

STRONGER TOGETHER

A RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY SPOUSES | Vol. 42 | Issue Three 2025



PEACE IN
THE STORM

STRONGER TOGETHER

Issue 3
2025



ON THE COVER

Storms rage. Wars increase. Uncertain times lie ahead. And through it all, there's God. He brings comfort, wisdom, discernment, healing, and calm to hurting, confused hearts. We can trust Him with our lives—and the lives of everyone we love. This issue of *Stronger Together* shares practical things we can do to find peace and reminds us that we can run to God with every worry, doubt, and fear.



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WE CAN TRUST OUR FATHER

FINDING REST FOR OUR SOULS



SCAN FOR AUDIO

WHEREVER WE LIVE IN THIS WORLD, we live in a war zone! Our little planet is in the middle of a cosmic war that has gone on for millennia and will last until that great day when Jesus comes to rescue those who know Him as their heavenly Father and best Friend. Until then, we must live in this battleground. How can we maintain peace within the chaos and uncertainty?

God alone can give us tranquility, joy, happiness, wisdom, guidance, and security. We can reach out to Him when sad, confused, frustrated, lonely, searching for the best answers, or longing for peace.

Ministering alongside our spouses in this world's war zone can be exciting, rewarding, and fulfilling. We can also face troubles that are unsettling, disappointing, and even gut-wrenching. And these challenges include not only our congregation, conference, or union but also our children, our aging parents, and the communities in which we live. How do we deal with these difficulties in a Christlike way?

*Ministering
alongside our spouses in
this world's war zone can
be exciting, rewarding,
and fulfilling.*



FROM ANXIETY TO PEACE

I still remember what riding on Daddy's shoulders felt like as a little girl. My father was tall, soft-spoken, very gentle, and yet strong; his presence exuded a sense of peace and safety. Even though I adored my father and trusted him implicitly, he was not perfect; he was a sinner like the rest of us. But he was connected to our perfect heavenly Father. If I trusted my earthly father with all my heart and always felt safe and secure in his presence, why do I sometimes struggle to trust my perfect heavenly Father, our Creator and God of the universe, when He alone is the only source of the perfect peace described in Isaiah 26:3.

Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy are full of practical and beautiful promises that remind us to turn to God when tempted to doubt.

If we don't know which way to go, God tells us, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with My loving eye on you" (Psalm 32:8).


If I trusted my earthly father with all my heart and always felt safe and secure in his presence, why do I sometimes struggle to trust my perfect heavenly Father, our Creator and God of the universe?

If we feel overwhelmed, we read, "I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for Me?" (Jeremiah 32:27).

If we feel anxious, we are reminded to "not worry" (Matthew 6:25) and to "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Philippians 4:4). In verses 6 and 7, Paul tells us how we can rejoice: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

If we feel afraid, Jesus reassures us, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). In the simplest language possible David wrote, "I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears" (Psalm 34:4, NKJV). What a magnificent reminder that His help is close at hand!

Finally, when we can't see how anything will turn out right, we need to remember God's assurance, "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,' declares the Lord. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isaiah 55:8, 9).

Jesus loves you with everlasting love and longs to fulfill your every need. Today, open your heart to Him, abide in Him, and trust Him to give you the courage, strength, and wisdom to deal with whatever challenges you face in this troubled world. 

Nancy Wilson has been a pastor's wife for nearly 50 years and considers her greatest role to be that of wife, mother, and grandmother.



Special Quotes

by Ellen G. White

When we take into our hands the management of things with which we have to do, and depend upon our own wisdom for success, we are taking a burden which God has not given us, and are trying to bear it without His aid. We are taking upon ourselves the responsibility that belongs to God, and thus are really putting ourselves in His place. We may well have anxiety and anticipate danger and loss, for it is certain to befall us. But when we really believe that God loves us and means to do us good we shall cease to worry about the future. We shall trust God as a child trusts a loving parent. Then our troubles and torments will disappear, for our will is swallowed up in the will of God.

