

# THE JOURNAL

A RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY SPOUSES

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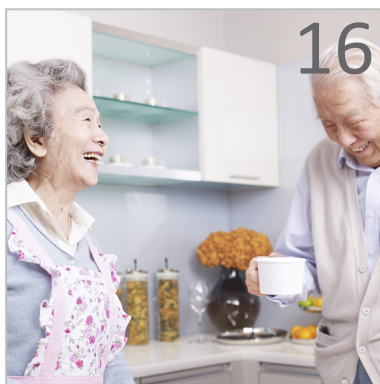
*Slowly,  
Slowly*

**SOMETIMES  
KINDNESS  
JUST INVOLVES  
SLOWING DOWN.**



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In this issue you'll discover the importance of kindness, as well as how to spread this gift to those around you for God's kingdom.



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# God, Me, and Fear

“THIS IS OK,” Becky said, “but it would be so much more fun to knock on people’s doors and offer to pray for them.” Josh agreed.

We were participating in 24 hours of prayer for a church and their upcoming evangelistic meetings. Prayer-walking the neighborhood was included. We were praying for the residents to know Jesus and to come to the meetings.

Shy and uneasy speaking to strangers, I reacted with fear to Becky’s idea. I imagined angry people slamming the door in my face. Becky and Josh agreed that they would knock on doors, while I could safely stand behind them writing down the prayer requests.

At the first house, a young woman opened the door. Suspicious, she asked what we wanted. Becky explained, “We’re from the Adventist church down the road, and we wondered if you had a need for prayer.”

“I can’t believe you’re here!” she exclaimed. “I was just telling my husband this week that we needed to get back to church, that we needed God. My husband has been out of work for a year, and I have for six months. The bank took our home back. We’re here living with my husband’s parents.”

Becky prayed with her. Shaking our hands, she asked, “What church did you say you’re from, and what is the address?”

Feeling brave, I knocked on the next door. With stomping feet, a large woman appeared, shouting, “What do you want?”

*“When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’”*

*Matthew 9:36-38, NKJV*

I immediately jumped off the porch. Josh and Becky didn’t move and met her glare with big smiles. “We’re from the Adventist church down the road,” Josh piped in. “Do you have a prayer need?”

Still yelling, she said, “Yes, you can pray for me and my whole family! My son just died yesterday!” After we had prayer with her, she said in a quiet voice, “Thank you for coming. I’m a Baptist, but I know God sent you here today.”

We needed to head back to the church. But as we passed by a house, a young woman got right in my face and asked what I was doing. “We’re just going around offering to pray with people,” I whispered.

“You’re praying with people?” she announced loudly. From the garage,

a young man pointed and said, “You need to pray for the people in that house. Their son died yesterday.” Josh told him we’d already prayed with them and then asked, “How can we pray for you?”

The young man looked at his bottle of alcohol and shook his head. “There’s no hope for me. I’ve tried to quit. I just can’t.”

Immediately Josh said, “Yes, there is hope! God saved me out of alcohol and drugs. He can save you! Can we pray with you?”

Shocked, the guy asked, “You mean now?”

“Yes.”

“Do I have to pray?”

“No.”

“OK, I guess you can,” he agreed. After all three of us prayed, his eyes filled with tears. “Thank you! What church are you from? Do they have help for people like me? Where is it located? How do I get there?”

It felt like God was shaking me, saying, “Janet, will you get out of your shyness! There’s a world out here that desperately needs to know I love them and I have a better life for them.”

In this issue, we will explore reaching out with kindness and love to our neighbors and communities. I hope you will join me in spending quality time with God, asking how He wants you to reach out and love people to Him. ■

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

# Kindness Always Pays

WE WERE SHOCKED TO DISCOVER THEIR PLAN.



IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL SABBATH morning in a rural country church in Victoria, Australia. I was at the door handing out church bulletins when I spotted a ute (utility vehicle) with three passengers inside. I'd never seen them before. It was their first time visiting us, and it was exciting to have visitors from the community.

Our family had just moved into this district, ministering to two country churches. On this particular Sabbath, my husband was away preaching at his other church, while I was on duty welcoming people at this church.

These visitors got out of their car—a father and his two children, a 14-year-old girl and an 8-year-old boy. Then they made their way to the front door of the church.

I greeted them with my usual enthusiastic Latino smile and handshake. We chatted for a little while in the foyer. As I tried to make them feel comfortable in our little church, I

was praying and hoping that what we had prepared for the day would be a blessing to them.

I led them to their designated Sabbath School rooms. One of the Sabbath School teachers on duty forgot her program at home, so she had to improvise with what she had in the room. The adult lesson went too long and off topic. Not a good first impression for our visitors. To make things worse, the preacher scheduled for that day was unable to come due to a car failure on his way to church.

*Can anything else go wrong? I wondered. Is there anything I can do to rescue their first visit to our church?*

None of the elders or deacons were prepared to take the pulpit. The only thing left to do was to play a prerecorded sermon from a video. As I witnessed their reaction to the whole scenario, I prayed that somehow we could mellow down that first impression with some positive experiences.

Then I thought of a plan—or should I say the Holy Spirit impressed me with a plan? *Invite them for lunch!* If you ever need to rescue a day for your first-time visitors, food is the solution.

I had a simple meal prepared—nachos. It's a meal that's easy to make, super yummy and cheap, and it goes a long way when we cater to a lot of people. My husband arrived just in time to share the meal with our visitors. We chatted and shared the whole afternoon. His kids and ours got along very well. Yet after we said goodbye that evening, I thought we would never see them again at church after such an eventful Sabbath morning experience.

But God is good, and He gave us many more opportunities with this beautiful family. Not only did they start attending church regularly and ask to be involved in church life, but they also expressed a

## *Can anything else go wrong? I wondered.*

desire to have Bible studies with the intention of becoming part of the Adventist church family. The man's wife, who was a Christian from another denomination, was transformed in her beliefs by the study of God's Word.

Two years later we received a call to move to another conference. The church organized a farewell dinner party for us. At this time we made an incredible discovery. This gentleman shared a powerful story. He asked, "Do you remember the first time we visited this church?"

"How can I forget?" I laughed.

He went on to reveal that that Sabbath was to be the day he would bring his kids to the church that they would never set foot in again. You see, this man was raised in a very rigid and strict Seventh-day Adventist home. At the age of 16, he left church and God for good, or so he thought. Thirty-five years later, after his son asked him to show him the church that they would never attend, they came to our little church.

Unbeknown to us, this eventful Sabbath, when everything went wrong, would become the deciding factor for their coming back to church. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, those nachos in our home made a difference in their lives. The whole family was baptized, and since then, they have been active members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Kindness through hospitality has proven to be one of the most effective methods of evangelism. We find this practice throughout the Bible:

- Mary and Martha preparing a meal for Jesus: Luke 10:38-42.
- Abraham serving three heavenly beings: Genesis 18:1-10.
- Lot hosting the heavenly strangers: Genesis 19:1-29.
- Manoah receiving the angel of the Lord: Judges 13:15.
- The widow of Zarephath caring for Elijah despite her poverty: 1 Kings 17:7-16.
- A Shunammite woman providing for Elisha: 2 Kings 4:8-10.

- Jesus eating at Zacchaeus' house: Luke 19:1-10.
- Jesus dining with two disciples in Emmaus: Luke 24:13-35.
- Jesus feeding His disciples by the seaside: John 21:1-14.
- Paul welcomed at the home of Lydia: Acts 16:11-15.

Most of us, when we think of hospitality, instantly think of the external things we can observe: how clean the house is, how delicious and mouthwatering the food is, how elegantly the table is decorated with fancy china and candles, and how politely our children behave while we have company. But the Bible has a different view of this important tool of evangelism.

It doesn't mean that we don't pay attention to the external needs—a clean house, food, and presentation. These are a part of hospitality, but not the vital one. In the Bible, hospitality is a means to an end. In other words, the food and the house are only factors to fulfill our ultimate aim—to introduce people to the Savior.

Opening the doors of our home in hospitality is a means of inviting people into our lives, our experience, our faith, and eventually our church. Simply sharing a humble meal with others around our table will give us the opportunity to share with them the Bread of Life.

