

# THE JOURNAL

A RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY SPOUSES

Vol. 35 | Issue Three 2018

## *Marie Spangler:*

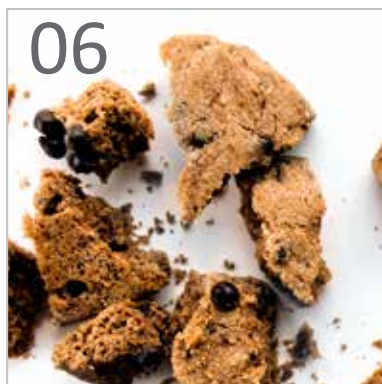
A VISIONARY FOR HER TIME





## ON THE COVER

During her lifetime as a pastoral spouse, Marie Spangler had seen it all: the joys, the challenges, and sometimes the loneliness of ministry life. Along the way she noticed that the needs of Adventist pastoral families had been largely overlooked. Read about how she launched our worldwide ministry to clergy spouses.



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Printed in the U.S.A.  
[ministerial.adventist.org/spouses](http://ministerial.adventist.org/spouses)

**PHOTO CREDITS:** dreamstime.com, freepik, unsplash.com



The Journal: A Shepherdess International Resource for Ministry Spouses is a quarterly publication produced by Shepherdess International, an entity of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Ministerial Association.

# SOMETHING WAS

## missing

SOMETHING WAS MISSING in our family worships. I wasn't sure what. We would read a Bible story and pray our requests again and again: "Dear God, please help Tyson to make an A in math. He really wants to have all As."

"Please help that older boy at school to quit picking on Zac."

"Please, Lord, we need a house."

"Please, God, something is wrong with our car."

"Please heal our friend."

"Please, God, do this and do that."

In Jesus' name, Amen."

When I later read some verses from Psalms, I realized what was missing!

*"We will not hide them from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done"* (Psalm 78:4, NKJV).

The problem was that we were forgetting to praise God for who He is and thank Him for what He has done and *is doing*.

Family worship began to change! We started leading our sons to give God thanks for everything—especially the stuff we usually take for granted—such as waking up in the morning, seeing, hearing, walking, a warm house, food, and arriving safely home each evening. We had so many gifts to praise Him for! We also began writing down our prayer requests and offering thanks when those requests were answered. Often, God surprised us by giving more than we asked for.

*"It is for our own benefit to keep every gift of God fresh in our memory. Thus faith is strengthened to claim and to receive more and more. There is greater encouragement for us in the least blessing we ourselves receive from God than in all the accounts we can read of the faith and experience of others."*

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 348

This was a life-changing experience for our sons. Focusing on praise and remembering God's answers and blessings through the years helped them know that He was real. They never doubted His existence! It also helped our sons to be grateful for what they had rather than wishing for more.


I learned another great idea from a family: to write answers to prayer or blessings received on index cards with the date. They kept the cards on the kitchen table in a bowl or basket. At meals, each family member would take a card, read it aloud, and thank God for the blessing.

I am convinced that the more our children see us praising God in all things,

the bigger an impact it will have on them. Lecturing your children about being thankful or telling them that they should be grateful doesn't work. I've found it actually has a negative impact on them. But when they see and feel your grateful spirit and the joy you have through your relationship with God, the Holy Spirit will work in their lives too. You may also find that the more you praise God, the more blessings He will pour out!

In Psalm 145 we are encouraged to proclaim, meditate, celebrate, and sing of His goodness. I started praying for God to show me how to do this. He did! And what a difference it made in our family! He will show you, too, when you ask Him.

*"Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—and I will meditate on your wonderful works. They tell of the power of your awesome works—and I will proclaim your great deeds. They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness"* (Psalm 145:3-7, NIV).

As God leads you—together with your spouse and children—in developing ways to praise and thank Him, please share those with me. I would love to include more ideas in *The Journal for Ministry Spouses*. 

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



# The Mysterious Phone Call

MY HUSBAND, ROBERT, AND I were happily married with two small children when Robert felt convicted to leave his excellent paying job to train for pastoral ministry. It was a call he had first felt as a schoolboy years earlier but had never followed. After four years of theology training, graduation was finally approaching, and we were excited to launch into full-time ministry. As it turned out, my husband's graduating class was so large that there were not enough ministry positions available for all the graduates. We had no future job on the horizon.

To make matters worse, the college administration let us know that as soon as graduation was over we needed to move out of student housing to accommodate another married couple coming in. Soon we would have no place to live!

The week before graduation I was driving our only car, a little red Cortina, up the long hill to the college when it suddenly caught on fire. I was unharmed, but our car was completely destroyed. Now we had no transportation. Our situation appeared more and more hopeless.

We prayed earnestly, "Lord, what do You want us to do? We need You to provide a way. We don't believe we've left the secular working world just to have to go back after You've provided this pastoral training. Please help us!"

By the evening of the following day we had the offer of two vehicles at our disposal for

an unlimited time. God provided transportation!

A week later, someone who had an empty house asked if we would be willing to stay there, rent free, just paying utilities, as the owner did not want the house to stand unoccupied. Our God provided a home!

While waiting for a position to open up in pastoral ministry, we accepted a difficult job called Harvest Ingathering. We went to businesses and solicited funds for projects such as Meals on Wheels for the aged, camps for the blind, and others. We received a very small percentage of what we collected, and this was our only income. There were no perks to this position at all, and with two young children in church school, we weren't sure how we would make it financially. But we kept praying. Soon an anonymous donor came forward and offered to pay our children's tuition so they could attend church school.

A few months after we started working with the Harvest Ingathering program, my husband became extremely ill. He could not work—thus, no money. We prayed and cried out to God to help us. During the second month of his illness, things were looking very bleak. It was then that a strange miracle happened.


One morning at 6:00 a.m., while it was still dark outside, the telephone rang and a voice that I did not recognize said, "Read Isaiah 58." Then the phone went dead. We were utterly bewildered. I went to the bedroom, picked up my husband's Bible, and turned to Isaiah 58. Robert

and I read it together, closed the Bible, and asked ourselves, "What could this possibly mean?"

The next day the same call and the same message came again. The third morning it happened again.

As we pondered why we were getting such a strange call each morning, my husband said, "Bring the large family Bible to the bedroom." We kept the large Bible we used for morning and evening worships on a low center table in the living room. Since my husband had been in bed with his illness, we had not been using this large Bible. I went to get the large Bible and placed it on the bed. Together, my husband and I turned to Isaiah 58, and to our utter astonishment we found a large number of 10-rand notes (South African currency) within the pages of Isaiah 58. This was enough money to take care of our immediate needs until we could return to soliciting funds for the needy projects.