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 100

Let us turn from the dusty, heated thoroughfares of life to rest in the shadow of Christ's love. Here we gain strength for conflict. Here we learn how to lessen toil and worry, and how to speak and sing to the praise of God. Let the weary and the heavy-laden learn from Christ the lesson of quiet trust. They must sit under His shadow if they would be possessors of His peace and rest.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, p. 69

It is not work that kills; it is worry. The only way to avoid worry is to take every trouble to Christ. Let us not look on the dark side. Let us cultivate cheerfulness of spirit.

Mind, Character, and Personality, vol. 2, p. 466

The "one thing" that Martha needed was a calm, devotional spirit, a deeper anxiety for knowledge concerning the future, immortal life, and the graces necessary for spiritual advancement. She needed less anxiety for the things which pass away, and more for those things which endure forever. Jesus would teach His children to seize every opportunity of gaining that knowledge which will make them wise unto salvation. The cause of Christ needs careful, energetic workers. There is a wide field for the Marthas, with their zeal in active religious work. But let them first sit with Mary at the feet of Jesus. Let diligence, promptness, and energy be sanctified by the grace of Christ; then the life will be an unconquerable power for good.

The Desire of Ages, p. 525

There is need of constant watchfulness, and of earnest, loving devotion; but these will come naturally when the soul is kept by the power of God through faith. We can do nothing, absolutely nothing, to commend ourselves to divine favor. We must not trust at all to ourselves nor to our good works; but when as erring, sinful beings we come to Christ, we may find rest in His love. God will accept every one that comes to Him trusting wholly in the merits of a crucified Savior. Love springs up in the heart. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there is an abiding, peaceful trust. Every burden is light; for the yoke which Christ imposes is easy. Duty becomes a delight, and sacrifice a pleasure. The path that before seemed shrouded in darkness becomes bright with beams from the Sun of Righteousness. This is walking in the light as Christ is in the light.

Gospel Workers, p. 415

SCAN FOR AUDIO

A young girl with dark skin and braided hair, wearing a white t-shirt, is shown from the chest up. Her hands are clasped together in a prayer position, and her eyes are closed. The background is a soft, out-of-focus mix of teal and pink colors.

RAISING SPIRITUALLY SECURE CHILDREN

HELP THEM PICTURE GOD'S ARMS AS
THE SAFEST PLACE TO BE

“DURING THE SERMON, I want you to draw a picture of God. No one knows what He looks like, but most of us have a picture in our head when we think of Him. I would love to see what your picture looks like!” Pastor Bob* had just finished the children’s story in church, and he was giving all the children paper and crayons.

James wondered about his picture of God. “He’ll be a bit like Dad,” he thought. “Kind and fun!” He loved hugging Dad and laying his head on Dad’s chest to feel Dad’s heartbeat. He drew God smiling and saying, “I love you, James!” James looked at his picture. He couldn’t wait to meet God one day!

Mary looked at her piece of paper. She felt sad. Mom often yelled at her and told her God was sad when she disobeyed. Mom said Mary wouldn’t get to heaven if she kept sinning. Mary tried her best to keep Mom happy, but Mom always found something wrong with Mary’s behavior. When Mom was very angry, she would hit Mary. Mary was frightened of God. She would never be perfect enough to please Him. As tears rolled down her face, Mary drew God with an angry face.

When you picture God in your mind, who do you see?

WHAT’S YOUR PICTURE OF GOD?

When you picture God in your mind, do you see a smiling, warm, and loving Father? Or an angry and disappointed Judge who is wondering how to punish you? Who shaped your picture of God? How does the way Jesus treated people correct your damaged picture of God and demonstrate His extravagant and gracious love? When we experience God as loving, accepting, forgiving, and comforting toward us, it helps us parent our children in ways that demonstrate God’s love for them. When they experience God’s extravagant love for them, they are more likely to fall in love with Him forever. We love God—and others too—because He first loved us (1 John 4:19; Matthew 22:37–39).