All the details of hospitality that we get so caught up with are but the background of a greater story that takes place the moment we invite others into our homes. Let us notice the counsel of the apostle Paul: "He must be hospitable, one who loves what is good" (Titus 1:8, NIV) and "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13:2, NIV). 7

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*Jasmin Stankovic is a pastor's wife in Western Australia. She and her husband, Robert, have three children. Jasmin is the Western Australian Conference Women's Ministries director and president of the Perth Adventist Orchestra. She enjoys playing music, reading, writing, preaching, card making, cooking, hospitality, and social events.*

# The Grace Place

PRAYER, KINDNESS, AND CARE CAN GROW A CHURCH AND TRANSFORM A COMMUNITY.



*The Grace Place Kidz Choir involves community children, who bring their families every week.*

“I WON’T BE COMING to church anymore,” Dr. Hyveth Williams, professor of homiletics at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, declared to her pastor, Dr. Throstur Thordarson.

She continued, “I feel the Lord has called me to do more than just sit in a church. I have been praying about this with one of my students, Heber Aviles, and I have decided to go to a section of Chicago and start knocking on doors. If you don’t see me in church, it will be because I am out knocking on doors praying with people and seeing if I can find some who will study the Bible with me.”

Pastor Thordarson calmly responded, “Let’s pray about this.”

When they finished praying, he said, “There is a little company I have in South Bend. They are not growing, and I’m thinking of disbanding them, but they have this beautiful church. Why don’t you go and look at it before you go to Chicago? Just see what can come of it.”

So the next Sabbath Hyveth looked at the church. “I was just overwhelmed by the facilities, the location, and everything,” she recalls. “It was just

as if God was saying, ‘This is where I want you to minister.’”

Immediately Hyveth contacted her friend Heber, a seminary student, and they both prayed about the possibilities. They invited a few other individuals to join them, and the group eventually grew to 12. They prayed and fasted together for a whole month, asking the Lord to reveal His will.

The impression on all involved was that God wanted them to do something in South Bend, Indiana. They were further affirmed in their goal and became charter members and formed the executive team of “The Grace Place,” as the church plant has been named. It was adopted by the South Bend First Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Indiana Conference, under the leadership of Dr. Thordarson.

## **KINDNESS EVANGELISM**

The executive team felt the Lord leading them to do a church plant with a community focus rather than simply another worship program for disgruntled or disenfranchised Adventists. The thought was that if the community could be made healthy spiritually, physically, and mentally, the church would grow and make a difference through innovative, creative, simple acts of kindness evangelism.

# THE GRACE PLACE

*“Our gifts of love are changing lives.”*

Research about the city of South Bend revealed a population of 100,886 (2 percent of Indiana’s 6.6 million residents); 66 percent claimed some kind of religious affiliation (29 percent Methodist and 20 percent Catholic; Adventists were too small to make the list and may have been lumped with the 6 percent “others”). It was evident that there was a large percentage of unchurched people to be reached with the gospel, so the team enthusiastically selected an area for outreach that includes about one-third of South Bend.

After fasting and praying for three months, the small group spent a week walking throughout the community where they hoped to minister. They prayed for the people living there. They asked that God would work in a mighty way to touch hearts and change lives.

The next week the group drove around the target community every day and prayed for it. They said, “Lord, we are claiming this community in Your name.”

Each day of the third week someone prayed in the church facility. They prayed that God would bless the work and not only change those who came but also enable those ministering to be conduits of His love.

Following this the group fasted and prayed for themselves and their leaders for another week.

Then on Sabbath afternoons they began visiting malls and shopping centers in the designated area. They gave out cards and prayed for and with people. They announced that they were starting a community church plant on February 16, 2013.

In addition to these efforts, 175 former Adventists living in the area were contacted through personal visits and telephone calls and invited to return to church. Letters of apology

were sent to each person. The letters, signed by Pastor Hyveth Williams, said, “We apologize for whatever caused you to be disconnected from us. We want you back.”

When visited, some people slammed their doors and said, “You are too late. Get lost!” However, a few accepted the invitation and came back.

When the first church service began, 90 people were in attendance, and at least 50 of them were from the community. Today, many have been baptized and others have returned to the fellowship of the Seventh-day Adventist faith at The Grace Place, where an average of 80 attendees worship weekly.

## **MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK**

Once worship services began, attendees were invited to share a Sabbath meal together each week. Rather than being a potluck, the food was prepared by a hospitality team. The menu included two options: (1) clean meats such as chicken, and (2) vegetarian choices to allow community visitors to sample vegetarian food and learn about it while still being able to eat something they were used to in well-prepared, balanced meals.

A few months after her baptism, Janet Turner, the first community member to join, became a vegetarian, and the transformation of new members continues to amaze the leaders.

After the meal, those who are willing and able go into the community to pray and invite others to worship at The Grace Place. They give out bread and other food as well as amenities such as toothpaste and soap.

“Whatever we have, we give,” says Hyveth. “Our gifts of love are changing lives. We have been told how different things are in the community since we started doing this. When we first started, one man cursed us and slammed the door in our faces. ‘Don’t bother me. I don’t want to have anything to do with anybody!’ he yelled.”

Immediately the visitors gathered on the front walk and prayed for the man. Then they carried a bag of food and set it near the door. As they were leaving, the man again opened the door.

*“Lord,  
we are  
claiming  
this  
community  
in Your  
name.”*

“We are from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and we just wanted to pray with you and give you this bag of food,” they told him.

“OK, you can pray for me,” he responded.

During subsequent visits they learned that the man had lost both legs in the war in Afghanistan. He lived by himself and had no one to look after him. Now members of the church regularly check on him.

“He has come a long way from cursing us to now allowing us to pray with him, bring him things, and look after him,” shares Hyveth. “We see this connection drawing him closer to God and to others.”

Being community focused includes cleaning up the neighborhood. Sometimes these efforts involve snow removal. Sometimes they involve cleaning out a house where the people are just so depressed and overwhelmed that they can’t deal with it. Church members go in, scrub, throw out trash, and help organize the home.

Hyveth remembers, “When we revamped a house in one neighborhood, the neighbors came around, looked, and asked, ‘Who are these people?’” Curiosity drew them to the church and to evangelistic meetings the church currently holds every summer. Many people have been baptized during these events.


While The Grace Place serves as a training lab for seminarians, the team has found many ways to reach the community. Financial peace workshops, diabetes seminars, and a health fair are just a few ways they have assisted residents. They also hosted a big July 4 party for the neighborhood. More than 200 people came to enjoy free popcorn, a bounce house, and games for the children.

Just For Kids is a monthly birthday program; parents having a hard time economically can bring their children, who are given a great party, taught Bible stories, and given birthday presents. In July, 107 children accompanied by 81 parents were treated to the best party imaginable.

The Creative Café is another innovative community program reaching college students and young professionals through the “Spoken Word” held on the third Saturday night of each month at the Kroc Center. Many community people attend and share their poetry and songs about Jesus. This provides opportunities to share the message from an Adventist perspective. (See [tgpthegraceplace.org](http://tgpthegraceplace.org) for more information.)

“Our strategy,” says Hyveth, “doesn’t focus on having a high worship service with the best singers, the best pianists, the best organists, and long offering appeals. We have a simple service with three parts—prayer, praise, and preaching. We don’t pass around a basket. We have a box in front where worshippers, moved by the Spirit, bring their tithes/offerings and deposit them in the box. Generosity has characterized these gifts. Community residents see what the church is doing in the community, and they want to show their support by giving.”

Another unique aspect of The Grace Place is that transfers from other churches are not encouraged or even accepted. While anyone may attend and all are welcome to the weekly worship experience, to be a member one must be a returning Adventist or a new believer. “This is to help us see if we are truly growing, because to me, transfers do not reflect church growth,” emphasizes Pastor Hyveth Williams, who serves with two seminarians, Pastor Christopher Cheatham, associate pastor, and Pastor Kristy Hodson, administrative pastor.

The word is getting out. The Grace Place is making a difference! 