What about the mysterious telephone calls? Never again did we hear that same voice with the same message. Was it an angel? Was it a deeply caring friend? We will never know for sure this side of eternity.

Several months after this incident, we received a call from the Southern Africa Union to go to Swaziland, which was considered a mission field in that union's territory. This was the beginning of nearly 40 years of pastoral ministry. These have been rich years—full of precious, direct interventions—years full of God caring for His children and ever standing at the back of His promises. Again and again we have seen that God hears and answers prayer. 

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*Esmé Ross is married to Pastor Robert Ross. They recently retired from the Triadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church in Clarksville, Maryland, and are now living in California. Both of their children serve the Lord in full-time ministry. This article originally appeared on the United in Prayer blog, February 25, 2018, at [www.revivalandreformation.org](http://www.revivalandreformation.org).*

# WHEN JESUS SAVED THE CRUMBS



## JESUS WAS A FRUGAL GUY.

How do I know? I think His crumb-saving creds were most clearly demonstrated in the feeding of the 5,000. The story is recorded in Matthew 14, Mark 6, and John 6.

In summary, a huge mass of people numbering 5,000 men, plus women and children, thronged to hear Him speak. It was growing late, and everyone was getting hungry, but instead of sending the people away to get their own food, Jesus asked His disciples to feed them. They found a boy with five barley loaves and two small fishes who was willing to surrender his lunch. Jesus proceeded to bless the food and then multiplied it until everyone in the whole crowd had eaten their fill. Then He told His disciples to “gather up the fragments.” They ended up with 12 basketfuls of leftovers for people to take home! Talk about saving the crumbs!

Let’s have a look at the practical life lessons on frugal living that we can learn from this story.

## GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS: DON’T WASTE!

This is perhaps the most on-the-nose lesson we can gather from this story. Jesus told the disciples to gather up the leftovers after everyone had eaten. They were sitting out on the hillside, where it probably wouldn’t have been a big deal if they had just left their crumbs to biodegrade into the landscape. But Jesus insisted that they not let the resources go to waste!

I fear that this attitude of resourcefulness has been lost in our generation, which causes much of our financial trouble. We have become a wasteful society, where everything is “disposable” or “one-use.”

- We idle our gas-guzzling SUV in the driveway. We say, “No big deal.”
- We throw away a perfectly good half plate of food we just paid \$15 for. We reason, “It didn’t taste good anyway.”
- We chuck the one-year-old smartphone—a supercomputer that has more computing power than the first spacecraft that flew to the moon—into a dusty drawer when the latest iPhones come out. We justify by saying, “It’s a slow piece of junk now!”

And yet we often complain about how difficult life is, how we never have enough money, how it’s impossible to have enough and get ahead. Maybe we should start by stopping the explosion of waste in our own lives and start gathering up the fragments as Jesus instructed. Or, as we like to say, start saving the crumbs!

*“Many despise economy, confounding it with stinginess and narrowness. But economy is consistent with the broadest liberality. Indeed, without economy, there can be no true liberality. We are to save, that we may give.”*

#### **ABUNDANCE IS NO EXCUSE**

Sometimes we hear the reasoning that it's OK for us to splurge and be extravagant because we have an abundance.

- Why is it such a big deal for me to idle my gas-guzzler or have a couple extra cars sitting around when I earn a big income?
- What's the big deal in wasting a little restaurant food when it barely dents my budget?
- Why shouldn't I upgrade my smartphone every year if I can afford it?

Well, for one thing, Jesus didn't produce a 10-course gourmet feast for the masses even though He could have. He provided simple but healthful fare for the multitude. Jesus provided their necessities but didn't cater to extravagance.

Here's something else amazing about this story: Jesus basically created food out of thin air. He did not need to save the resources by gathering up the leftovers. In fact, it probably would have been simpler if He had just created more food instead of having the disciples gather stuff up. Moreover, why did He create more than enough anyway? Couldn't He have multiplied just enough for everyone to get full and no more? Wouldn't that have been the least wasteful option?

Clearly, He was trying to teach a lesson.

Jesus, who could have created as much food as needed on demand, the One who had limitless abundance, still wanted the leftovers gathered. He was modeling the attitude we ought to have toward our resources—which all come from Him anyway. He was saying that if we have an abundance, we still have no excuse for waste! And that leads to the question of “Why?”

#### **ECONOMY IS NOT STINGY WHEN IT'S TO BENEFIT OTHERS**

Jesus was not saving up simply to hoard meaninglessly. He had the leftovers gathered up so people could take them home to share with family and friends. The leftovers provided a tangible conversation starter so people could tell what they had learned from Christ that day.

“Hey, you wouldn't believe what happened today!”

“What?”

“You see this bread I brought for you? Jesus multiplied enough for the whole crowd of thousands from just a little boy's lunch!”

“Get outta here! Tell me, what else did He say?”

“Let's talk while we eat . . .”

What a brilliant strategy. Everybody won. Who doesn't like free food? And Jesus' message got massive word-of-mouth exposure, even after everyone went home.





Jesus wasn't teaching that economy is good simply for economy's sake. He wasn't teaching us to be stingy. He was illustrating that the frugal choices that enable us to share with others result in multiplied blessings. His example answers the question of "Why save?" The answer is "To give!"

The book *The Ministry of Healing* says this about Jesus' method: "Many despise economy, confounding it with stinginess and narrowness. But economy is consistent with the broadest liberality. Indeed, without economy, there can be no true liberality. We are to save, that we may give" (p. 206).

### USE WHAT YOU HAVE


On the flip side of the equation, I know many people really are strapped economically and just don't have any extra to save. They're not wasteful, but they're still struggling. I think this story has a lesson for those people too.

Jesus could have sent ravens to feed everyone as He did for Elijah. He could have rained manna from the sky as He did during the Exodus. He could have done any number of things that didn't involve His disciples or the little boy's lunch. But He didn't. He insisted the disciples investigate what resources they had at their disposal, and then Christ cooperated with them and multiplied their feeble offering.

The lesson that Christ taught wasn't primarily that He will supply all our needs (although that's part of it). The principal lesson is this: we must look at what we have in our hands, bring *that* to Jesus, and then He will multiply it. It is the lesson of our taking the initiative to cooperate with divine power.

