

STRONGER TOGETHER

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COMPASSION

STRONGER TOGETHER

Issue 2
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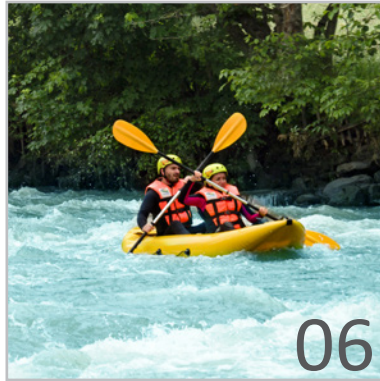


ON THE COVER

The Bible is filled with examples of God's compassion. His mercies are new every morning (Lamentations 3:22–23). In this issue, we explore what it means to be compassionate to yourself and others. We can show kindness to everyone—from our families and friends to our neighbors and even perfect strangers. When caring for those who are sick, enduring trials, or grieving, we can gather courage from the Word, prayer, fellowship, and stories of God's providence from faith communities around the world. We are, indeed, stronger together.



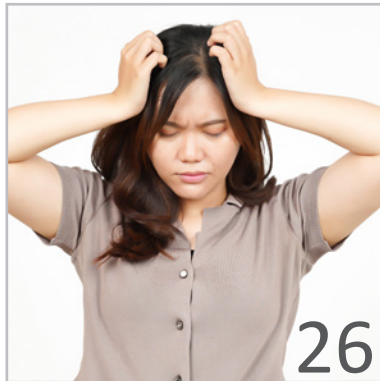
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JESUS HAS COMPASSION FOR THE SICK

GOD (STILL) HEARS AND HEALS

SARAH LIVED IN A SMALL, close-knit church community. For years she had battled a relentless health issue—a constant bleeding problem that had plagued her every day. She had sought the help of numerous doctors, endured countless medical treatments, and spent a fortune on medications, but nothing had brought her relief. Her condition seemed incurable, and her hope was fading fast.

Sarah woke up one morning feeling sad and desperate because of her health problem. She had faith in Jesus and the power of prayer, so she decided to share her worries with her pastor, Pastor John. Sarah had read stories from the Bible about Jesus healing the sick. She hoped for a miracle with the same unwavering faith as the woman in the Bible who had bled for twelve years. She came to Pastor John hoping that he and her church could help her through prayer.

*God's
mercy and
compassion
are limitless.*

As she explained her situation to Pastor John, tears rose in Sarah's eyes. She had reached a point where she believed only divine intervention could save her. Pastor John listened attentively; his heart filled with compassion for her suffering. He assured Sarah that her faith was not in vain and that God's healing touch could transform her life.

The church, he decided, would embark on a collective journey of fasting and prayer for Sarah's healing.

CARING AS A CHURCH BODY

Pastor John knew that this moment required more than just a casual prayer. He told Sarah that she needed to confess her sins to God, as repentance is often a crucial step toward healing. The church, he decided, would embark on a collective journey of fasting and prayer for Sarah's healing. He believed that God would work a miracle, just as He did in the time of Jesus.

With great faith and trust in God, Sarah agreed to the plan. The church congregation united in fasting and prayer, dedicating a day to seeking divine intervention. Sarah was anointed with oil, symbolizing the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the entire congregation fervently prayed for her healing.

As the church fasted and prayed for Sarah, a miraculous transformation began to take place within her body. The bleeding stopped, and she regained her strength. She felt the touch of the Divine Physician, the same touch that had healed so many during the time of Jesus.

The church congregation was amazed by the news of Sarah's miraculous healing. Her testimony was a powerful reminder of Jesus' compassion toward those in need. Similar to how Jesus healed the woman suffering from an issue of blood, He also extended His healing grace and compassion to Sarah.

The story of Sarah's healing became a testament to the power of faith, prayer, and the unwavering compassion of a community of believers. It reminded everyone that, as a church, they were called to follow Jesus' example of compassion, reaching out to those in need and believing in God's miraculous power. Jesus wants to heal our illnesses today as much as He did when He walked on earth.

Sarah's unwavering faith and her congregation's love, compassion, and prayers led to a remarkable change in her life. She had the opportunity to witness the healing power of the Savior, a powerful reminder that God's mercy and compassion are limitless and that His miracles are still possible for those who have faith. ■

Aurora Canals serves as associate ministerial secretary for pastoral spouses and families.





Special Quotes

by Ellen G. White

Here is the ground upon which we should exercise compassion toward our fellow sinners. "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." 1 John 4:11. "Freely ye have received," Christ says, "freely give." Matthew 10:8.

—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 245

Let the father seek to lighten the mother's task. In the time that he would devote to selfish enjoyment of leisure, let him seek to become acquainted with his children—associate with them in their sports, in their work. Let him point them to the beautiful flowers, the lofty trees, in whose very leaves they can trace the work and love of God. He should teach them that the God who made all these things loves the beautiful and the good. Christ pointed his disciples to the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, showing how God cares for them, and presenting this as evidence that he will care for man, who is of higher consequence than birds or flowers. Tell the children that however much time may be wasted in attempts at display, our appearance can never compare, for grace and beauty, with that of the simplest flowers of the field. Thus their minds may be drawn from the artificial to the natural. They may learn that God has given them all these beautiful things to enjoy, and that he wants them to give him the heart's best and holiest affections.

—*Christian Education*, pp. 172, 173

God wants us to demonstrate His love by showing a living interest in the youth under our care. Hold them up before the Lord, and ask Him to do for them what you cannot do. Let them see that you realize your need of divine help.