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*Betty Eaton was a correspondent for the Lake Union Herald before her death in January 2017.*

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*Dr. Hyveth Williams is senior pastor of The Grace Place. She is a world-renowned preacher, minister, professor, and leader. She has written three books: Anticipation, Will I Ever Learn? and Secrets of a Happy Heart. Her greatest passion has always been reaching people. This is evident in the love and commitment she shows to her students and the wider community. It is also this passion that motivated her to team up with Pastor Heber Aviles to form The Grace Place.*



# *Fabric of Worship*

YOU CAN CREATE SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL.

DO YOU ENJOY looking through and selecting different fabrics? I like to admire all the colors and patterns—from simple to elaborate, from festive to plain and practical. Shimmering, silky, soft, durable . . . the adjectives could go on and on.

I know that fabric doesn't turn everyone's head. I enjoy it, but not like my mother and sister, who could spend hours in a fabric store and at their sewing machines.

Even if fabric doesn't "call your name" as you walk by it, I do want to throw out a fabric challenge to you and myself. The challenge is to become part of the fabric of your church. What do I mean by that?

- To become more than a pew warmer.
- To connect with the hearts of the people.
- To give a part of your heart to them.
- To worship there in your spirit and soul.

How is that really going to look? It's different for each of us. Just like the varied colors and patterns and textures of fabric, this challenge will play out in diverse ways in our lives as pastors' spouses.

Some will do it simply. Some will do it with elaborate flare. Few will do it with festivity, and many will do it practically. All types and kinds of involvement and meshing with your congregation will be beautiful.

May our churches feel our love, our involvement, and our care as we choose to be a part of their fabric.

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**Malinda Haley** is a pastor's wife, mother to three grown children, a maternal/infant nurse, and, above all, God's servant. She lives in Nashville, Tennessee, with her husband, Steve, who is president of the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference.



# *This Little Light of Mine...*

## COULD IT BE MAKING YOU SICK?

IT ALL STARTED WHEN Cathy Flanders began regularly burning candles in her home. She loved the pleasant odors of the scented candles and the ambiance of the soft flames. She had no idea she might be poisoning herself and her family.

### **FLAMING HISTORY**

Candles have been used for light, to aid travelers at night, and during social and religious celebrations for thousands of years.

The ancient Romans are generally recognized as the first to develop candles with wicks. This was accomplished by dipping rolled papyrus repeatedly in melted tallow. Historians have further discovered that the wicks of ancient Chinese candles were made of rice paper. For a wax base, early civilizations often used plants, insects, seeds, and even fruit as ingredients.

Early Western cultures made their candles primarily from animal fat, but a major improvement came about in the Middle Ages with the introduction of beeswax candles originating in Europe. Beeswax was highly desired for its pure, clean burn without the usual smoky flame. It also emitted a more desirable odor.

Contemporary candle making underwent great strides in the nineteenth century with the discovery of how to extract stearic acid from animal fatty acids. Thus, stearin wax was developed—a harder wax that was more durable. Paraffin wax, which was introduced in the 1850s, offered a more affordable candle. However, with the development of the light bulb in 1879, the need for candles began to decline.



It was at the onset of the twentieth century that candle popularity started to grow again. The emergence of U.S. oil and meatpacking businesses aided in increasing the byproducts of paraffin and stearic acid—both still basic ingredients of candles. The interest in candles remained steady until about the 1980s, when producers became more creative and candles in a broad variety of sizes, shapes, and colors caught the public eye. Then their popularity increased dramatically as candles became viewed as important household decorative items, mood setters, and gift possibilities. But it was the introduction of scented candles that made the biggest impact.

### **DANGEROUS FUMES**

Attracted by the variety of scents—including spices, fruit, pine, vanilla, lavender, and herbs—Cathy Flanders, like much of the enamored public, became intrigued with candles whose labels promised to fill

## *All candles emit chemicals into the air we breathe.*

the house with lovely fragrances. However, after six months of burning these candles, she began to notice soot damage around her house.

About that same time, 11-year-old Andrew Flanders began having problems in school. His grades fell, and he exhibited unmistakable symptoms of attention deficit disorder. After taking Andrew to the doctor for a checkup, his parents were amazed to hear that the blood test report showed a significant level of lead poisoning in his system.

Andrew was immediately sent to live with his aunt until the source of the problem could be resolved. Further testing showed the lead level in the Flanders' home to be 40 milligrams per square foot—27 times more than is considered a nonthreatening, safe level. Where was all that lead coming from? Ultimately, all indications pointed conclusively to the scented candles.

### **BEWARE OF THE WICK**

The cause of the problem in this and similar cases is the wick, which is frequently made with a metal core or is covered with metallic pigment generally composed of lead. These are commonly the wicks of choice, especially in scented candles, because they will firmly stand upright, they burn slower and longer, and they are easy to light. Cotton wicks, although much safer, often go limp and fall over into the wax.

Not all metal-wicked candles contain lead, but a significant number do, and there is no consistent way of knowing which do and which do not. Some safe-wicked candle manufacturers will clearly indicate on an attached label that the candle contains no lead products.

Lead-wicked candles were banned in Australia in September 1999. But in the United States and some other major candle-producing countries, there are no current laws mandating the application of warning labels or prohibiting the manufacturing or importation of health-hazardous candles.

Scented candles are an important component in aromatherapy—a type of alternative medicine in

which pleasing odors are used to treat illnesses, decrease stress, and aid in relaxation. How ironic that these very same candles can also cause poor indoor air quality, with lead toxins traveling on dust particles and being deposited on furniture and household surfaces, thus precipitating serious health threats to all in the vicinity.

Lead poisoning can lead to behavior changes and serious, sometimes fatal, damage to internal organs. Children, the elderly, and people with weak immune systems or ongoing lung conditions such as asthma are particularly at risk. The central nervous system of children is particularly sensitive to lead, and exposure can precipitate learning disabilities and behavioral disorders in the child, some of which can be severe and irreversible.

Go ahead and enjoy candles, but be cautious.

1. Avoid supercheap candles.
2. Check for a shiny metal wire inside the wick. If there is no label indicating the wick is lead-free, do not use the candle.
3. Cotton or hemp wicks are considered to be the safest.
4. Do not choose a candle that is greasy to the touch. These are generally slow-burning candles with questionable additives.





## This Little Light of Mine

5. Imported candles may come from countries that have far different standards regarding the use of chemical compounds in household products. Check the label for information about where a candle was made and, if possible, which materials were used in its production.
6. Don't use candles in jars when the candle leaves a soot ring on the jar's lip. The soot may be an indication of lead dust. No candle is completely soot-free because of combustion, but choose candles made from beeswax or soy wax, which do not produce sticky, black, petroleum-based soot.
7. Keep wicks trimmed for more complete combustion. Trim to one-quarter inch.
8. Keep burning candles away from drafts, which can blow toxins into the air and burn up your candle more quickly.
9. On the other hand, do not burn a candle in a small, closed room (such as a bathroom), as toxins can become concentrated (even from safe-wicked candles) and precipitate a health hazard. Choose instead a larger, well-ventilated room.
10. Looking for aromatherapy without the worry of choosing a safe-wicked candle? Put a few drops of scented oil in a diffuser, or add some drops to boiling water.

All candles emit chemicals into the air we breathe. However, in safe-wicked candles, toxic compound emissions are in extremely low concentrations. These candles burned once in a while for special occasions are relatively harmless.

### AM I A CANDLE?

Each one of us is a light—a candle—in our own little worlds. Every choice we make, each action, the words we speak, our attitudes and habits, all exert a positive or negative influence and reflect on the kind of wick—or spirit—that is deep within us. As we carefully choose the safest wicks to burn in our homes, we must even more carefully choose the best spirit to live in our hearts, one that will shine out the beauty and warmth of love, kindness, and grace (see Matthew 5:14-16 and Proverbs 4:23). 7

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[www.candlecomfort.com/lead.html](http://www.candlecomfort.com/lead.html)  
[candles.org/history/](http://candles.org/history/)  
[www.globalhealingcenter.com/natural-health/are-your-candles-emitting-toxins/](http://www.globalhealingcenter.com/natural-health/are-your-candles-emitting-toxins/)  
[www.keeperofthehome.org/toxins-in-candles-sad-but-true](http://www.keeperofthehome.org/toxins-in-candles-sad-but-true)  
Neil Nedley, M.D., *The Lost Art of Thinking*, Nedley Publishing, 2011, pp. 195, 196

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*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.*

# TIPS TO ~~SURVIVE~~

# THRIVE

## SPEAK LIFE

We have many opportunities every day to speak. What are we doing with those words? Proverbs 18:21 reminds us that “death and life are in the power of the tongue” (KJV).