For those of us who might be struggling with debt, joblessness, huge bills, or some other financial emergency, the lesson here is applicable to us. We take a look at what we have—maybe it's just a little bit of cash, maybe it's a free afternoon once a week, or maybe it's some stuff that can be sold—and we bring it to Jesus, do what we can, and ask Him to bless us. I believe He *can* and that He *will*!

### HE CAN DO IT AGAIN

Jesus is still in the business of multiplying loaves and fishes, and He still wants us to have the attitude of gathering up the fragments. Wherever you find yourself in your financial journey, may you cooperate with Him! 

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*Alistair Huang operates AudioVerse, a nonprofit ministry that offers sermons, videos, and other powerful spiritual resources for listeners. This post was originally published August 28, 2016, on his personal finance blog: [savingthecrumbs.com](http://savingthecrumbs.com).*

# TIPS TO ~~SURVIVE~~ THRIVE

IT'S FRIDAY. SABBATH IS COMING, and the house needs to be cleaned! Doing it all in one day can be overwhelming and stressful if you're racing the clock to finish before sundown. Why not make it easier by splitting your home into sections and cleaning some areas earlier in the week?

Usually, some parts of a home get less use than others and could be cleaned ahead of time (a guest room, a guest bathroom, etc). These rooms could be cleaned on Monday and likely kept clean all week. Other spaces, such as your kitchen, are used multiple times a day and need to be cleaned on Friday just before Sabbath.

Consider splitting your home into five or six sections and cleaning one section each day, based on its use and visibility. If you often host people on Sabbaths, clean the most visible spaces—such as the kitchen, dining room, and living room—on Thursday and Friday. Rooms such as your bedroom can be cleaned earlier in the week. Using this method, the whole house will be cleaned at some point each week.

You could do all your Sabbath preparation this way. For example, wash and iron your Sabbath clothes on Monday and polish your shoes on Tuesday. Plan your Sabbath menu, buy groceries, and plan any Sabbath afternoon activities on Wednesday. Finish house cleaning and food preparation on Thursday and Friday.

Find a system that works for you to make your Friday a lot more enjoyable!

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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

"Money is a needed treasure; let it not be lavished on those who do not need it. Someone needs your willing gifts. Too often those who have means fail to consider how many in the world are hungry, starving for food. They may say, 'I cannot feed them all.' But by practicing Christ's lessons on economy you can feed one. It may be that you can feed many who are hungering for temporal food. And you can feed their souls with the bread of life. 'Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.' These words were spoken by Him who had all the resources of the universe at His command; by His miracle-working power He supplied thousands with food, but He did not disdain to teach a lesson in economy."

—*Medical Ministry*, p. 176

"The special system of tithing was founded upon a principle which is as enduring as the law of God. This system of tithing was a blessing to the Jews, else God would not have given it them. So also will it be a blessing to those who carry it out to the end of time. Our heavenly Father did not originate the plan of systematic benevolence to enrich Himself, but to be a great blessing to man. He saw that this system of beneficence was just what man needed."

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 404, 405

"But the hearts of men become hardened through selfishness, and, like Ananias and Sapphira, they are tempted to withhold part of the price, while pretending to fulfill God's requirements. Many spend money lavishly in self-gratification. Men and women consult their pleasure and gratify their taste, while they bring to God, almost unwillingly, a stinted offering. They forget that God will one day demand a strict account of how His goods have been used, and that He will no more accept the pittance they hand into the treasury than He accepted the offering of Ananias and Sapphira."

—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 75



# *He Uses Me, and I Am Thrilled*

I WAS BORN A FOURTH-GENERATION Seventh-day Adventist into a loving and godly home. My parents have served as lay members all my life (my dad as an elder or head elder, and my mom as a deaconess or head deaconess). Our home was always open to visitors, and it was the “safe haven” for the pastoral family. I can still hear my mom’s voice saying, “Whenever the doors of the church are open, we are to be there.” “Being there” meant a range of events such as work bees, socials, prayer meetings, and Sabbath School—always arriving 30 minutes early, being involved, and being the last to leave. My parents’ service for the Lord inspired me to have a heart for service as well.

As a teenager my official volunteer church jobs were church clerk and bulletin editor. Eventually, I became a kindergarten Sabbath School leader, an Adventurer director, and a Vacation Bible School director. Give me a hundred kids, and I will be excited and can develop a program quickly. However, if you give me a handful of adults, I’ll be scared to death and ready to crawl

under a table. God is stretching me in that area, though, and I praise Him for His ability to take people like me and mold and gift us with just the right capabilities.

My husband, Darryl, and I met in ninth-grade civics class. Darryl tells everyone that he “discovered” me, but I already had my eye on him. The way he articulated his answers in class just amazed me. He was blessed with a brilliant mind and the gift to explain things in a way that anyone can understand. He was my answer to prayer. My grade school teacher had encouraged me to start praying for my future husband, so I did, and God blessed me with Darryl. Two years after high school we were married.

Seven years into our marriage, a call to ministry was placed on my husband’s heart. I wish I could say that I started packing for us to move to college, but I did not. I was pregnant with our third child and just could not see moving before our baby was born.

*“Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.”*

This began my “adult” faith journey. In the summer of 2003, God sold our home, and off to Southern Adventist University we went with our 10-month-old, and 2- and 3-year-old babies.

By the end of our first month we already had run out of money. Rent and the electric bill were due, and we needed food and diapers. Darryl went to class that day and encouraged me to pray. I was ready to pack and move back to our family in North Carolina.

Instead, however, I prayed throughout the day. I prayed and read Scripture. Then I came across a promise that I still claim today: “Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life” (Matthew 19:29, NKJV).

That evening when my husband came home, I met him at the door; he was holding the mail and had tears in his eyes. In the mail was a check from the government. This unexpected check covered all the bills, food, and other needed items. God gave me a miracle that day and showed Himself to me. He was going to take care of us.

God continues to provide for me, and not just financially. He hears my prayers and answers them. Throughout the past nine years I have had an amazing journey with my Lord as my husband and I have served in pastoral ministry. He awakens me to spend time with Him early every

morning. As I read His Word, He shares ideas with me for children’s programs and seminars.

My favorite thing in ministry is being part of someone’s life as they totally surrender to God. Seeing the change in others gives me hope as I see Satan working overtime in my own family.