—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 214

Nothing can excuse the minister for neglecting the inner circle for the larger circle outside. The spiritual welfare of his family comes first. In the day of final reckoning, God will inquire what he did to win to Christ those whom he took the responsibility of bringing into the world. Great good done for others cannot cancel the debt that he owes to God to care for his own children.

—*Gospel Workers*, p. 204

The life of Christ must be your pattern, to do good in every spot and place. In caring for others, God will care for you. The Majesty of heaven did not avoid weariness. He traveled on foot from place to place to benefit the suffering and needy. He was wearied with His journey and sat upon the well to rest. Although you may "possess all knowledge," may understand the human system and trace disease to its cause, and even if you had the tongues of men and angels, there are yet qualifications necessary or all the former will be of no special account. [1 Corinthians 13:1, 2.] You must have power from God, which will only be realized by those who make God their trust and consecrate themselves with devotion to the work He has given them to do. Christ must be in your knowledge. His wisdom must be seen instead of yours. Then will you understand how to be a light in the rooms of the sick.

—*Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 2, letter 30, 1870, par. 22–23

SCAN FOR AUDIO



Caring WHEN LIFE HURTS

NAVIGATING HARD TIMES TOGETHER

WE ALL ENCOUNTER TRAUMA of some kind at some point in our lives. This is one of the sad facts of life in this very fractured world. We might not face it personally; it might be someone in our family, congregation, or community. But even then, it scrapes and bruises our hearts and minds.

In these very complex and confusing moments of trauma, we need to feel the compassion of someone who cares deeply for us and who will slow down and pause to help us recover our sense of safety.

THE BLESSING OF NUMBNESS

Whenever we go through trauma or shock, our first reaction is likely a sense of numbness. We may be in denial. We may feel frozen or confused because any kind of sudden trauma is disorienting.

We've been tipped out of our familiar comfort zones and into a painful chaos. We struggle to make sense of what is happening. The numbness is our mind's natural way of preventing us from being overwhelmed by how terrible things are while we try to cope with our immediate needs for safety or medical attention.

RECOVERY ZONE

Whether trauma touches us directly or indirectly, finding a quiet place to sit and let our senses recover from the ordeal can help. We can snuggle in a blanket and sip warm, soothing drinks, such as herbal teas with honey. We can also take slow, deep breaths to help our body calm down naturally and to lower the levels of the stress hormones adrenalin and cortisol.

Being close to someone who cares for us, hugs us, and reminds us to rest, eat, and drink will also help us to find peace. We might need someone to hold our hand and pray for us, but it's best to keep it short and simple. A distressed mind will struggle to stay focused or learn new information.

INTENTIONALLY FORGET THEIR WORDS

When sitting with someone in trauma, we might be startled by their words. Sometimes going through a traumatic time makes finding the words to express our feelings difficult. It's quite common for people who don't usually use bad language to become angry or say words they wouldn't usually use. The kindest thing is to let this go as long as no one will get hurt. Don't add to someone's distress by judging them for what they do and say in moments of severe emotional trauma. And be kind enough to keep these moments confidential. By doing so, we won't add to their painful memories by gossiping and damaging their reputation.



Whenever we go through trauma or shock, our first reaction is likely to be a sense of numbness.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO TALK . . .

We used to think that talking about trauma helped us recover from it. However, counselors have noticed that reliving the memories and experiences can add to our trauma and slow down our recovery. Instead, it's best to let people decide for themselves whether they want to talk about their experiences (Ecclesiastes 3:7). If they do want to talk, they may share things that will distress us. If we are not ready to listen to their stories, we can help them find a trained counselor or someone who can be a good listener (James 1:19).

LISTENING WELL

If we choose to listen, here are some simple tips for listening well. By making eye contact, we show that we are paying attention to the speaker. Our ears are listening. When they pause for us to talk, we should summarize

what they have said first to check that we have heard well. This also reassures them that we are truly listening and interested in what they say. It also allows them to clarify anything we might have misunderstood or forgotten. We keep our brain engaged and stay curious about their story so we can ask warm and helpful questions. And we listen with our heart, showing empathy and compassion, and offer our hands to help where needed.

COMPASSION ON A TOUGH DAY

Even if we or our loved ones are not experiencing trauma now, we can all have tough days. It's good to plan how we will care for ourselves or anyone else who has a bad day. If we're feeling troubled or exhausted by the day's experiences, we can choose to do something that helps us feel happier, calmer, or more loved. Our "Comfort List" could include any of the following:

Warm and positive relationships with other human beings help us to manage the ups and downs of life in this unbalanced world.



He notices every tear and heartache (Psalm 56:8).

- Pray.
- List ten things we are thankful to God for.
- Watch or do something that makes us laugh.
- Listen to soothing praise songs.
- Name three things that went well during the day.
- Ask ourselves where we saw Jesus at work today.
- Plan something to look forward to.
- Look at something God made that fills us with wonder.
- Breathe in deeply and exhale slowly, as if we are blowing bubbles.
- Do something kind for others.
- Spend time working on your favorite hobby.
- Gather with friends. Warm and positive relationships with other human beings help us to manage life's ups and downs in this unbalanced world.

We can also make a "Comfort List" of all the ways that the people in our family like to be comforted when they have had a challenging or painful day and keep it where everyone can be reminded how to care for each other.

If we live with other people, we can share our stories of the day together. Comfort the sad moments. Be kind, appreciative, helpful, and encouraging toward each other. Do something fun together for a few moments in the evening. We can be intentional about telling each person in our home how special they are to us. Sharing daily experiences together will help us feel less alone with our challenges.