That’s powerful! That means that every time we speak to our spouse, our children, our church members, our neighbors, and our colleagues, we have the choice to either impart life to them or cause death.

Honestly, sometimes it’s easier (and more tempting) to complain, gossip, argue, and degrade. But these words don’t bring life. They often bring hurt and discouragement to the hearer—and they don’t leave the speaker feeling very good either. Instead, speak life! Look for ways to encourage, compliment, thank, affirm, and bless others with your words. These words impart life to those around you.

Life-giving words can be hard to speak, though, especially if you don’t feel that people deserve them. But begin praying that God will give you opportunities to do this. Pray that He will give you the right words to say at the right time. Pray that He will change your heart and give you the desire to build up those around you—especially those you feel don’t deserve it.

What a difference it will make! As you seek to encourage your spouse, they will be blessed. Your children crave and will appreciate your affirmation. Your neighbors and coworkers will be uplifted by the compliments. And your church members will be changed by your prayers and comments of blessing.

You will notice that these types of words connect you with those around you, and your love for people will increase. You will also notice that these words bring life, not only to others but also to yourself! “Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips” (Psalm 141:3, NKJV).

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*Have a survival tip that someone shared with you once upon a time, or that you have learned along the way? Send it in to share here at: [spouses@ministerialassociation.org](mailto:spouses@ministerialassociation.org)*

## Special Quotes

“From every Christian home a holy light should shine forth. Love should be revealed in action. It should flow out in all home intercourse, showing itself in thoughtful kindness, in gentle, unselfish courtesy. There are homes where this principle is carried out—homes where God is worshiped and truest love reigns. From these homes morning and evening prayer ascends to God as sweet incense, and His mercies and blessings descend upon the suppliants like the morning dew.”

*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 144

“If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one. But, though professing to be converted, we carry around with us a bundle of self that we regard as altogether too precious to be given up. It is our privilege to lay this burden at the feet of Christ and in its place take the character and similitude of Christ. The Savior is waiting for us to do this.”

*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 189, 190

“In almost every community there are large numbers who do not listen to the preaching of God’s Word or attend any religious service. If they are reached by the gospel, it must be carried to their homes. Often the relief of their physical needs is the only avenue by which they can be approached. Missionary nurses who care for the sick and relieve the distress of the poor will find many opportunities to pray with them, to read to them from God’s word, and to speak of the Savior. They can pray with and for the helpless ones who have not strength of will to control the appetites that passion has degraded. They can bring a ray of hope into the lives of the defeated and disheartened. Their unselfish love, manifested in acts of disinterested kindness, will make it easier for these suffering ones to believe in the love of Christ.”

*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 144, 145

# Slowly, Slowly

SOMETIMES KINDNESS JUST INVOLVES SLOWING DOWN.



*WHY, OH, WHY, I think, does he have to take so long over a little shopping? Why does he have to read every label, so carefully scan the different brands of milk and orange juice, ponder—the precious minutes ticking away—every piece of fruit in the bins?*

Resentfully I follow my grandfather's unsteady, slow steps, pushing the grocery cart for him up one aisle and down the other, and thinking of all the things I *should* be doing on my one day off from the hospital.

I want so badly to be home, cleaning the little apartment until it shines like a jewel. I want to plan tonight's special dinner, special because Pete, my husband of four months, and I will eat it together for a change. Since he works days and I work evenings, we don't have the chance to eat together very often. *But Granddad has no one but me, I remind myself. It's my duty to help him.*

Slowly I trail after Granddad, pretending to show an interest in the food he is buying, knowing that he is hoping I will stay over for lunch.

"It's so nice in the backyard now, before the summer's heat begins," the old voice assures me. "We'll have a salad and just sit for a while, in silence, and listen to the birds."

I turn away. "I can't, Granddad. I have too much to do." I do not look at him. I do not want to see his disappointment.

Anyway, the shopping is half over now. I will soon be free. Unfortunately, there are too many people he knows. I find myself slowing down a little. What's the use? He knows everyone, it seems, and must say a word or two to them all. And, of course, he is eternally fascinated by children, and they by him. They look at his seams and wrinkles with big, solemn eyes and accept him with wide, confiding grins. Then they look at me, and their smiles vanish.

*“I have  
too  
much  
to do,”  
I say.*

A little boy barges into him, almost knocking him down. There is a note of anxiety and fear in the voice that yells, “Hey, Dad, where are ya, Dad?”

And Granddad says soothingly, “Slowly, slowly—everything will be all right.” Taking the little boy’s hand, he walks with sure and proud steps up the aisle, leaving me standing there watching.

“Don’t be in such a hurry. Go slowly, slowly—and everything will be all right.”

The words echo in my mind. How many times had I heard them? When I fell and scraped a knee, when I learned to ride a bike, when I learned to swim, to skate . . .

I stand there waiting, but patiently now, and though my smile is a little blurred, it is still a smile.

At the checkout stand I say, “I think I’ll take you up on that offer of lunch, Granddad. And I’d like to spend the afternoon too, if it’s OK.”

“Why, sure, honey, sure—but what about all those things you have to do? You don’t have to stay just because of me, you know.” The blue eyes look anxiously into mine.

“There is no hurry,” I say. “Everything will be all right.”

I take Granddad’s arm, and we begin to walk slowly out of the store. It’s nice, walking slow. A soft spring breeze is blowing outside. I feel it on my cheeks, tousling my hair. Was it blowing before? I see daffodils blowing in the wind, and tulips. I think, *Thank You, God, for giving me Granddad.* ■

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*Eileen Sanders is a pseudonym.*



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KEEP IT FOCUSED! STORIES SHOULD BE ABOUT 250 WORDS / ALL MANUSCRIPTS WILL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF REVIVAL AND REFORMATION AND THE GENERAL CONFERENCE MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION. / WE WANT TO SHARE YOUR STORY, BUT PUBLICATION IS NOT GUARANTEED

# Still Best Friends

“STILL BEST FRIENDS!” wrote my friend on her Facebook page. Lisa and her husband were celebrating their silver wedding anniversary.

My cursor hovered over the “Like” button. Then I changed my mind and clicked on the “Message” tab. “Congratulations!” I typed. “That’s amazing! If you have a moment, I’d love to hear what’s kept your friendship so vibrant and alive.”

“Good question!” wrote Lisa. “Let me think . . . Lots of love, having a laugh together, being kind to each other, not saying everything we think, forgiving each other, learning to appreciate our differences, trying to solve our problems respectfully . . .”

As we messaged back and forth, we noticed that many of the secrets of their friendship were similar to the fruits of the Spirit: being loving, joyful, kind, self-controlled, patient, and peace-loving.

Friendship brings us together at the beginning of a relationship. It helps us to be more resilient when we face the different challenges of life. And it warms our hearts with happy memories when we grow older and look back on years of companionship. When we’re married to our best friend, it reassures our children, it inspires young people to choose marriage, and it blesses our communities.





## *How do you nurture the friendship “fruits” in your marriage?*

Here are some ideas for nurturing the friendship “fruits” in your marriage.

### **PRAYER**

- Pray that the Holy Spirit will grow the fruit of God’s love in your life so that it can infuse and transform the friendship in your marriage.