God is so good to me, and I am falling deeper and deeper in love with Him every day. **J**

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***Ginger Bentley** is a pastor’s wife from the Midwest. This article originally appeared in the March/April 2017 issue of The Shepherdess Voice, the official newsletter for ministry wives in the Michigan Conference.*

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# WHEN LESS IS MORE

## WHY I GOT RID OF A LOT OF MY “STUFF”

“MINIMALISM” IS GETTING a lot of attention these days, and one of my personal resolutions is to lead a more minimalistic lifestyle. I intentionally strive to live simply, because I believe that owning less makes life feel purposeful.

I feel such satisfaction when I finally let go of something that is just taking up space—something I haven’t used in years or may not have liked in the first place! I owned a few items that held a certain sentimental value, but I was even able to rationally say goodbye to some of them. Some of my best years were when I could fit everything I needed into two suitcases.

Don’t worry; I’m not telling anyone to get rid of their sentimental items; this is my personal choice, and it’s a continuing process. But here’s why I think that less is more:

### **SAVE MONEY**

If you are content with your needs, then nothing is compelling you to buy as much as your credit card or bank account will allow.

### **SAVE TIME**

When you have less “stuff,” you tend to have more time. Think it through: Fewer dishes = less dishwashing. Less decor = less dusting (and less clutter). Fewer clothes = less laundry (not to mention less time deciding what to wear in the morning).

Basically, you’ll have more time to do what you enjoy (or more time to be productive!).

### **HAVE QUALITY ITEMS**

Since you will have fewer expenses and fewer things to buy, you should buy items that will stand the test of time—items that won’t break after just a few uses. Bonus: your possessions will also have more meaning to you personally, because you actually use and love them and took the time to choose well!



### **LESS CLUTTER TO OCCUPY YOUR SPACE AND YOUR MIND**

When my surroundings are a mess, I find that my thoughts are too. I can't be as creative, and I can't easily stay on task. Your surroundings often reflect your state of mind.

### **PACK LESS, TRAVEL MORE**

More money to spend on travel, less to put into your suitcase. (Say goodbye to overweight fees at the airport!)

### **ADD VALUE TO YOUR LIFE**

Decluttering and simplifying is really just getting rid of anything that does not add value or joy to your life. I have experienced it myself: when I let go of items that are just "things," I feel free of dead weight. Material things are not bad, and neither is having a certain sentimental attachment to some of them. But I strive to store treasures in heaven (see Matthew 6:19-21).

Consider getting rid of useless and meaningless possessions. You'll declutter not only your surroundings but also your mind—and you'll have more room for God and His Holy Spirit. 7

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***Amanda Walter** is a teacher and happily married to her pastor-husband, Jonathan. They serve on Western Michigan's lakeshore. This article is from Amanda's website: [www.maplealps.com](http://www.maplealps.com).*



# WHAT WILL I DO WITH “THIS”?



MELISSA DOHME REMEMBERS how she felt that dark night as she walked out of her house to meet her former boyfriend. She thought the darkness seemed a bit eerie, and she felt apprehensive.

She and Robert Burton had been friends for some time before it turned into a relationship. Robert came from a troubled, dysfunctional family background. As time passed it became apparent that he felt seriously threatened and jealous over Melissa's decision to pursue a degree in nursing. He became verbally demanding and then physically abusive. After one malicious attack, Melissa made the decision to end the relationship in spite of his threats to kill her if she did.

After three months of separation, Robert began contacting Melissa repeatedly by phone, begging her to meet him one last time for a farewell hug and final closure to their relationship. Initially she refused, but he persisted with begging and tears. She finally agreed only because he promised to leave her alone permanently if she would meet with him one final time.

What happened at that meeting was horrific. Robert stabbed Melissa 32 times and left her for dead outside her home. A passerby happened to witness the last moments of the stabbing and called 911.

Melissa suffered multiple stab wounds to her face and arms and lost a large quantity of blood. She was still conscious and able to speak to the young emergency rescue officer who soon arrived on the scene. As the rescue officer quickly evaluated her blood-covered form, he was amazed that she was still conscious. The desperate look in her eyes and cries of "Help me; I'm dying!" have haunted him.

Only when being loaded onto a transport helicopter did Melissa allowed herself to drift into unconsciousness. She was flown to a hospital trauma center and placed on life support. Shortly after that she suffered a stroke as a result of the significant blood loss. The surgeon and medical staff did not expect Melissa to survive.

*When you forgive, you in no way change the past, but you sure do change the Future. —Bernard Meltzer*

#### **LIFE CAN KNOCK US DOWN.**

No one, not even the luckiest of us, escapes some of life's hits. Injustice, sickness, accident, loss, and major change are just a few of the hard blows that can occur at any time. Thankfully, most of us will never experience an event as traumatic as did Melissa; nevertheless, dealing with threatening circumstances can be a challenging task. There is no guarantee against misfortune—whether minor or life-changing. It's how we adapt to and use these events that makes a difference to our quality of survival, overall health, and potential for helpfulness to others.

#### **BEWARE OF EMOTIONAL PITFALLS.**

Whenever something bad happens to us, care should be taken to avoid engaging in some of the more negative, unhealthy responses, such as:



- **Self-victimizing talk:** "Why me?" "Bad things always happen to me." "This is so unfair!"
- **Self-depreciating comments:** "It's all my fault." "I'm always making dumb mistakes." "I should have seen this coming."

- **Anger and blame:** We let frustration overwhelm us and lash out at the incident, blaming and accusing others.
- **Dejection and depression:** If we don't manage our emotions well, we can feel defeated by life, lose hope, and sink into despair.

#### **KNOW YOU HAVE A CHOICE.**

While we cannot always control what happens to us, we can choose our reactions. Roadblocks and obstacles can become growing experiences.

Melissa had a long road to complete emotional and physical healing. Although not without moments of discouragement and days of hard work with various therapies, she consistently demonstrated a strong will to survive. She also engaged in the following helpful strategies:

1. **Realize you are not alone:** No matter what the incident, the support of friends and family is essential. There is healing in knowing that you are loved, that you are valued, and that help is available.
2. **Release frustrations:** Whatever the incident, you can be sure someone else has gone through much the same experience and can understand the frustrations and discouragements involved in recovery. In Melissa's case, the hospital engaged a woman who had also survived a devastating domestic attack. It was she who provided the most helpful, ongoing emotional support and encouragement to Melissa, such as when she first looked at herself in the mirror and with shock gazed at her damaged and changed face.
3. **Choose to be objective:** We can take responsibility for the feelings that result from an incident. Step away from purely emotional reactions and look at the situation objectively. In most cases the incident was just that—an incident. Evaluate the causes, the



## What Will I Do With “This”?

results, and the lessons learned; then set some goals. Melissa refused to be a passive recipient of injustice. In the court trial that eventually occurred, she looked Robert in the face and told him she realized he had intended to end her life, and for that he should be imprisoned. This was an empowering moment for her.