SOOTHE BEFORE SLEEP

Soothe someone who has experienced trauma as much as possible before bedtime, especially on the same day as the trauma. When we go to sleep with a distressed brain, it can add to our levels of anxiety and sadness. Say comforting things, such as "I am so sorry about what has happened to you. No one should ever have to endure something like that." "You are special to me, and I care about your suffering." "I wish I had been there to comfort and support you." They may like a warm bath, a hot milky drink, or a hug to help them calm down.

GOD IS OUR COMFORTER

When we are traumatized or having a bad day, it's good to remember that no matter how we feel, God is always with us. He notices every tear and heartache (Psalm 56:8). We can give ourselves a big hug from God by wrapping our arms around our chest. We can encourage others to do the same and to remember that He is always holding them in His loving arms and whispering words of love and compassion (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). **L**

Karen Holford is a family therapist. She is a departmental director at the Trans-European Division and teaches pastoral/theology students how to care well for others.





THE COST OF BELONGING

GOD WAS FRACTURED TO RESTORE

ONE MID-DECEMBER DAY, Mike and I packed his Saab station wagon and set out for the shores of the Gulf of Mexico for the annual Christmas gathering of my extended family. The trip cost us a chunk of change in gas, tolls, and hotels, plus some wear and tear on the nervous system due to, shall we say, interpersonal challenges within the extended family. But we gladly sacrificed because belonging comes at a price.

The need to belong tugs at every heart. God designed us to function based on intimate relationships, to love and be loved. He derived this design from Himself, for from eternity, the original family of Father, Son, and Spirit lived in intimate closeness. “God is love,” not just in the sense of love extending from God, but love within God, between the Father, Son, and Spirit. The very nature of God is love, with or without His creation.

But then God did create, and He created us like Him.

Because of our God-likeness, we possess not just a capacity for love but a demand for it. When our need is met, we thrive; when it remains unmet, we fail to thrive. Neuroscience screams this out to us in various studies, from those that show how children raised in a nurturing environment have higher IQs to those that correlate loneliness with heart disease and cancer. Belonging entwines itself in the spiral-ladders of our DNA, reaching out in tendrils of longing from our cores.

We want to belong. We need to belong. So *how* to belong becomes the question. Clearly, humanity fails at it. Strife lashes out everywhere, from the interpersonal to the global scale. We find ourselves “hateful and hating one another,” one description attests (Titus 3:3, KJV); another describes human beings as “alienated and enemies in your mind” (Colossians 1:21, KJV). A quick perusal of the daily news validates these assertions.

The very nature of God is love, with or without His creation.

THE UNDOING OF ALIENATION

So here we sit, alienated from one another and from God, opposed to the very need engraved on our DNA. We can't extricate ourselves without a Savior. But qualifying Himself to save us cost Jesus something. The human race, under Adam, orphaned itself through sin, and only through a new Representative, a second or "last Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:45), could we gain entrance into the heavenly courts. Jesus qualified Himself to become the last Adam by first joining the sinful race and then atoning for its sins on the Cross. This was the cost of our belonging.

Have you ever noticed the plurality of God throughout Bible?

"Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, . . .'"
—*Genesis 1:26*

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' . . ."
—*Isaiah 6:8*

". . . 'You are my son; today I have become your father.'"
—*Psalms 2:6-7*

"Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. . . ."
—*Isaiah 63:10*

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."
—*2 Corinthians 13:14*

"To God's elect, . . . who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood; . . ."
—*1 Peter 1:1-2*

While each member of the Godhead is mentioned in the Old Testament, the New Testament mentions the specific persons of Father, Son, and Spirit as a collective.

Yet the cry that ascends from the Cross, reveals the alienated condition that Jesus willingly took upon Himself. He cries, "... My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). Weighed down with our sin, He finds Himself outside the circle, outside His eternal home, outside of belonging.

The Inseparable Trio of love is fractured: Father looking down in woe, present but not perceived, Spirit moaning with cries too deep to be uttered; Jesus orphaned and outcast.

The cost was commensurate with that which He bought. He bought belonging for us. He paid with His own belonging. In Christ, we belong to the most elite family in the universe, soon to ascend with Him when He comes again.

Time to pack for the journey. ■

Jennifer Jill Schwirzer, LPC, is an author, speaker, TV host, professional counselor, musician, wife, mother, lover of Jesus, and a friend to many. She loves to communicate about the fascinating intersection between theology and psychology and does so whenever and however she gets a chance. This article is adapted from a post that originally appeared on <https://jenniferjill.org> on January 6, 2015.

FINDING JOY IN THE BALCONY

CHANGE YOUR WORLD, ONE CHEER AT A TIME

SCAN FOR AUDIO



IT WAS WEDNESDAY EVENING. My co-leader and I were busy teaching a class of second graders attending our church's Adventurer Club meeting. Danny* was a member of our class. He was taller than the rest of the children—and mischievous, often disrupting the class with his jokes and teasing. We spent a lot of time trying to keep him under control.

At one point in the class, as the children were busy working on an art project, I happened to take a good look at the work Danny was doing. He was, for once, quietly focused on gluing and painting, and the effect was turning out to be quite exceptional.

"Danny, your picture is beautiful!" I exclaimed. "I love the colors you are putting together. You are an artist."

Danny looked up in stunned surprise, and slowly a smile spread across his face. At that moment, I realized that he, with his frequent misbehavior problems, probably seldom heard words of praise and encouragement.