### **LOVE**

- You are the best channel God has for expressing His love to your spouse. Which aspects of God’s love are flowing through your life into theirs?
- Discover each other’s “love languages” so that your love can be more effective. You can take a free quiz at: [5lovelanguages.com](http://5lovelanguages.com).
- Try the free “7 Days of Love” program ([thedatingdivas.com](http://thedatingdivas.com)) to help you discover how your spouse prefers to be loved. The Dating Divas website is run by Christians who have loaded it with beautiful and inexpensive materials to nurture the adventure and friendship in your marriage.
- Ask yourself: What’s the most loving thing I can do for my spouse today?

### **JOY**

- List some of the things that have brought you joy as a couple. Which ones can you do more of in this season of your marriage?
- Joy is a deeper sense of happiness that comes through your gratitude for each other. Make a list of at least 20 things you appreciate about your spouse. Find a quiet and cozy time to read them aloud.

- Keep looking for fun and creative ways to delight each other.
- At the end of your day, share your happiest moments together and thank God for them (Philippians 4:4).
- Ask yourself: What do I do that makes my spouse’s heart sing with joy? How can I do that more often?

### **PEACE**

- Make at least one room in your home a haven of peace and tranquility where you can both relax. Use soft lighting or candles, play soft worship music, scatter some pillows and throws, stack inspiring books, and create a collection of beautiful natural objects that fill you with wonder (Philippians 4:6, 7).
- Find ways to relax together: go for a walk, have a warm bath, read, share a hobby, work in your garden, pray for each other, etc.
- Ask yourself: What can I do to help my spouse relax and let go of their stresses and concerns? What can I do to reduce the level of conflict and stress in our marriage? See Romans 12:16.



*“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”*

*Galatians 5:22, 23*

#### **PATIENCE**

- Paul listed “patience” as the first quality of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4. Patience encourages us to slow our pace to match the other person so that they feel safe and comfortable. Realize that patience shows respect and care for the other person.
- What changes could you make to your schedule and planning so that you have more unhurried time for each other?
- Ask yourself: When am I most likely to be impatient with my spouse? How can I give them the gift of my patience, let go of my need to rush, and lovingly put their needs ahead of mine?

#### **KINDNESS**

- Kindness is a vital ingredient of any friendship, and especially a marriage. Read Ephesians 4:32.
- Being kind and helpful every day, even when you don’t feel like it, is one of the easiest ways to strengthen your marriage. Even small kindnesses can make a big difference. Offer to spend 10 to 15 minutes doing the most helpful thing for your husband or wife.

#### **GOODNESS**

- Make a list of your personal values. Describe how you are living out each value in your marriage. How do these lived values bless your spouse? Read Romans 12:9-21.
- Ask yourself: Which character strengths am I working on with God that will also bless my spouse and strengthen our marriage?

#### **FAITHFULNESS**


- Find ways to increase the spiritual connection in your marriage. Agree to pray for each other throughout the day. Read Psalms to each other. Attend a couples’ retreat. Find a ministry you can do together.
- Ask yourself: How can I show my spouse that I am committed to making our marriage the best it can be? See Ephesians 5:21-33.

#### **GENTLENESS**

- Speak warmly and softly to each other. Touch each other gently. Do things that increase each other’s comfort (Philippians 4:5).
- Anticipate each other’s needs by offering to make a drink, pack a lunch, or send an encouraging text during a challenging day.
- Ask yourself: How can I be gentler toward my husband or wife today? How can I increase their sense of comfort and well-being?

#### **SELF-CONTROL**

- Filter your words before saying them. Ask yourself: If I say this, will it bring us closer together, or will it push my spouse away? See Ephesians 4:29.
- Plan regular friendship times together and prioritize them, no matter how busy you are. Use self-control to manage your time and workload so that you can protect your precious couple time.
- Ask yourself: How can I use my self-control to protect my spouse from pain, fear, and distress? 7



**Ask yourself: How can I surprise my spouse with kindness today?**

*Karen Holford is a marriage and family therapist and director of the Family Ministries Department for the Trans-European Division.*

# Kindness Counts

YOU CAN SPREAD kindness and make friends for Jesus! One of the best ways is by being light and salt in the world.



## SALT AND LIGHT

Read Matthew 5:13-16. In these verses Jesus tells us that we are to be like light and salt.

When we are “light,” we help people to see what God is like. They notice our kind “good works” and give credit to God for them.

When we are “salt” and we mingle with people, we can help them to “taste” or experience what God is like.



## CURIOUS SCAVENGERS

Go around your house with your family and look for different kinds of light. Then think of different ways you use salt.

Talk together about these different lights and uses of salt. How can they help you to understand more about sharing God’s loving-kindness with the people around you?

## THE SALT LIGHT PROJECT

Starting your own SaltLight project is a fun way for you and your family to share Jesus’ loving-kindness with others!

Read the list of ideas below. Add other ideas of your own.

- Buy or print a calendar with a space for each day.
- Do the project as one family, or invite another family at church to join you. That way you can work together and reach your goals sooner.
- Decide how many of these activities your family, or group of families, could easily manage in a month. Then choose how you will celebrate when you reach your goal. Invite another family to join your celebration so you can share Jesus’ loving-kindness with them too.
- Every time you do something to share Jesus’ love, stick a gold star or a red heart on your calendar. When you have reached your goal, celebrate with your family. Then set a new target to reach.



# “GOOD WORKS” LIST



### • PRAY FOR YOUR NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS.

- Smile at someone.
- Say hello to a neighbor and ask if there is anything you can do to help them.
- Help bake cookies. Then take them to a neighbor, police station, homeless shelter, women’s refuge, fire depot, etc.
- Offer to walk a neighbor’s dog.
- Tape dollar bills to toys in the dollar store.
- Write colorful, happy messages and Bible verses on paper. Tuck them into free newspapers.
- Write a happy message on a sticky note. Then hide it inside a book in the local library. Include some paper money to give someone a lovely surprise.
- Make encouraging bookmarks to hide inside library books.
- Pack up some of your good outgrown clothes, toys, and books. Take them to a Goodwill store or a women’s refuge.
- Invite a lonely child to play with you.

- Pick a bunch of flowers from your yard, or make pretty paper ones. Tie them with ribbon and hang them on someone’s front door.
- Use colorful chalk to write a happy message or Bible verse on a sidewalk.
- Without being asked, do something kind to help your teacher or parent.
- Tidy your bedroom.
- Go around your home and see how fast you can put everything back in its place, or deliver items to the correct room.
- Leave a thank-you note and treat in your mailbox for the mail carrier.



### • PICK UP ONE PIECE OF SAFE LITTER FROM THE STREET AND PUT IT IN THE GARBAGE BIN.

- Feed the birds.





**• PLANT FLOWER SEEDS IN POTS AND CARE FOR THEM UNTIL THEY BLOOM. THEN TAKE THEM TO LONELY OR ELDERLY PEOPLE IN YOUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY.**

- Make thank-you cards for your Sabbath School teachers.
- Make “We’re praying for you!” cards to give to people going through tough times.
- Collect loose coins in your home. Use them to save up for a special caring project. Or buy a gift through ADRA to help a family in another part of the world (ADRA.org).



**• INVITE ANOTHER FAMILY TO YOUR HOME FOR POPCORN AND A GOOD MOVIE OR GAME.**

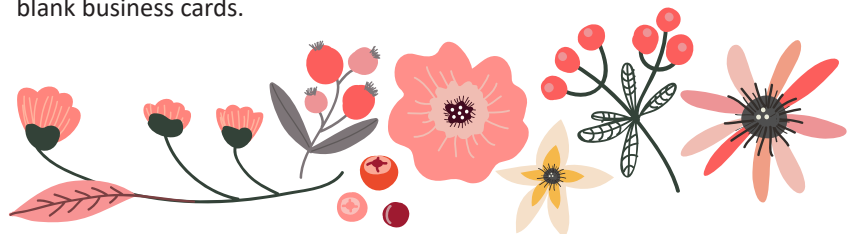
- Write out the instructions for some of your favorite family worships. Include any supplies that are needed. Give the family worship kits to other families in your church.

- Encourage your church to start their own “Messy Church” program to reach families in your community (messychurch.org.uk).
- Visit fathersloveletter.com. Print off the children’s version to share the good news of God’s loving-kindness with other children. You can also print the love letter in many different languages if you know people from other countries.
- Find inspirational video clips that help people to understand God’s loving-kindness and the good news of Jesus. Then share them on your family Facebook page or through other types of social media.

