8
"It's not worth it."	"It will be worth it."	Romans 8:28
"I can't forgive myself."	"I forgive you."	1 John 1:9 and Romans 8:1
"I cannot manage."	"I will supply all your needs."	Philippians 4:19
"I am not afraid."	"I have not given you a spirit of fear."	2 Timothy 1:7
"I am always worried and frustrated."	"Cast all your cares on Me."	1 Peter 5:7
"I'm not smart enough."	"I will give you wisdom."	James 1:54 and 1 Corinthians 1:30
"I feel all alone."	"I will never leave you or forsake you."	John 14:18 and Hebrews 13:5

WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION: LEADERSHIP RETREAT



WAD Shepherdess Coordinators and Shepherdesses at meetings at Babcock University in Nigeria

On January 3-9, 2011, Josephine Wari, West-Central Africa Division Shepherdess Coordinator, reports that 2,500 delegates from 22 countries in WAD met at Babcock University in Nigeria. This was the first meeting of its kind, bringing together leaders at the beginning of the 2010–2015 quinquennium.



Josephine Wari, WAD Shepherdess Coordinator

to the progress of God's work in this part of the continent. As the WAD Shepherdess Coordinator, I can say that the massive presence of the pastors' wives is a clear indicator of the Shepherdesses'



A Shepherdess with her son attending meetings in Nigeria

This initiative, which was the inspiration of the Division President, Pastor Gilbert Wari, was a challenge in terms of human mobilization, finance, and most of all, spiritual enthusiasm. The theme of this gathering was "Revival and Reformation."

The amazing thing about this meeting was the massive attendance of the pastors' wives. Like an army ready for a mission, 900 Shepherdesses in uniform worked hand in glove to show, with their husbands, their total adherence and commitment



The sweet children in Nigeria attending the Shepherdess meeting with their moms



A woman selling cloth outside the meetings in Nigeria

need for their spiritual growth and total commitment in the ministry.

In his welcome, Professor Makinde, Vice Chancellor of Babcock University, declared: "This retreat will give a new orientation to service during this quinquennium."



Josephine Wari and Janet Page with the Shepherdesses in Nigeria

Pastor Oyeleke Owolabi, President of the Northwestern Nigeria Union Mission and host of this meeting, stated: "We are here to seek [look] for solutions with the Master, and we wish that He will inspire His people and provide them with a good sense of orientation throughout this quinquennium."

For Pastor Gilbert Wari, this retreat must bring forth a true revival and a deep reformation for the leaders first, and then for all the church members: "We are here to claim from God the outpouring of His Holy Spirit. We have fasted and prayed for this outpouring to be effective so that we can accomplish our mission in this division."

The General Conference was represented by Pastor Jan Paulsen who, to the astonishment of many, served as a deacon during the Lord's Supper. The Ministerial Department was also represented by Jerry and Janet Page, GC Ministerial Secretary and Shepherdess International Coordinator. Elder George Egwakhe, GC associate treasurer, was also present.

The presence of the Shepherdesses, both in quantity and quality, strongly contributed to the success of this spiritual rendezvous. This was a confirmation of their great support to the ministry.



Shepherdesses in their colorful native dress in Nigeria

At the end of the meeting, all the participants expressed their satisfaction and determination to take this wind of revival and reformation to their respective fields. The Shepherdesses, of course, have a vital role to play if this dream is to come true. They urged the division administration to have this kind of meeting regularly.



Josephine Wari, WAD Shepherdess Coordinator, had a special prayer for the Shepherdesses in Nigeria

Revival AND REFORMATION

Pray777

Seventh-day Adventists praying seven days a week at 7 (a.m. or p.m.) for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit's power and presence. Praying any hour on the hour a person will join with thousands of others in another time zone around the world bringing unity. "A chain of earnest praying believers should encircle the world... to pray for the Holy Spirit." RH, January 3, 1907



Worldwide Days for Prayer and Fasting

First Sabbath of each quarter designated as days of prayer and fasting for the world church. Encourage families and individuals to establish the first day of each month and one day a week as normal or partial fast days. Support information and helps being developed by the Prayer and Fasting Subcommittee.



For more information, visit:
www.RevivalandReformation.org