OF BASEMENTS AND BALCONIES

In Joyce Landorf Heatherley's book *Balcony People*, we are told of two significant categories of people we experience in life's journey. First are those who have caused us heartache and pain through their discouraging and destructive words or actions. These, she says, are the "evaluators."¹ Another term she uses is "basement people"²—those who pull us downward into the dark, murky waters of discouragement and despair.

However, second are the "affirmers" or as Joyce calls them, the "Balcony People." She further explains how this would look:

"All around that sphere of clear air in our conscious minds runs a balcony filled with people who are not merely sitting there but practically hanging over the rail, cheering us on."³

These people can include family, close friends, parents, co-workers, teachers—anyone from the past, such as Bible heroes and authors, or those in the present who cheer us onward toward becoming more than we are.

It is an unfortunate human trait that we tend to spend more time replaying and sharing the harmful memories of wrongs done to us than we do in lifting our thoughts to all the support and love extended from the balcony influences in our lives. Choosing to be pulled downward into memories of sadness and pain can be a pathway to detrimental health issues, such as elevated blood pressure, physical aches and pain, and loss of interest in living an abundant life.

*Not his real name.



*Danny is still
Danny, but
I'm seeing this
young boy in a
new light.*

Finding Joy in the Balcony

Here is some helpful advice to consider:

“Cultivate the habit of speaking well of others. Dwell upon the good qualities of those with whom you associate and see as little as possible of their errors and failings. When tempted to complain of what someone has said or done, praise something in that person’s life or character. Cultivate thankfulness. Praise God for His wonderful love in giving Christ to die for us. It never pays to think of our grievances. God calls upon us to think of His mercy and His matchless love, that we may be inspired with praise.”⁴

THE VIEW FROM THE BALCONY

The memory of that moment with Danny, of seeing how my praise surprised him and made him smile, still warms my own heart. Danny is still Danny, but I’m seeing this young boy in a new light. He needs love and affirmation. He needs balcony people in his young life to patiently encourage the development of his good characteristics.

Everyone needs encouragement. It can be a source of motivation, of feeling valued, and of self-confidence. Not only is it important to mental and physical health but it can also infuse life with joy and purpose—joy for the receiver of encouragement, and joy for the heart of the giver: the balcony person.

God knows our needs well, and in His Word we can find much to encourage us in our journey through life. However, this joy is to be shared, and we are urged to encourage others, using every opportunity to lift up those around us. God wants us to be His balcony people on this earth. He longs for us to be both His *words* and *acts* of encouragement and kindness to those who need such. Hear words of invitation to this calling:

1. “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (1 Thessalonians 5:11).
2. “May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had” (Romans 15:5).
3. “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen” (Ephesians 4:29).
4. “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).



God wants us to be His balcony people on this earth.

BE A BALCONY PERSON—CHANGE YOUR WORLD

Imagine what your family, your church, your workplace, and your community would be like if there was more sharing of praise, encouragement, and kindness. What a wonderful world ours would be! You and I can make a difference by taking every opportunity to be a balcony person by—

- Speaking honest words of praise, encouragement, and appreciation
- Encouraging even the smallest of efforts, especially by children
- Focusing primarily on what someone did right, not wrong
- Writing a note of thanks or a card of caring concern at appropriate times
- Listening attentively when someone is speaking to you
- Helping in times of need such as moving, childcare, and rides to appointments
- Giving when a need arises for food, clothing, etc.
- Being present when comfort or encouraging companionship is needed
- Providing visible tokens of encouragement such as colorful stickers for children, flowers, badges, certificates, and even hugs or a hand on the shoulder to affirm and offer support
- Remembering how your balcony people have inspired and encouraged you and then sharing their methods in your ministry

RESOURCES:

<https://deborahbyrnepsychologyservices.com/8-tips-on-how-you-can-encourage-others/>

<https://www.wikihow.com/Encourage-People>

<https://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/health/2015/08/18/eight-ways-provide-power-encouragement/31905023/>

<https://www.countryliving.com/life/inspirational-stories/g33038069/bible-verses-about-encouraging-others/>

¹ Joyce Landorf Heatherley, *Balcony People* (Austin, Texas: Balcony Pub., 1984), p. 15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 492.

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.

When tempted to complain of what someone has said or done, praise something in that person's life or character.



HONESTY IN **GRIEF**

CONSIDER THIS OVERLOOKED GRIEF VIRTUE

SCAN FOR AUDIO



THROUGHOUT MY ACTIVE GRIEF, I was tempted to withhold what I was honestly experiencing, thinking I would spare myself added discomfort or spare the one who casually asked, “How are you doing?” I could either respond with polite avoidance or be honest with the person. Which option would benefit us the most? Always, it was honesty. But being honest about our grief is a bit of an art.

SPEAK THE TRUTH, EVEN IF YOUR VOICE SHAKES

While my son died over 32 years ago, there are times when the wave of grief sweeps over me. This past summer, I found myself overcome with the need to share stories about Dawson. And there was Darlene. It took courage, yet I could cry freely and be real with her. She listened so well, and I was free to be honest.

But if we haven’t practiced telling ourselves the truth about how we feel and think, it might feel quite unusual to begin now. Begin by honestly assessing your thoughts and feelings at the start and the end of each day.

It is so easy to fool ourselves into believing something differently than our authentic self really knows. Now that your heart is broken, there is less need to pretend. The healing feeling is grief. If you want the grief to move through on its flow to the sea, you must get in and ride the current to its destination to find restitution, resolve, relief, and renewal.