**• WRITE A HAPPY AND ENCOURAGING LETTER OR CARD AND SEND IT TO SOMEONE.**



- Look out for people who need help. Then encourage your family to help them.
- Start a family fund for helping others. Add a little bit of money every week, and think of fun and happy ways to share God’s love with others.
- Make Bible verse promise boxes or jars to give as gifts. Print out Bible verses or write them by hand on blank business cards.



**• ASK YOUR CHURCH TO INVEST IN A LARGE, COLORFUL PLAY PARACHUTE.**

Help your parents or children’s ministry leader to learn how to use the parachute to tell Bible stories, sing praise songs, learn Bible verses, and play Bible games. Take the parachute to use in a local park. Let other children in the park come and join you to learn about Jesus while they play (ministry-to-children.com/parachute-games/ and throughtheroof.org/innovative-parachute-resource-includes-all/).



• **DONATE COLORED PENCILS AND CHRISTIAN COLORING SHEETS TO WAITING AREAS AT CLINICS AND HOSPITALS, OR TAKE THEM WITH YOU TO SHARE WITH OTHER CHILDREN WHEN YOU ARE WAITING.**

- If your local library has Christian storybooks, borrow them, read them, and write a review for your library website or local bookstore.
- Be a junior journalist. Find out if your local paper will publish stories written by children. Then write about some of the good things that are happening at your church. Make sure you take some good photos to make your article more interesting.
- Some local papers offer to print free or low-cost messages at different times of the year, such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Use this opportunity to share messages of faith, hope, and love.
- Start a project in your church in which the children and young people interview the older people about their faith journeys. Write them down, or make video recordings of them to share with the whole church or to include on your church's website.

- Instead of Halloween, why not hold your own Christian, anti-Halloween Light Party and invite your friends? See [lightparty.org](http://lightparty.org) for ideas.
- Invite each of your neighbors to your home for a simple soup supper so you can get to know them and their needs.



• **AT CHRISTMASTIME VISIT EACH OF YOUR NEIGHBORS AND SING CAROLS TO THEM. GIVE THEM A SMALL GIFT OF HOMEMADE COOKIES, A BASKET OF FRUIT, OR AN INSPIRING OUTREACH BOOK.**

- Start a children's choir or singing group. Practice until you are good enough to sing at a local mall, airport, or other public place.
- Discover the spiritual gifts of each person in your family. Find ways to use those special gifts to share Jesus' love.

## CELEBRATION IDEAS

Once you've had fun spreading kindness, have a celebration with your family and anyone else who helped you! Here are some ideas for your celebration:

- Watch an inspiring movie together.
- Have a picnic in the park or in another beautiful place.



- **Go for a walk together. Ask one of your parents to plan a Bible treasure hunt or a nature scavenger hunt.**
- Make pizza together.
- Think of other things you enjoy doing with your friends.
- Tell us about it! Do you have a creative activity that your family has used to share God's loving-kindness? Please write and let us know.

*Karen Holford is director of the Family Ministries Department for the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.*

# “I Don’t Have Time”

## DID I HAVE TO HELP HER AGAIN?

THE RINGING PHONE broke into my thoughts. I glanced across my paper-strewn desk and sighed. *I don’t have time for this*, I thought. *Some days at work are just too hectic!*

The phone jangled a second time. I put down my pen and stretched my back. *Better grab it before it rings again*. Reaching out, I picked it up. It was Leah.\*

Leah had left five voice mails the day before. I had called her back twice, and we’d already spoken once today. *God, I really don’t have time for this today. Not now. Not again.*

Even as I thought that, I smiled and spoke. “Good morning; this is Jill. How may I help you today?”

“Oh, Jill, I really need you right now,” Leah’s voice came over the phone.

“Leah, how good to hear from you again!”

She launched into the difficulties she was facing. They somehow sounded very similar to the issues she had shared when we had talked just a couple

hours before. As I listened, I tried to straighten the papers on my desk and log a couple of items on the computer—something to make me feel as if I weren’t wasting my time. Again.

We talked awhile and I tried to listen, but my heart wasn’t in it. I didn’t feel as though I had time for this today. Turning my head toward the other women in my office, I rolled my eyes. They watched me, amused.

Suddenly Leah spoke. “Jill, could you pray for me now?”

Ouch! The enormity of what I’d just done washed over me. Leah was God’s daughter! He loved her. And I had just rolled my eyes and taken lightly the needs of one of God’s precious children. How could I pray? What a hypocrite!

A deafening silence filled my ears, and I realized that Leah had stopped talking and was literally waiting for me to pray. Me? With my sin-filled heart! Who was I to intercede on her behalf? *Oh, God, what have I done?*

I began to pray, for there was nothing else to do. Somehow I made it through, and we said our goodbyes. As soon as the phone clicked, I turned to my coworkers. “I’m so incredibly sorry! Can you forgive me for my attitude—for my selfishness and indifference toward one of God’s daughters?”

They were generous and kind, but the pain in my heart remained. Later, in the quietness of the evening, I took my sin-filled heart to God. “Will You take out this sin? Will You forgive and cleanse me? Will You remake me into Your image?”

So today, and every day, I’m asking Him for His grace, His love, and His Spirit for each one who crosses my path. After all, we are all God’s children, still growing in grace. ■

\* Not her real name.

*How could  
I pray?  
What a  
hypocrite!*



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*Jill Morikone is administrative assistant to the president of 3ABN, a supporting Adventist television network. She and her husband, Greg, live in southern Illinois and enjoy ministering together for Jesus. This article originally appeared in the February 2017 issue of the Adventist Review.*

# *The Great Little Things*

ARE YOU IMPRESSED ONLY BY BIG, SHOWY ACTIONS?



WHAT DO YOU THINK of people who attach great importance to little things? Today, there's hardly anyone who wants to be called a nitpicker. The term sounds more negative than positive.

But the Holy Scriptures far too often direct us to focus on minor things. It's the ordinary, small deeds that ultimately indicate a person's true character.

The Bible frequently speaks of faithfulness that begins with small things and leads to—and is a measure of—faithfulness in big deeds. The apostle Paul urged Christians to do everything, even consume food and drink, to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Every big deal begins with something small. True, not every little thing will necessarily result in something big. It's challenging to immediately discern greatness in small things. But that's why Jesus called us to look at small things through the eyes of faith and treat even the smallest commission or request as something important.

We can find several biblical stories that center around a request for a seemingly little thing, but with great implications. One example is in Genesis 24:17: "The servant hurried to meet her and said, 'Please give me a little water from your jar'" (NIV). It was a simple and easily fulfilled request: "Please give me a little water."



## *She had no clue that her future was shaped by that one act.*

Of course, Bible readers know that the above request was preceded by a condition made by Abraham's servant before the Lord. Rebekah, who came to the well, had no idea what would happen to her after meeting that request. She didn't know that she would marry a wealthy and noble man and spend a fulfilled and long life with him. She didn't know that she would give birth to twins from which two great nations would descend. She didn't know that she would become a part of the family tree of the Lord Himself. And, of course, she didn't suspect that thousands of years later, people would read her story in the Bible.

All this was unknown to Rebekah. Yet all this would happen to her because she responded correctly to a small request of someone who crossed her path.

Maybe reading the words of Rebekah, you've thought, *What did she say that for?* After all, just listen to what happens after the request: "'Drink, my lord,' she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink. After she had given him a drink, she said, 'I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have had enough to drink'" (Genesis 24:18, 19, NIV).

Nobody asked Rebekah to draw water for the camels, although such a condition was stipulated (by the servant toward God rather than toward her). Abraham's servant appealed to God with a serious request. He had to find a wife for his master's son, Isaac, a wife who would

be worthy of the son of promise. She should be a noble woman with God-given qualities. But the story tells us that the servant didn't ask for all of that. He strongly believed that if the Lord provided a bride for Isaac, that girl would match well his young master. Indeed, Rebekah turned out to be a beautiful, polite, helpful girl. She was exactly the kind of wife that Isaac desired.