SPEAKING WELL OF GOD

Children need a true and healthy picture of God’s strong and steady love for them. God’s love for them overflows with patience and kindness (1 Corinthians 13:4). He will never leave His children or abandon them (Deuteronomy 31:8). He forgives their sins and does not hold their sins against them (Psalm 103:9–12). He comforts their tears (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4). When we give children a picture of God as a kind, compassionate, forgiving, and accepting Father, we help them trust Him when life is complicated and distressing (1 Peter 5:7). Their anxieties are soothed because perfect love and fear cannot co-exist (1 John 4:18).

*All names are pseudonyms.



Be careful about the stories you tell children about God, especially during the children's story time during church. Don't tell scary stories with the theme "Be sure your sins will find you out!" Tell them surprising stories of God's extravagant and gracious love for them and fill them with wonder, love, joy, and peace (Isaiah 26:3).

When children hear the message that God is angry with them or disappointed in their behavior, they are filled with fear. Graphic stories of end-times and posters of strange beasts can frighten children and teenagers and make them anxious and distressed. When we misrepresent God so that children conform out of fear, we are telling them lies about God's character. Many young people have given up trying to please this very distorted picture of God because it is impossible to be perfect; they feel overwhelmed by despair. When we distort the loving image of God to manipulate children's emotions and behavior, they experience spiritual abuse and are more likely to feel anxious, depressed, guilty, and even suicidal.

JESUS WELCOMED CHILDREN

Jesus came to live God's love among us. He welcomed little children! They ran into His arms because they felt safe with Him. They clambered onto His lap, clutched Him with their sticky fingers, and listened to His beautiful stories of God. He hugged them in His strong and gentle arms and blessed them with loving words they would never forget. He didn't speak harshly to them or express His disappointment in them. He never made them afraid because He wanted them to welcome Him into their childish and innocent hearts. He did, however, say very harsh words about those who place obstacles between innocent children and their loving heavenly Father (Matthew 18:6).

Before we can help children feel safe with God, we need to experience the security of God's love for us.

HELPING CHILDREN FEEL SPIRITUALLY SECURE


Before we can help children feel safe with God, we need to experience the security of God's love for us. Write twenty words that describe God. What do they say about your understanding of God's character? Where did you learn these ideas about God? Do they reflect the truth about Him?

Study God's character. Explore the many ways that God loves you. Search the Bible for verses about God's love and listen to what God is saying to you. Then rewrite the verses in your own words. Write each fruit of the Spirit on a different piece of paper: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Look for stories in the Bible where God demonstrates these traits. List what you are doing well in showing these fruits in your parenting. Write specific ways your parenting can show your children these fruits and help them experience these traits in their relationship with God.

Create an alphabet of God's love with your spouse or family.

Gather at least one hundred words to describe God's love for you. Sit quietly and let God's love soak into your heart. Then hold the hands of your spouse or child and look lovingly into their eyes. Tell them they are God's beloved child, and He delights in them (Zephaniah 3:17).

Explore God's goodness with your children. Ask them what they like about God and what they don't like. If they have any fears, help your child experience the truth about our safe, welcoming, and loving Father in heaven.

Parents, pastors, teachers, and grandparents play an important role in building a child's picture of God. When responsible adults hurt children, make them feel afraid, or abuse them, it can lead to lifelong fear, distrust, sadness, stress, self-loathing, discouragement, anxiety, and guilt. But when adults have a positive, loving, trusting, and worshiping relationship with their loving Father in heaven, they can help children flourish spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically. This prepares their heart for loving and compassionate relationships with God and each other—fulfilling the greatest commandments of Jesus. 