If you wish to gain the most benefit from being honest with yourself, take out some paper and a pen and write reflectively about your grief experience thus far.

There's no need to hide any pain from His authentic healing presence.

By being honest about your current grief experience, you might find the courage to be honest with others. Talking with a trusted friend is a safe place to begin. You could start by reading them this article or simply summarizing what you are learning about the importance of honesty with your grief.

NOT EVERY INQUIRY NEEDS A FULL EXPLANATION

We can indeed sense when others are not emotionally safe for us to share an honest reply. I found that a few pre-planned replies helped enormously. I sometimes honestly responded, "Today is a little on the hard side right now. I don't feel like talking about it. Thank you for asking." Or "I don't think I will be fine for a long while." Or "It is exhausting for me to talk about my grief right now. Thank you for understanding." With these responses, we can still maintain honesty but avoid mismatches in timing or the person inquiring.

The virtue of being honest with ourselves and others is a useful tool in the bereavement process. It opens our hearts to the healing presence of the One who knows us best. When we exercise our trust in God's faithfulness to heal our broken hearts, we can experience it even more readily when we practice honesty with Him. There's no need to hide any pain from His authentic healing presence.

Have you ever had a time you practiced being honest or avoiding honesty about your grief, either with yourself or with others? Your story just might encourage someone else. I am guessing it will.

Karen Nicola and her husband, Steve, each found their own way through the darkness when they lost their young son, Dawson, to leukemia at age 3. They discovered that God was with them through grief—and healing. Their book, Comfort for the Day, offers a personalized grief recovery experience, bringing real help for really hurting people. This article was excerpted from Karen's blog on <https://comfortfortheday.com> on September 5, 2017.

LET'S BEGIN RIGHT NOW.

What are you feeling, thinking, and experiencing at this moment? What have you already experienced? The words below might help you evaluate your grief more easily.

	Numbness	Guilt	Anxious loss of emotional control	Loss of focus
	Panic	Anger	Socially awkward	Loss of appetite
Shock	Depression	Relief	Reconciling	Helpless
Denial	Despair	Fear	Resigned	Hopeless
Hurting (physically, emotionally, spiritually)	Loneliness	Hostility	Confusion	Moments of joy, trust, and peace
	Blame	Acceptance		
	Regrets			

SCAN FOR AUDIO



BE AN INCRECIBLE *Grandparent*

PASS HEAVENLY VALUES TO THE NEXT GENERATION



WHAT'S THE ROLE of a grandparent? That varies greatly from uninvolved to overinvolved. For caring Christian grandparents, perhaps the better question is "What *could* the role of a grandparent be, and what influence can grandparents have in the character development and eternal destiny of their grandchildren?" Here are four ways to get started being an incredible grandparent.

1. BE INTENTIONAL.

We remember the day we were told we were about to be Grandma and Grandpa, or Grammy and Papa in our case. We weren't part of the decision; we were simply informed. However, once we knew a baby was on the way, we were part of the plans and preparations for its arrival. And soon, our new role began.

It's easy just to flow with what comes, but more often, flowing with the current leads to drifting apart rather than coming together. It's too easy to be engrossed in our own worlds and fail to be a part of theirs if we are not intentional. Being intentional means marking the calendar with dates and times for the grandchild. Those dates may include planned activities together, a phone call, or better yet, face time. It means remembering birthdays, church programs, school programs, and holiday plans.

BY THE WAY— DID YOU KNOW?

As a grandparent, you are a powerful role model and carry enormous influence in your family. That's why it is essential to be intentional. You are helping to shape a life.

2. LOVE FREELY.

God is love. If we grandparents want to be successful in reaching and influencing the hearts of our grandchildren, we too must be love—unconditional love. Children who know they are loved develop confidence and healthy self-esteem. Unconditional love does not mean letting children get away with anything. That's not what children really want. But it does mean never withholding love because of a choice that was made, no matter how poor.

Former US President Jimmy Carter observed, "Because [grandparents] are usually free to love and guide and befriend the young without having to take daily responsibility for them, they can often reach out past pride and fear of failure and close the space between generations."

That's so true. Our son has a very special bond with Nana—what he calls my husband's mother. From the time our son can remember, Nana would always hug and snuggle with him and sing, "I love you a bushel and a peck and a hug around the neck." When he had his own family, he passed on that feeling of being loved through that little song to his children, hugging and snuggling with them as he put them to bed with "I love you a bushel and a peck and a hug around the neck."

It's too easy to be engrossed in our own worlds and fail to be a part of theirs if we are not intentional.



3. SPEND TIME.

Children want the attention of adults. Spending time with our grandchildren tells them they are important to us. Sing to them and later *with* them. Reading to them is a wonderful use of time. Studies show that a child regularly read to will be considerably more successful in school and future life than they would have otherwise. Aside from being smarter at school, there is nothing more fulfilling than a little head leaning against your shoulder whispering with a sleepy voice, “Read more, Grammy—just one more book!”

BY THE WAY— DID YOU KNOW?

As grandparents, we have an incredible powerful influence. Here’s an important fact: we are right there behind the parents in influencing our grandchildren with spiritual truths.

Children who know they are loved develop confidence and healthy self-esteem.

Nurture your relationship with your grandchildren and your children! Our values, attitudes, lifestyle, words, and actions are extremely influential. We can nurture a budding faith in our grandchildren and model a strong faith for our children.

Here are a few ideas that will help us mentor and disciple this generation of children:

Go for walks together, taking time to explore. This will open the door to conversations beyond what you could have ever planned. You will also form bonds with each other and with nature.