Perhaps Rebekah herself dreamed of meeting someone like Abraham's son, who would become a worthy husband. However, she had no clue that her future was shaped on that evening when a weary traveler approached her. She had no idea that her fate would depend on the things expected of her beyond a common request.

Rebekah was not prepared to meet the servant, and nobody warned her of such an event. At that fateful moment, she behaved in her usual way, the way she would on any of the preceding days. It was her natural desire to do a little more than what was asked that made it possible for her to acquire marital bliss.

### **GO TWO MILES**

Let's try to walk in her shoes. When was the last time you offered to wash someone's car after they asked you for a little water to wash their hands after repairing their car? You likely don't remember such a time. How about that time you helped the elderly woman cross the street? That was enough, right? You didn't have to ask her questions about what else she needed, see her safely home, buy her something in a nearby shop, and tidy her apartment.

Rebekah too didn't have to go the extra mile—no one would have blamed her for simply providing the drink of water and leaving it at that. But many centuries before Jesus said, "If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them

*We can't  
consider  
their meeting  
a mere  
chance.*

two miles" (Matthew 5:41, NIV), Rebekah did more than what she was asked.

Every day we encounter in our path dozens of little things we should consider. Some of them are dealt with automatically and are soon out of the way. Others seem to be of little importance and are neglected. But there are times when small things are handled as they should be, with effort and energy. God knows how many miraculous and great events pass unheeded by us for no other reason than that we allow small things to remain small.

There are at least three reasons that we must watch out for small things:

1. We don't know when God will ask us for a drink of water. Perhaps it will be in the morning or in the afternoon, or maybe He will even awaken us at night. It may happen at any time, this year or over the years.
2. We don't know who will turn to us with a request. Rebekah didn't suspect that a servant was the key to Mr. Right. The widow of Zarephath also didn't know that a person asking her for a little water was God's servant who was able to work miracles when necessary. The Samaritan woman at the well didn't have any idea that a Jew who asked her for water was the Messiah Himself.
3. We don't know why we are to perform one or another deed. If Abraham's servant hadn't been commissioned by his master, he would more than likely never have turned to Rebekah with his request. We can't consider their meeting a mere chance. There was more behind it—a responsible mission in which Rebekah had a role to play. The widow of Zarephath didn't know the reason for a stranger's request either, but we see from the following events that her interests were also taken into account. The same holds true for the Samaritan woman, who had no idea she would acquire salvation.

In our world, people mainly rely on great and mighty things. A concert should be a real show, a shop should be a *supermarket*. Only grandiose things seem worthy of respect and approval.

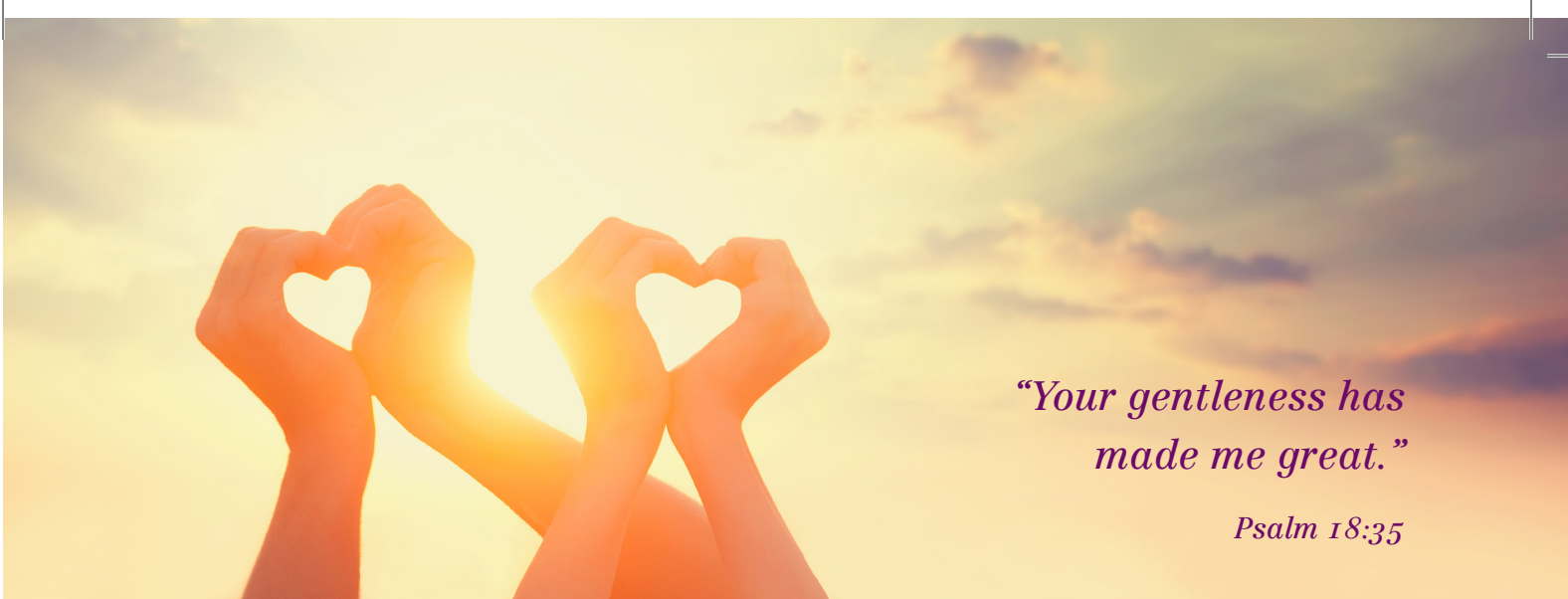
But behind the clatter and chatter of great achievements is the thin voice of small things, things often discarded as below notice.

The Christian church is also at times inclined to forget the small in behalf of the great. Yet Christ tries to bring us to a stop, divert us from the vanities of this world, and remind us, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40, NIV), or "If anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward" (Matthew 10:42, NIV).

Let God help us put emphasis on the small things of life, from which mighty works of faith can gradually grow and be greatly rewarded. ■

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*Alla Alekseenko is the Shepherdess coordinator for the Euro-Asia Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.*



*“Your gentleness has  
made me great.”*

*Psalm 18:35*

# *Gentle Strength*

WHAT THE STUDENT DID WAS ONE OF THE MIGHTIEST,  
MANLIEST SERMONS I’VE EVER SEEN.

THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY post office had just been mopped as I gingerly started across it to my post office box. Preparing to go and turn the little brass dial according to the directions and reach for some letters teasing from behind the small glass window, I noticed a young veteran just entering the building.

He had a pleasant face—handsome, if I may say so—and a muscular strength that defied his crutches and the stump that remained of one leg.

Though the floor had not yet dried, he advanced, maneuvering deftly through the glass doors.

I should have warned quickly, “This floor is wet!” But I didn’t. Maybe I was wondering whether it would make any difference. I had never walked on rubber-tipped crutches.

If there was any question, I soon knew the answer. It was the crutch on the side of the stump that slipped.

The veteran toppled—down onto the tender end of his stump. Hard.

On the floor he clutched at it and rocked back and forth, moaning. Once he looked up at me, and our eyes met.

What could I do? I shook my head dumbly, feeling sympathy such as I have never felt, then looked

away. (Does a strong man want pity? Or does humiliation vie with pain? Perhaps it would be better not to see.)

Just then a student entered the post office. The two men did not seem to be acquainted. Nevertheless, the student dropped his load of books and knelt beside the veteran. Gently putting his arm around the suffering man’s shoulders, he murmured words of sympathy and patted him as tenderly as I have ever seen a mother soothe her son.

They stayed there together until the pain lessened. When it did, one man bent his strength to help the other up and back onto his crutches.

I have seen sentimentality. I have seen polished courtesy. And I have seen weakness. What I saw that day in the post office was none of the above. It was the quality which David the psalmist spoke of when he observed, “Your gentleness has made me great” (Psalm 18:35, NKJV).