RESOURCES

Karen's webinars for Christian parents:

- Nurturing the faith of babies and children
<https://ted.adventist.org/family/nurturing-the-faith-of-babies-and-toddlers/>
- Spiritual nurture of children
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1QSgt-g5A>
- Loving discipline
<https://ted.adventist.org/family/loving-limits-positive-and-effective-discipline/>

A helpful paper on how Christian parents might use counter-productive strategies and distort a child's experience of God:
<https://www.sabu.no/assets/files/documents/Barn-og-Familie/vaer-varsom/spiritual-abuse-and-counter-productive-strategies.pdf>

Karen Holford lives in England. Every day she notices how God is loving her, and she tries to love others similarly. This fills her with great peace and joy!





SCAN FOR AUDIO



FINDING PEACE DURING ANXIOUS TIMES

WE CAN TRUST HIM WITH TODAY AND TOMORROW

WE LIVE IN A TIME of worry, fear, and anxiety. It's important to acknowledge that these feelings are a natural part of the human experience. Christians might wish they could be exempt from worry. But the truth is, not only do we feel anxious, but we also struggle with guilt about our anxiety. This leads us to question whether it's even possible to let go of fear and live without constant anguish.

MINISTRY TRANSITIONS

Ministry transitions often cause ministry families to lose their peace, becoming anxious and fearful. These times are difficult and frightening. As human beings, we tend to root ourselves where we serve, loving and being loved by the people we work with. We become like trees with deep roots, pulled out of our comfort and taken to new soil to grow new roots and bear fruit.

In 2015, my husband and I received a call from the North American Division just as we were finishing a decade of work in conference ministry. We were certain that this call was not God's will. Our hearts were broken and our souls overwhelmed by the prospect of moving across the country into the unknown and uncertainty of a new chapter, leaving behind our loved ones and everything we had built.

But as we prayed about it and placed our future in God's hands, we were filled with peace and assurance that He had called us to a new chapter. We were able to move forward with confidence.

LIFE EVENTS

We live in a world that is upside down, fraught with numerous challenges that spark concerns about the future. Life often feels unpredictable, with issues like financial instability, health concerns, and natural disasters becoming more prevalent. In these circumstances, finding stability and peace can seem daunting.

As the world changes, it feels as if we are adrift, striving to protect our families and communities in a secure space. However, the effort often feels like swimming against the tide.

Instead of dreading the unknown future, we can entrust our will and desires to Jesus.

FINDING PEACE

In essence, the journey to finding peace while surrounded by life's challenges is a continuous practice of surrendering to God, trusting in His plans, and actively seeking His presence. As we navigate life's unpredictable tides, let us hold steadfast to the truth that God's peace surpasses all understanding and is our constant refuge.

The Bible tells us that when our minds are filled with doubt and our hearts troubled, our compassionate Lord will calm us and give us new hope and joy. When our anxious inner thoughts overwhelm us, He comforts and encourages us (Luke 12:22–32). Psalm 37:1 says, "Do not fret." The word *fret* refers to a state of extreme emotional disturbance. Next, verse 3 asks us to trust. Verse 4 tells us to delight. Verse 5 calls us to commit. And verse 7 invites us to rest in the Lord.

SURRENDERING TO GOD

Having God's peace doesn't mean we won't feel anxious at times. Yet, even in those moments, we can rest assured that God is with us and is more powerful than our anxiety. Instead of dreading the unknown future, we can entrust our will and desires to Jesus. We continue communicating with Him, letting His guiding presence keep our course. He goes before us, walking with us and removing the obstacles on our path (Deuteronomy 31:8).

What would happen if instead of worrying about your future, you put all this in God's hands, saying, "No matter what happens, I trust You with the results. Lord, Your thoughts are far better than mine, and Your ways are far higher than mine." As you do this, an amazing experience begins to happen. God fills you with His peace (Philippians 4:6, 7). ❤️

Angelina Wood has served in many ministries over the past 41 years, including as an educator, administrator, and conference department director. She and her husband currently serve in various roles in the North American Division. She enjoys reading, gardening, and adventuring with her husband.