4. **Set goals:** It's important to evaluate the incident and make some plans and set goals in order to normalize life again and move on into the future. Melissa was initially told she would likely never walk again. She worked hard at her physical therapy sessions and learned not only to walk again on her own, but she also was able to walk across the platform that year at her graduation ceremony.


5. **Choose to forgive:** In the event that a wrong was committed against you, forgiveness does not turn that wrong into a right. It is instead the choice to give ourselves permission to release the hurt and pain. Since we have been freely forgiven by our Creator, we, out of thankfulness and compassion, ought to forgive others. During the final court hearing involving Melissa, she further addressed Robert, saying she forgave him and was letting go of the hatred and negative emotions against him, choosing to live her future life in peace and joy.

6. **Don't forget gratitude:** It is an inspiring example that Melissa, out of gratitude, eventually returned to thank all those who were involved in saving her life: the police officer who first arrived on the scene, the emergency rescue team, the surgeon who repaired all her injuries, the nursing staff, and others. Gratitude can greatly help in recovery from a traumatic event, making the experience less intrusive and corrosive. Choosing to focus on things for which we can be thankful makes life happier and healthier. "No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18, TLB).

### WHAT WILL I DO WITH “THIS”?

Melissa is convinced she is alive today because God saved her. She believes she is called to educate young women about domestic abuse and violence. She is also using her voice to speak for those who are afraid to speak, and for others for whom it is too late.

Along with choosing how to react in adverse situations, let's also consider how we can benefit ourselves and others by what we have learned and overcome. In considering the very question of how we can use “this” for good, we are already beginning to change an unpleasant event into something of benefit and blessing.

Read Melissa's incredible story on <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/48-hours-live-to-tell-one-last-hug/>. 

### INFORMATION SOURCES:

- Amy Newmark and Deborah Norville, *Chicken Soup for the Soul: The Power of Gratitude: 101 Stories About How Being Thankful Can Change Your Life* (Cos Cob, Conn.: Chicken Soup for the Soul, LLC, 2016), pp. 1-5.
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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.

# NO MONEY? NO PROBLEM!

TRY THESE FUN, INEXPENSIVE ACTIVITIES WITH KIDS



1. Indoor scavenger hunt. (Example clue: I have legs, and you can put things on me. Answer: A table.)
2. Outdoor scavenger hunt. (Send them to destinations such as the mailbox, a shed, etc.)



3. Do creative crafts. You can use glue to create decorative framed art, a candleholder, etc. You can also decorate a t-shirt or canvas bag. Websites such as Pinterest have great ideas.



4. Go to a museum.
5. Spend time at a park playing on the swings and slides. Kids need to spend time outdoors.



6. Roast marshmallows to make s'mores, or make some other treat over the fire.
7. Do Bible story charades. Let the children use things around the house to create the story. Bonus: you'll find out what your kids know about the Bible.



8. Play board games.
9. Make cards to send to older people or someone who is sick.
10. Play flashlight tag at night.



11. Color in coloring books. As you spend time coloring with kids, they might talk and share what is happening in their lives.



12. Make cookies to share with church members and neighbors. Tie a scripture card to each package.
13. Read a Bible story for worship. Try changing details to see if the children are paying attention.
14. Fill a big bag with various items and let the kids choose one at a time. Then tell a Bible story related to the item (such as a stuffed animal, stick, or rock).



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**Shelly Lowe** is senior editorial assistant for The Journal. She enjoys spending time with her niece and nephew, who inspired these ideas.

# Marie Spangler:

## A VISIONARY FOR HER TIME

MARIE SPANGLER WAS THE visionary who gave birth to what we know today as the Ministry to Clergy Spouses.

Marie Spangler was born Marie Claytor on December 17, 1920, in Newport News, Virginia. The third of four girls, Marie grew up surrounded by relics of early American history and the beauty of Virginia's abundant wildlife. Marie's mother became a Seventh-day Adventist as an adult after marrying Marie's father, who lived his life as a devout Methodist.

Times were hard in that era of American history, which meant finances were limited. Only one of the girls was able to attend a private Adventist school. Marie went to the local high school, eventually graduating as salutatorian of her class. Wanting to stay close to home, she enrolled at Columbia Union College (renamed Washington Adventist University in 2009) in Takoma Park, Maryland. It was there that she met her future husband, Bob Spangler.

Bob was a college theology major looking for someone to date. As he stood on the girls' dorm steps talking with a female friend, Marie passed by on her way to worship. Bob's friend suggested, "There's a really nice lady, Marie Claytor." Pulling up to his full six-foot-three height, he moaned, "Oh no, she's too short!" Marie was a demure five foot three. Her petite frame, however, didn't seem to deter him! The attraction was instant, and he asked her out. They married June 1, 1943.

In a 1984 interview with *Ministry Magazine*, Marie shared a brief sketch of their life together in ministry:

"My husband and I entered the ministry 41 years ago, right after we graduated from college, where I majored in English and secretarial science. We enjoyed a team ministry in the pastorate and in evangelism until he was called to the Far Eastern Division as Ministerial Association secretary.



“During the eight years we were there I taught at Far Eastern Academy and did secretarial work in the division office. When my husband was called to our world headquarters, I was asked to teach elementary school. After helping with the development of our church’s elementary school science textbooks and later being employed as an executive secretary in the General Conference, I attended the University of Maryland, where I obtained a Master’s degree in early childhood education. While teaching I also worked with the Shepherdess section of *Ministry*.”<sup>1</sup>

During this time—through her and Bob’s interaction with ministers’ wives at seminars, retreats, and camp meetings—Marie began to recognize that ministry spouses “have real needs that for the most part have been overlooked.”<sup>2</sup> She cited a study of Seventh-day Adventist pastors’ wives where it was “discovered that they have a sense of isolation from, and an absence of, meaningful human relationships” (see *Ministry*, June 1981) because they move so frequently.

In 1983 Marie left her lucrative teaching position in order to devote more time to helping the wives of pastors. She launched a pilot organization specifically for pastors’ spouses. She was tireless as she persevered through the steps to bring the ministry to fruition. This included writing the constitution and bylaws and consistently bringing forth the manuscripts to countless committees for approval and passage. While Marie was about the business tasks of birthing the ministry, she consistently traveled with her husband, teaching seminars, counseling, and listening to and praying with and for these unique women who many times serve silently. Marie devoted the rest of her life to supporting ministry wives around the world. She was passionate about her calling and inspired those who followed to try to fill those tiny shoes that left a giant impact.