Pray for them—and with them! You are their connection with a God they cannot see.

Do service projects together. Working side by side to help others is one of the best educational experiences there is.



Share fun and memorable worship experiences with them.

Play games with your grandchildren—games from peekaboo to hide-and-seek to the alphabet game when riding in a car to table games. One game that continues to be a favorite with our grandchildren is hiding a plastic lizard that’s about six inches long. We would take turns hiding and then hunting for it. The game grew into the grandkids hiding the lizard before they left, and we would find it later in strange places like the refrigerator or under our pillow. Then we would hide it to be found later on their return.

**BY THE WAY—
DID YOU KNOW?**

If we want to pray with our grandchildren, we must first play with them.

4. BE AN EXAMPLE.

Grandchildren quickly see who we are and what is important to us. Let them see our consistent walk with God and our unflinching trust in Him. Let them know our confidence in the stories and promises of the Bible. Let them see our life reflecting Jesus in how we interact with others, in the comments we make, in the things we do, and in the books we read for our pleasure. They’ll figure out what is important to us.

Our grandchildren know where we will be every Sabbath. Church is a constant they can rely on. That’s where we are when we visit them; that’s where we are when they visit us. Even when we are camping, family church is on the schedule, and they look forward to it because they are included in an active and joyful worship service.

We don’t need to point out that our bond with God is built on our relationship with Him. That’s what our grandchildren need to see. If we are to pass on our faith, it must be by letting them catch the vision, seeing our joy in Jesus and how important that relationship is to us.

***Sherri Uhrig** is children’s ministries director of the North American Division. Her husband, **Bob**, serves as pastor of the Linthicum Seventh-day Adventist Church in Maryland. Sherri and Bob have two children and eight grandchildren. This article originally appeared on Adventist Review online on December 4, 2016.*



**BY THE WAY—
DID YOU KNOW?**

As grandparents, we have so much to offer: our unconditional love, our spiritual example, our wisdom, and, most important, our time. Our grandchildren need us. Our children need us to be present and involved with their children.



LET'S CARE FOR EACH OTHER

SCAN FOR AUDIO



THE CARING STRANGER

Read Luke 10:25–37.

Here are some things that the Good Samaritan did to help care for the injured man. They are all jumbled up. Some of them are not in the written story, but we know that he must have done them.

Draw a line starting with the first thing he did to care for the injured man (in red) to the second, the third, and all the way to the last one (in blue).

He believed that it was important for him to be kind and helpful to others.

He saw that the man was from a different country. But he didn't mind because caring for anyone in need is important.

He led his donkey very gently along the path to the next town.

He gave him water to drink.

He decided the injured man was too hurt to travel with him on a donkey.

He wanted to help the injured man.

He lifted the man onto his donkey even though it was difficult.

He took the man to the inn so that the man could rest in a quiet place.

He took care of the man's cuts and bruises.

He noticed an injured man by the road.

He came back and paid the innkeeper for looking after the injured man until he was better.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN ON THE PLAYGROUND



Imagine that the story of the Good Samaritan took place in your schoolyard or a park near you. Imagine you are the Good Samaritan in the story—the person who cares and helps. Tell the story of being a Good Samaritan, and then write, draw, or act it out with your family.

A child is bullied on the playground, and they fall and cut their knee (make sure no one gets really hurt!). The child is bleeding and sad. Who ignores the child? How do you notice them? What do you do to take care of them? And where will you take them to get the care and love they need? Who helps you to help the child?

LET'S CARE

Here are some situations when you might need some help and care. How would you like to be cared for when these things happen, and what do you think other children might like?



BE A SHEEP!

Read the story of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31–46.

Draw some fat and fluffy sheep shapes on paper and cut them out.

Draw a big heart on the back of each fluffy sheep.

Read the story and find out what the sheep did that was kind and caring (such as sharing food with a hungry person).

Write or draw one of these things inside each of the hearts on the sheep.

On the other side of each sheep, write the name of a person in the Bible who did kind things like these for others.

For example, Dorcas made clothes for people who needed them. Hannah made a little coat for Samuel each year. Then write how your family could share clothes with others too.

Make a garland, mobile, wreath, or poster with your sheep to remind everyone in your family to be kind.

A TIME WHEN YOU NEED CARE	What would you like others to do for you?	What might other children in this situation need you to do for them?
When you are in a new place and feel all alone		
When everyone is playing and you are left out		
When someone is teasing or bullying you		
When you've forgotten your lunchbox and you're hungry		
When you've fallen and you're bleeding and hurt		
When you made a mistake and people are laughing at you		
When all your friends are invited to a party and you are left out		



KINDNESS KIT

The Good Samaritan was ready to help! He had oil and bandages for the man's wounds. Make a kindness kit for your backpack or family car and a few extra kindness kits to give away! Include sticky bandages for cuts, paper handkerchiefs, cereal bars or healthy snacks, shoelaces, string, pencils, hand gel, smiley stickers, juice cartons, a pair of socks, and more. Keep everything tucked neatly into a zipper pouch or bag so that it is ready and safe when you need something to help someone.



MAKE A SCENE!



Use the toys you have, or use sticks, stones, sand, leaves, shells, and other natural materials to create the scenery for the story of the Good Samaritan.

Make some hills and a road from Jerusalem to Jericho.

Build a little inn for Jericho. Make sure it has a bed for the injured man to sleep on.

Make some rocks for the robbers to hide behind.

Find toys or twigs to represent the hurt man, two robbers, the priest, the Levite, the Good Samaritan, his donkey, and the innkeeper.