I left the building, still hurting with the wounded and sickened by what I had witnessed, but warmed too. I felt blessed by one of the mightiest, manliest, greatest sermons I have ever seen. ■

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*Ann Burke enjoys living in southern California, where the moon rises like a golden washtub over the hills, and pear trees blossom in winter with the first warm spell.*

## FROM THE FIELD

### *Euro-Asia Division*

More than 300 young people gathered in July for a congress of pastors' children sponsored by the Ukrainian Union Conference. The weekend included singing, prayer ministry, devotionals, and group discussion time. Special emphasis was placed on the development of talents and personal skills to be used in the Lord's service. The climax of the congress was a baptismal service held Friday night; eight precious souls made the decision to follow Jesus and commit their lives to Him.



Eight young people commit to follow Jesus in baptism during the congress of pastors' children.



Pastors' children release balloons into the air. Attached to each balloon is a Bible verse with a special message from Jesus.

### *Southern Asia Division*

Shepherdesses in the Gujarat Conference are actively sharing their faith with their neighbors and seeing amazing results! A pastor's wife in Madhya Pradesh has become well-known for her prayer life. Her Hindu neighbors asked her to pray for their missing buffalo, and when three of the buffalo came home safely, they decided to begin attending the Adventist church. They were impressed with the power of prayer.

Another story is told of a Shepherdess in Lavchali who offered special prayer for a woman who desperately wanted a child. Her husband had asked for a divorce because, after 10 years of marriage, they had not been able to have children. After six months of continuous prayer and faith, the woman became pregnant and has now delivered a baby girl. The family has been restored!



Shepherdesses in Lavchali visit and pray with neighbors.

### *East-Central Africa Division*

Central Kenya Conference ministerial leadership recently organized a weeklong congress for pastors' kids (PKs) of



Participants enjoy a workshop at the PK camp meeting in Nairobi, Kenya.



Twenty-eight PKs respond to a call for baptism at the PK camp meeting in Nairobi, Kenya.

all ages from across the central Kenya region. This unique camp meeting featured sermons and devotionals specific to PKs and lots of social time. By the end of the week, 28 participants gave their lives to Jesus; 21 of these were ready for baptism! Some who attended were inspired to form more PK associations across the country.

## South Africa-Indian Ocean Division

Shepherdesses in the Cape Conference of South Africa recently completed a women's ministries leadership training course. Instruction was given in communication skills, conditions of women in the Bible, effective public speaking, and more. This special program enables Shepherdesses to train, equip, and empower the women in their local churches for ministry. More training programs are planned for other regions as well.



Shepherdesses from the Cape Conference pose after completing a three-day women's ministries leadership training course.

## West-Central Africa Division



Eastern Nigeria Union Conference and Mission Shepherdess coordinators pose together at the 2016 Ministerial Advisory held in Aba, Nigeria. Meetings coincided with the Shepherdess annual prayer retreat in September.

## South American Division

Ministerial spouses enjoyed time together at AFAM councils throughout the South American Division, including in Brazil, Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Ecuador.



Pastors' wives from the Uruguay Union formed a prayer circle during their meetings in Montevideo, Uruguay, in June 2016.



Pastors' wives from the North Ecuador Mission gathered in Ibarra, Ecuador, this past July.



Pastors' wives from the South Ecuador Mission met in Guayaquil, Ecuador, this past July.



Pastors' wives from the South Ecuador Mission enjoyed fellowship and worship in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

## Dear Abigail,

*Recently I was talking to the wife of the retired pastor of the church where my husband is currently the pastor. As our conversation continued, the head deacon passed by and commented about how it had been so cold lately.*

*I exclaimed, "Oh my gosh, I know!"*

*Immediately, I was harshly reprimanded by the retired pastor's wife in front of several church members.*

*I agree that this wasn't the best choice of words for me to use, and I am working on that. But I am so upset! It was very embarrassing. And sadly, this wasn't the first time this woman has "lined me out," so this incident was the "icing on the cake" for me. I left immediately with good intentions to tell her how I really felt in an email.*

*But the next day as I sat at the computer to email her, I noticed that she had already sent me a very apologetic note indicating that she had a long way to go with her character. It was a nice gesture, but I'm wondering how to go forward now.*

Angry

## Dear Angry,

Whoever coined the phrase "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me" may have been a little off base. Words do hurt. And we can't take them back.

The Bible has much to say about our words. Ephesians 4:29 tells us, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (KJV). We all need to be more aware of how powerful our words can be to others.


It is perfectly understandable to have a visit with the wife of the retired pastor. Prayerfully ask God to give you wisdom as to how the conversation can be healing for both of you. It may be that she needs somebody to talk to, and that someone may be you! Rather than responding with anger, pray and ask God to give you an extra measure of love in your heart.

Many years ago a common acronym was WWJD (What Would Jesus Do?). While you may be tempted to give a response that is laced with anger or bitterness, it would be wise to pause and ask, "What would Jesus do?" We should always be mindful of others when we speak in an effort to curtail damaging effects.

The world is certainly lacking when it comes to kind words, or better yet kindness in general. There are hurting people all around us and especially in our congregations. I know that God will help you do your part in building others up as we pray this simple yet profound prayer: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3, KJV).

God is in the business of perfecting our characters; He wants us to depend totally upon Him for this beautiful transformation. Trust God to turn this bitter encounter into a blessed friendship.

Sincerely,  
Abigail



# PRAYING FOR EACH OTHER

*If you have a special prayer request, or you'd simply like some friends in ministry to pray for you, email [spouses@ministerialassociation.org](mailto:spouses@ministerialassociation.org). If requested, the prayer needs you share will be kept confidential, but all heaven promises to get involved!*

*Our Facebook page ([facebook.com/groups/ministerialspouses](https://facebook.com/groups/ministerialspouses)) has an active prayer session every Wednesday called "Wednesday's Prayer Circle."*

THIS QUARTER WE WILL FOCUS on praying for God to raise up workers in the world church divisions.

1. Pray for God to raise up medical missionaries to plant churches among the 830 people groups in the 11 countries of the East-Central Africa Division (ECD).
2. Pray for God to raise up young people to plant churches for the 750 people groups within the 13 countries of the Euro-Asia Division (ESD).
3. Pray for God to raise up urban missionaries to plant churches for the 806 people groups within the 20 countries of the Inter-European Division (EUD).
4. Pray for God to raise up an army of workers to plant churches for the 948 people groups within the 38 countries of the Inter-American Division (IAD).
5. Pray for God to raise up martyrs willing to work among the 746 people groups within the 20 countries of the Middle East and North Africa Union (MENA).
6. Pray for God to prepare volunteers to serve the 70 people groups within the Israel Field (IF).
7. Pray for God to prepare young professionals to plant churches for the 789 people groups within the 9 countries of the North American Division (NAD).
8. Pray for Adventist business leaders to witness to Christ's love through their businesses among the 691 people groups within the 8 countries of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD).
9. Ask God to open opportunities to train church planting missionaries for the 676 people groups within the 9 countries of the South American Division (SAD).
10. Pray for the 541 people groups within the 18 countries of the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID).
11. Pray for God to raise up youth to make disciples among the 1,459 people groups within the 20 countries of the South Pacific Division (SPD).
12. Pray for God to call retired teachers and educators to minister to the 2,566 people groups within the 14 countries of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD).
13. Pray for God to raise up prayer warriors to intercede in prayer for the 2,568 people groups within the 4 countries of the Southern Asia Division (SUD).
14. Pray for God to raise up intercessory prayer warriors to pray for the 893 people groups within the 25 countries of the Trans-European Division (TED).
15. Ask God to raise up nurses and doctors to plant new churches among the 1,978 people groups of the 22 countries in the West-Central Africa Division (WAD).



**THIRD QUARTER 2017**

## Day of Prayer and Fasting

**SABBATH, JULY 1**

### **The Battle Belongs to the Lord: Fighting for Our Hearts**

*“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”*

PROVERBS 4:23

**Revival**  
& REFORMATION

Visit [www.revivalandreformation.org](http://www.revivalandreformation.org)  
for quarterly prayer and fasting  
materials and additional resources.

*Save the Date: October 7 – Fourth Quarter 2017*