According to Marie, Shepherdess had six main goals that needed immediate addressing: (1) Training through continuing education courses for the pastor’s wife as well as courses for pastors and wives to study together. (2) Resource materials directed at the establishment and maintenance of good relationships within the pastoral marriage. (3) The development of materials dealing with the role of the pastor’s wife. (4) Materials for the encouraging of team

ministry where husband and wife can cooperate together in saving souls. (5) The fostering of Shepherdess organizations on the local level that will provide support for the wives of ministers in their fields. Suggestions and materials were provided to these local groups. (6) Above all, the most important objective was to encourage wives to take time for personal growth.<sup>3</sup>

Marie wanted to help men at all levels of church leadership to understand the importance of the personal and public role that pastors’ wives play. She especially promoted the idea of team ministry, feeling that pastors’ wives had a tremendous “untapped reservoir of talent” to offer.

Through Marie Spangler’s visionary influence the regional Shepherdess organizations, newsletters, and the quarterly *Shepherdess Magazine* (now *The Journal: A Resource for Ministry Spouses*) became a reality. Marie accomplished the goals she set out to achieve and left a legacy for other international Shepherdess coordinators to follow.

Remembered worldwide as “Sweet Marie” for her ready smile and friendly spirit, Marie established her place in history as a woman who truly cared for the minister’s spouse; she saw a need and sought to make a difference.

Marie Spangler died March 26, 2017, at the age of 96. 

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<sup>1</sup> *Ministry Magazine*, September 1984.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

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**Beth Thomas with Sharon Cress.** *Beth Thomas is a freelance writer living in Maryland with her husband and two children. She is a contributing editor for The Journal. Sharon Cress is a retired pastor living in Virginia. She worked 43 years in ministry, most of it in ministerial administration. She served 18 years as the General Conference associate ministerial secretary for ministry spouses. She has fond memories of her friendship with Marie.*



# Raising Contentment

TODAY WE'RE BOMBARDED with messages telling us that we need to buy newer, better, and more perfect things. These messages leave us unhappy with our looks, our clothes, our home, our car, and everything we own.

Jesus taught us not to worry about all these things because God knows our needs (Matthew 6:28, 29). As a missionary, Paul faced hardships and lived without many things, but he learned to be content in all circumstances. Philippians 4 contains some of his secrets for peace: gratitude for what he had;

asking God for what he needed; experiencing the peace of God in his heart; and focusing on the positive things around him. These values can help our families find joy in a society that continually whines for more.

## MODEL CONTENTMENT

We need to reflect prayerfully on our own attitudes if we want to develop anti-materialistic attitudes in our children. So, how contented am I with my car, home, furniture, clothes, technological devices, and even my appearance? Do I believe that everything I have has to be just perfect, or have I learned the joy of "good enough"?

And how am I verbalizing my contentment to my children? We can talk intentionally about our blessings, peace, and joy. We can express gratitude for what we have. We can limit our own purchases and take care of our possessions. We can teach our children how to “make do and mend” in creative ways and share our own delight in giving things away to make others happy.

### **ANTI-WANTING**

Advertising creates a desire for things we never knew we “needed.” Describe advertising to your children as a sneaky little thief who is trying to steal their money and their peace of mind. Help children to spot some of advertising’s nasty little tricks.

When your school-age child wants something very badly, try the anti-wanting debate. Pretend that you are your child, and have your child pretend to be you. You present the case for buying the object, and they have to come up with 5 to 10 reasons, depending on their age, for why it’s not worth buying.

When children want something new, encourage them to write it on a wish list with today’s date, and then see if they still want it in a month. Help them to develop delayed gratification by earning money and saving up for bigger items. This is an important life skill that will protect them from getting into debt later.

### **ENOUGH**

Most of us have enough in our homes already. When tempted to buy something new, be creative and wonder if you already have something you could adapt, repaint, renovate, or reuse. Choose simple, timeless decorating styles, and add color or accessories with budget-friendly items. Challenge your children to have fun making a spaceship out of an appliance box or to find new ways to play with old toys. Explore the Internet for free printable Lego challenge cards, which help children to use this versatile toy in fresh and creative ways.

### **BUYING AFFECTS THE WORLD**

Encourage your child to care for the environment. Most toys are made from plastics and synthetic materials from nonrenewable sources. Encourage older children to explore the environmental effect of using disposable plastics. Learn about fair trade and choose to buy items that show care for the workers who made them and for the creatures and beautiful world God created.

### **BETTER SPENDING**

If children have pocket money to spend, take them to thrift stores and yard sales. Teach them to save money by choosing good, pre-loved toys and clothes. It can be loads of fun discovering interesting toys that you can’t buy in stores today. Show them how to check secondhand items to make sure that all the pieces are there and nothing is broken. Being willing to buy pre-loved items and knowing how to do it wisely and well could save them thousands of dollars in the future.





### ENCOURAGE GENEROSITY

Work together as a family to raise money for a caring project. Try to find a project your children can be actively involved with and where they can see the difference that their generosity makes to others. Provide them the opportunity to give some of their own savings to the project.

Linda's family has decided not to buy anything new unless they can afford to buy two. They wait for half-price sales and two-for-one deals so they can give away the second item or an equivalent-value gift voucher. "We now spend much less, we choose more carefully, and we're more generous," Linda says. "It has changed the way our children think about buying and giving."

When you go to a store with children, give them some money to buy food for a food bank or a gift for a homeless child instead of buying something for themselves.

Celebrate your birthday by taking your children with you to do 10 acts of kindness in the community, and encourage them to do the same on their birthdays. Planning acts of generosity can help to focus your child on the needs of others at a time when they might otherwise be focused on their own wants.

### MAKE GIVING FUN

Researchers have discovered that the happiest people are not those who have the most but those who regularly give things away. Help your children to experience the joy of giving by showing them how to make simple gifts. Download printable playdough playmats, laminate them, and make little pots of colored dough to share with friends. Bake bread and cookies together, decorate planters, grow bulbs, then share them with neighbors and friends. Learn how to make a giant-bubble mixture and wands using dowels, string, screw eyes, and washers (<https://happyhooligans.ca/homemade-giant-bubbles/>) and share with others at the park. Or make kindness rocks by painting smooth garden stones and decorating them with encouraging messages, Bible verses, and cheerful designs. Brush a layer of clear sealant over each rock to protect the design. Have fun leaving the rocks where they will bring joy. (See [www.thekindnessrock-project.com/home](http://www.thekindnessrock-project.com/home) for more information and project guides.)