Now tell the story to your family using the scenery that you have made!

You could ask a parent to make a video of your story.

WHEN WE'VE HAD A TOUGH DAY ...



What do you do when you have had a sad or tiring day? What helps you feel better again? And what helps the other people in your family feel better when they have had a tough day? Make a chart like this to go on your fridge, or write it on a whiteboard or blackboard:

Name	My day was... (1 very tough – 5 very good)					This is how we can help each other feel better this evening . . .
	1	2	3	4	5	
Mommy						
Daddy						
Me						

KINDNESS IN CHURCH

Is there someone in your church who needs help? What can your family do to make their life happier or more comfortable? How can you help them? Invite other people to help too.

Clean up the yard of a person who is unable to do their own work.

Make food for them. Invite them to your home.

Ask them to come with you on a day trip.

How can you and your family encourage your church to be the kindest church in your whole town? **7**

Ideas to help each other might be:

- Say a short prayer for me
- Give me a big hug
- Listen to what happened to me
- Go for a peaceful stroll in nature with me
- Do something fun with me
- Help me by . . .
- Read a story with me
- Make my favorite drink or food
- Have worship / read the Sabbath School lesson together
- Play a game together
- Kick a ball together
- Make something beautiful
- Watch a video of funny or interesting animals that care for each other, like dolphins, sea-otters, meerkats, and monkeys
- Remind me how much God loves me



Karen Holford is the family, children's, and women's ministries director of the Trans-European Division. She loves the story of the Compassionate Samaritan because it inspires people to be kind!



SCAN FOR AUDIO



“A AND B” STORIES

“Please tell us a story!”

Hardly a day went by that my children didn’t ask for a story. They loved stories. But the day finally came when I sighed and said, “I can’t think of one more story I haven’t already told you!” My oldest spoke up, “Then make up a story, Mommy.” “I can do that,” I thought to myself.

So I started spinning a story about Johnny and Carrie. “Oh, I know who Johnny is; he lives around the corner,” said one of them.

Since I didn’t want them to think I was talking about their friends, I chuckled and said, “No, this is not about *that* Johnny. Let’s start calling the children A and B. I will tell you whether A is a girl or a boy.” Thus a tradition of “A and B” stories began sometimes including “C, D, and E.”


I soon realized I could weave character-building lessons into the stories. I always invented a story about things they could relate to, such as a road trip with family, a campout, a birthday party, playing with cousins, or anything that interested them.

Sometimes, I included something that one of them did wrong. Then I would pause and ask, “Should A have done that?” They would all shake their heads and very seriously say, “No.” I’d

follow up with, “So what could A have done instead?” They would all think up various ways to handle the situation.

When appropriate, I asked, “What would happen if B did that?” I wanted them to think about how their actions impact their lives. Usually, I asked them if it would help to ask Jesus what to do, and their agreement to that came quickly.

Other times I would ask, “What should the parents do?” Quite often their replies were nothing short of being “shot at sunrise.” I would encourage them to think of something a bit less severe and more in keeping with the wrongdoing. They grew to understand that parents are responsible for giving compassionate consequences so children could learn not to do that again.

The A and B tradition continued through all the grandchildren, who begged for “A and B” stories too! 

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

—Proverbs 22:6

Evelyn Griffin is a retired pastor’s wife. She and her pastor-husband have four children and 14 grandchildren.

Quite often their replies were nothing short of being “shot at sunrise.”



GOD DOES NOT SPONSOR **FAILURES**

A TESTIMONY OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

> PART 1



SCAN FOR AUDIO



AS PASTORAL SPOUSES, many of us experience great testimonies and see very closely the hand of God that sustains us throughout our ministry. But let me tell you my testimony—and that of my family—when I decided to follow Christ and accept His call, even though I was not a pastor’s wife but a future pastor’s wife at the time.

In 2014 my husband responded to a call during a campaign called “Passion for Souls.” He chose to listen to the voice of our Father when he felt the need to study theology. He was passionate about lost souls, prayed to God, and asked for His approval. Then we decided to leave the city of San Luis Potosi, where we lived, to go to the university.

At that time, our family consisted of my husband, my six-year-old daughter, and me.

Believing that we had things solved and that everything would be straightforward, we went excitedly to the adventure of a new city, a new house, activities, people, and even a new job for me. Since I had a bachelor’s degree in accounting, I thought it would be very easy to place me in a career position to support my family, who would now depend 100 percent on my income.

And why do I say we believed we had our lives solved? Before we decided to leave the city, we had three businesses that had provided us a comfortable life and allowed us to enjoy certain privileges. When we decided to go to the university, we tried everything we could to transfer them, but we managed to sell only one.

We had enough money to support us for at least half a year and cover registration fees, tuition, rent, essential furniture purchases, and other expenses. The other two businesses we left under the administration of a relative on the condition that they should only send us the equivalent of the tuition for my husband and daughter; the rest was the payment of their salary and for reinvestment.

FIRST TEST

Those businesses that at the time had been very profitable stopped being so. In less than half a year, one of them disappeared. When we went to ask for an account, it no longer belonged to us. It had changed owners. And that is where my faith began to waver.

Thinking that God had not called us to His ministry, that perhaps we had rushed into the decision, and that we had not taken considerable time to pray and listen to God’s voice, my mind told me that we had made a very bad decision. I wondered if going to the university was not what the Lord expected of us.

Every night I prayed and asked God to manifest Himself in our lives. If it was not His will that we would serve Him in ministry, I asked that He would allow us to return to San Luis Potosi and start again in business. But at the same time, I told Him that I did not want to be a stumbling block for my husband, not knowing and being sure of His will.

I was afraid to tell my husband about my feelings. If I did, would he want to go back for my peace of mind instead of following his dream, making void the “possible will of God”?

Then I understood this biblical passage: “Jesus answered, ‘If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me’” (Matthew 19:21).

*And that is
where my faith
began to waver.*

God Does Not Sponsor Failures

Undoubtedly, God calls us to follow Him without any limitations. He requires that we commit ourselves totally and get rid of what hinders our genuine relationship with Him. We must depend totally on Him and thus be able to experience the great blessings that He has prepared for us and recognize His power through prayer.

Questions came into my mind: *What will be waiting for us? How will we pay for the next three years of my husband and daughter's studies?* If our source of wealth had vanished, the means on which our destiny depended had collapsed.

You know, God manifested Himself at every moment and supplied our basic needs. He gave us the means so that we would never lack our daily bread. Did we have many needs? Yes. Did we long for the past life filled with blessings? Very much—you have no idea.

Dear colleagues, when we believe that all is lost, that our lives are sailing aimlessly, and that we are not worthy of God's blessings—or even when we believe that He does not hear our prayers—we just have to wait patiently. He calls us to trust.

The Lord God said, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

The Lord's purposes are without error. He allows us to pass under His standards of quality and always watches over our spiritual growth.

Now my family and I analyze everything we went through and how we overcame in the name of Jehovah. We see clearly how God was always in control of our lives. Although it felt at times that we were cut off by the bad things we experienced, we enjoyed the torrential rains of blessings.

Let us overcome in the name of Jehovah and testify to all He has done for us.

Companions, this is only part of the story. Another time I will tell you the second part of our testimony and how God allowed my husband to graduate successfully. J

To be continued in the next issue

Lorena Angélica Monsiváis Peralta lives in Mexico City and serves God in a pastoral family with her husband, Pastor Carlos Pineda Meza. Lorena works for the church in legal affairs and teaches theology students how to care well for others. She and her husband have two children, Naára and Dancarlo.



*Undoubtedly,
God calls us
to follow Him
without any
limitations.*

Inter-American Division

SOUTH CENTRAL AMERICAN UNION CONFERENCE

Costa Rica held a union-wide pastors' convention and ordination in October 2023. Ramón and Aurora Canals from the General Conference attended the meetings and took part in the ordination.



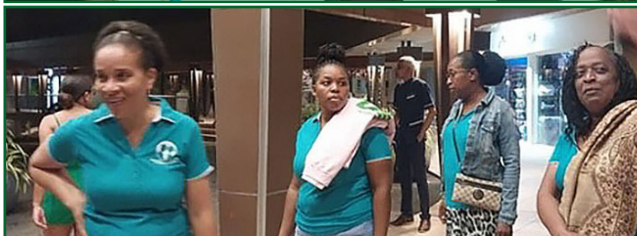
Pastors and spouses were ordained at a special service in Costa Rica.



Ministerial couples listen to talks at the pastors' convention in Costa Rica.

SOUTH CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE

South Caribbean Conference spouses met in May 2023 to discuss issues such as stress management, confidentiality among the spouses, hospitality, and saving our children. Interspersed between the topics were health nuggets, prayer points, and special music—all delivered by pastors' wives. Simone Walcott reports that another retreat was scheduled since there was not enough time to cover everything that spring. The theme for the fall retreat, held in Trinidad, was "Reigniting Fellowship, Inspiring Hope, Stronger Together."



South Caribbean ministerial spouses attended two spiritual retreats in 2023.



Pastors' spouses gather for a group photo in Trinidad.



Several pastors' wives spoke at both retreats.

Northern Asia-Pacific Division

KOREAN UNION CONFERENCE

The Korean Union Conference (KUC) published *What No One Tells the Pastor's Wife* in Korean in June 2023 and distributed it to approximately 800 pastoral wives who serve the Lord across the five conferences and one mission. The division also supported the translation costs of the book. In a September meeting, five Shepherdess directors from each conference decided to hold reading groups for this book this year and next year.

EAST CENTRAL KOREAN CONFERENCE

In East Central Korean Conference, 209 Shepherdesses are divided by region and meet several times each year. Participants are enjoying times of joy and growth through reading *What No One Tells the Pastor's Wife*. Book reviews, testimonials, and photo reports are pouring in from the regions.

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR PASTORAL WIVES

KUC Ministerial Spouses Association (MSA) is planning to hold the same meetings next year to maximize the reading of this book as continuing education for pastors' wives. We praise God for learning and growing together.



Ministerial spouses regularly meet to read and discuss the new book.



The new book is being used for continuing education for pastoral wives.



Pastoral wives in Korea enjoy the recently translated book *What No One Tells the Pastor's Wife*.

Southern Asia Division

Ministry by Shepherdesses in 2023 resulted in over 900 baptisms. Praise God for the work they are doing in SUD.



Shepherdesses in the Southern Asia Division were blessed with a bountiful harvest. A few of the baptisms are pictured here.



MARRIED TO A PASTOR?

Discover a safe place to fellowship, ask questions, and learn from others on social media!

DISCUSS

SHARE

CONNECT

Official groups for ministry spouses online:



ministerialspouses



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NEW

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/esposasministeriales/>



TOO BUSY TO READ?

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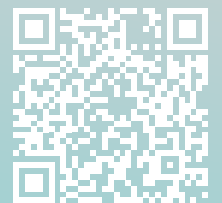
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