It's challenging to help your children swim against the tide of materialism, but they'll develop positive Christian values for a lifetime of contentment and joy. **J**

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**Karen Holford** is director of Family Ministries for the Trans-European Division.

# Stuff!

DO YOU EVER FEEL LIKE you have too much stuff? Toys that get all over your floor and clothes that burst out of your closet? You could get a home with a bigger bedroom or bigger closets—but you'd probably still have too much stuff.

Selfishness leads to wanting more and more stuff, which hurts our world, our families, and ourselves. God has a better plan: unselfish generosity, kindness to others, and being more creative and contented with the things we already have.

## MORE-STUFF AND LESS-STUFF MAPS

Make a “more-stuff map.” Draw yourself in the middle of the page. Imagine that you want to get lots of things. In the four corners of the paper, draw pictures of people who suffer when we use up the world’s resources. You might include the factory workers who receive low wages for making your things, needy families who have little to eat or wear, your parents who work hard to earn money for your home and toys, your brothers and sisters who need things too, and others. Draw arrows from yourself to the other people and write down how getting too much stuff for yourself can hurt others.

Now make a “less-stuff map” and do the same again. This time draw and write how the other people benefit when you choose to get less stuff. Consider how your unselfishness can benefit the world, your family, and yourself.

## “THANK YOU” PRAYER WALK

Walk around your home with your family. Thank God for at least 20 things that you are grateful for in each room. Then draw a large outline of your home and write on it some things you’re thankful for in each room. Have lots of stuff? Choose one room at a time and thank God for every single thing in the room. If you don’t feel very thankful for something, perhaps it’s time to give it away!





Stuff!

## BAD ATTITUDES AND BIGGER BARN!

Jesus told a parable about a man who wanted more stuff. Instead of sharing with others and feeding the hungry, he just kept building bigger barns because he wanted to keep everything for himself. Read his story in Luke 12:16-21.

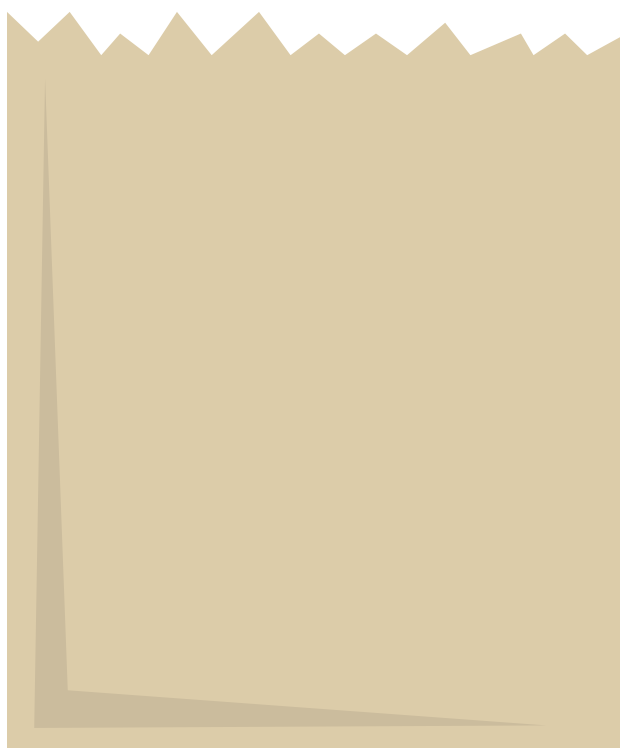
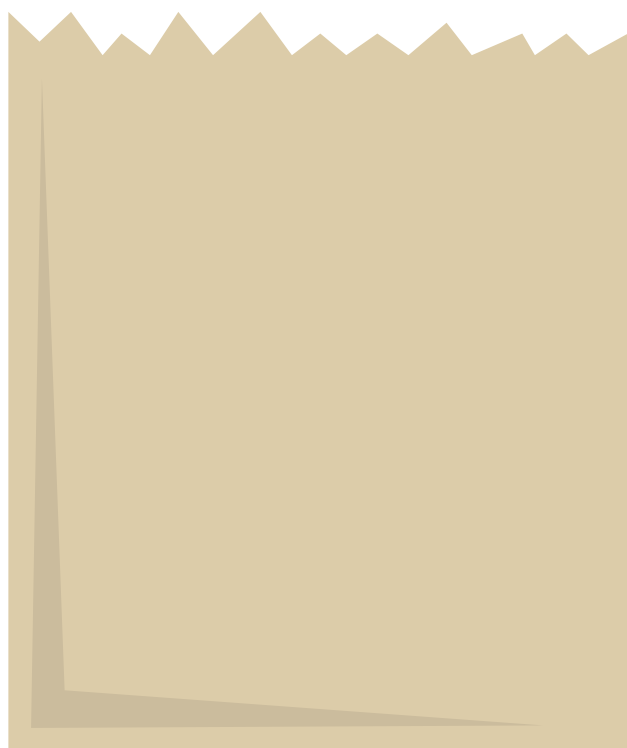
Find a sheet of paper and draw a cartoon version of this story. Then imagine that the farmer is kind and generous instead and draw a different ending to his story. Show both stories to your family and talk about it. What's the most important message



for you and your family in the parable of the bigger barns? What does Jesus want us to do instead? (See Matthew 6:25-34; 25:31-40.)

## TWO GROCERY BAGS

I knew a girl who lived in a country where her family needed to move around and hide to stay safe. She told me that she could only own what she could carry in two grocery bags. Every time they moved she had to give the rest away or leave it behind. Think about everything you own. If you could have only what you could carry in two grocery bags, what would you keep? Draw or write your list in the bags below. Talk about this with your family. How much do you really need? What would be harder if you had less stuff? And what would be easier?





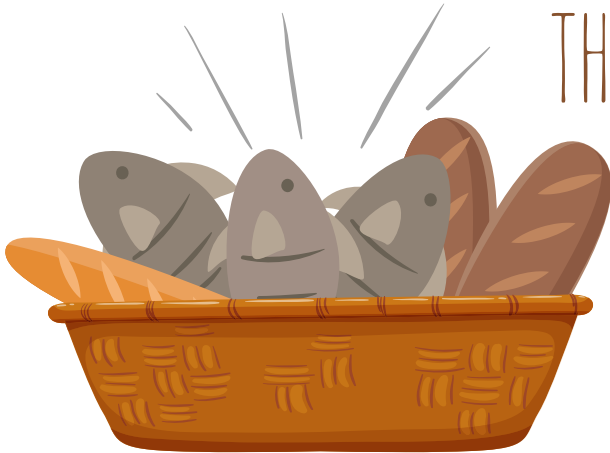
# UNUSUAL GIFTS!

The more content we are with what we have, the more generous we can be with others. What's the most unusual gift you ever received?

Write it here: \_\_\_\_\_

People in the Bible sometimes gave each other unusual presents. Search your Bible to unwrap some of these odd gifts. Look up the story on the gift tag, and then write the gifts inside the box.






## THE DAY I SHARED MY LUNCH!

Read about the boy who shared his lunch with Jesus in John 6:5-13. He was probably very hungry, just like everyone else in the crowd. He could have easily eaten everything in his lunch sack. But he chose to share his bread and fish, and something amazing happened! Imagine you are this boy. Write the story of your experience in your journal. Or imagine that you have arrived home carrying a basketful of leftovers for your own family. What would you tell your family that evening? What do you think their reactions would be? How would you all respond to Jesus after this?

## TRY THESE AT HOME!

- Be generous with Mom and Dad! Find or make something to give to them. Do the same for your brothers and sisters. Surprise them with a gift just because you love them!
- Count exactly how many books and toys you have. Then count how many socks, underpants, pants, shirts, sweaters, skirts, and dresses you have. (It's OK to write 0 next to the dresses and skirts if you are a boy!) Did you realize that you had so much stuff? Thank God for your blessings, and then give some things away to children who need them more.
- Bored with your toys? Try being creative with boxes and tape or things you can find in nature. Or ask Mom and Dad to download some Lego challenge cards for you to try.
- Feel like buying more stuff? You'll get more for your money if you go to a yard sale or thrift store.
- Want something? Write it on your wish list with the date. After one month, look at the list and see if you still want it as badly. What have you learned?
- When you go to the store and feel like buying something, ask Mom or Dad what you can buy to help someone else. Notice how good it feels to be generous. 

*Karen Holford loves having real fun with her three young grandchildren.*



## GIVING MAKES YOU HAPPY!

Memorize Luke 6:38 and make up some actions for it. Or go into the kitchen and act it out with cups and grains. Perform the verse for your family. What experiences have you and your family had with being generous, and discovering that God is generous with you too? What could you and your family do to put this verse into action? How does this verse help you when you feel tempted to be selfish?



## Dear Deborah,

*What is the appropriate amount to give when it comes to the multiple requests that a pastoral family receives for mission trip assistance, graduations, birthdays, and weddings? Our income is very limited, and we get bombarded every year with numerous invitations. It seems so cheap to only give \$5 here and there, yet we cannot afford to give \$20 to each person. I feel really bad, but at times we have given more to some and less to others. It is always a dilemma, and we struggle to do the right thing. To be honest, we always dread graduation time because of this obligation that we cannot seem to fulfill.*

*Sincerely,  
Overwhelmed*

## Dear Overwhelmed,

Few pastoral families can afford to give cash gifts for every event, especially if you serve a large congregation or district. First, choose a realistic amount that you can spend each year. Then focus on gifts that are meaningful rather than expensive. Some pastors give thoughtfully chosen devotional books for graduations, weddings, or milestone birthdays. Find attractive books that have meant something to you personally and purchase in bulk for a better price. Wrap them nicely and include a note of spiritual encouragement.

If you have a talent for bargain shopping, you could also keep a stash of nice but inexpensive gifts on hand for unexpected events. And homemade gifts are appropriate for some occasions. Your family might enjoy making cards, bookmarks, or Bible verse artwork to give away.

If you do decide to give cash, know that even a small gift is appreciated when given with prayers and thoughtful wishes.

As for mission trip donations or other evangelism projects, those are really a matter of personal conviction. Consider setting aside part of your yearly family budget to help with these important requests. If God impresses you and your spouse to give, He will make it possible.

“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you” (Deuteronomy 16:17, NKJV).

Blessings as you serve!  
Deborah

# A Million Little Joys

Too often we focus on the frustrations of ministry instead of the joys. I challenge you to spend a few days really reflecting on what brings you deep satisfaction in ministry.

For me, one of the greatest joys is spending time with fellow pastoral spouses. How I have enjoyed women's retreats and moments of sharing our hearts and getting to know one another! What a privilege to set aside masks and be real.

Another source of joy is providing a safe haven for my husband and family by creating a tasteful home and, at times, tasteful meals (as our family becomes more scattered and grown up, our meal schedule is not what it used to be!). For me, creating a warm home environment is a sweet part of "ministering" as a pastor's wife.

And perhaps there is no deeper joy than seeing new believers come to accept Jesus and commit to a life with Him.

Sometimes my joy in ministry comes from just singing together with my church family or from a timely conversation in the church foyer—either one where God uses me or one where He sends someone to speak to me. Being the hand of God or feeling His hand work through people is so refreshing.

What brings you joy in ministry? In what areas do you truly enjoy serving beside your spouse? Make time to stop and identify these blessings. Then be intentional and serve in these areas of joy as often as possible. ■

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

## FROM THE FIELD

### *West-Central Africa Division*

The following is a pictorial report from the West-Central Africa Division.



*Last year leaders of the Koforidua District in central Ghana met together at the Akropong church.*



*Shepherdesses and church members did visitation as part of the Total Member Involvement (TMI) initiative.*



*Members prayed with a family during visitation in Akropong township.*



*Shepherdesses visited the Nyinahin church, where they taught a children's Sabbath School class.*

## FROM THE FIELD



*Participants of the Kwadaso District met to study the Bible together.*



*Shepherdesses shared tracts and prayed with community members in Kumasi.*



*Shepherdesses spent a day together at the Afasiebon church in the Agric Nzema District.*



*Shepherdess coordinators from Meridian Conference of the Southern Ghana Union Conference.*



*Shepherdesses of the Central Ghana Conference gather at the 2018 biennial retreat of the Northern Ghana Union Mission.*



*Eastern Sahel Union Shepherdesses from the Togo chapter met for a retreat in March 2018.*



*Northern Ghana Union Shepherdesses took an excursion during the 2018 biennial retreat in March.*



*Cameroon Union Mission Shepherdesses held a one-day prayer meeting in March 2018.*



*Shepherdesses from South Ghana Union Conference fellowship at a retreat.*



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