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:
f ministerialspouses @ministryspouses @gc_ministerial_spouses
NEW <https://www.facebook.com/groups/esposasministeriales/>



DEALING WITH STRESS

TIPS FOR STAYING CALM (OR RETURNING TO IT)

SOMETIMES I FEEL AS IF I have so much stress that I'm drowning. Other times, I feel like I can conquer the world. I find that dealing with stress is best done by preventing it as much as possible. Of course, this is not always possible. Life likes to throw unsuspected curve balls every once in a while. Here are some things I do to prevent and manage stress.

1. KEEP A PLANNER.

Writing down my tasks and goals and prioritizing them helps me keep on track. I can focus on things that keep me productive, and I waste less time when I know what I need to be doing. When I realize I'm wasting time, I get discouraged and have a hard time picking myself up from it, so this is an easy way to keep moving ahead.

2. JOURNAL.

The number of filled journals I have is amazing. I write in them significantly less than I used to, but I still journal regularly. Sometimes I'll just get my thoughts out until I can think straight again. Other times I'll write prayers or letters to God. I have one rule for journaling: I never write anything bad about anyone. My journals will likely outlive me, and I don't want a moment of agitation or anger on my part to ruin anyone's reputation. Besides, I want to get over it, right?


3. TAKE TIME FOR ME.

This may sound counterproductive, but when I take time to recharge, I am able to come back and face all my tasks head-on and with a better attitude than before. What do I do? Soak in a hot bath, light some candles and relax, or read something for fun. Those are all great ways I can temporarily remove myself from a situation. Sometimes I just need a power nap to get my focus back on track.

4. SING.

This coping strategy started from a very young age. I've sung to myself in many stressful situations—from pumping myself up for interviews and other difficult situations to singing while driving on icy roads. It somehow calms me. Especially singing hymns and scripture songs filled with promises that remind me that God's got me.

5. GIVE MY BURDENS TO JESUS.

How heavy is a glass of water? The longer you hold it, the heavier it seems. And if you're carrying that thing for a year, we may have to call the ambulance for you. The same applies to our stress and burdens. Jesus tells us to give Him our burdens, and He will give us rest (Matthew 11:28). That's a promise I love to cling to. 

Amanda Walter is a wife, mama, teacher, traveler, and cat mom. This article is excerpted from her blog at www.maplealps.com.

Sometimes I'll just get my thoughts out until I can think straight again.



LIVING SACRIFICE: THE ALTAR OF WORSHIP

TAKING A DEEPER LOOK AT
ROMANS 12:1



SCAN FOR AUDIO

WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD *sacrifice*, what immediately comes to mind? Perhaps images of loss, deprivation, or giving up something important. For those of us who have left our homeland, the word *sacrifice* holds a deeper and more personal meaning—for ourselves and loved ones left behind. It conjures feelings of distance, aloneness, separation, nostalgia, denial, and even memories of times and places in the past. Sacrifice is not just a concept; it is a lived experience, a journey of recognizing God's mercies altar moments and praises to the Almighty.

In this reflection, I want to offer another perspective on a familiar Bible verse, Romans 12:1, which states, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship." This verse is often quoted in churches, but it wasn't until I reflected on it more deeply that I saw aspects I had previously overlooked. To understand it better, I will break the verse down into four key parts:

1. I Urge You
2. In View of God's Mercy
3. Living Sacrifice
4. True and Proper Worship

1. I Urge You

Paul's words are not casual; they are a heartfelt, impassioned plea. The Greek word for urge is *parakaló*, which means to call alongside, exhort, plead, and encourage. It conveys a sense of deep invitation, passion, and urgency. Paul is not merely suggesting something in passing—he is earnestly calling believers to respond to God. After spending the first eleven chapters of Romans outlining the rich truths of God's grace, salvation, and mercy, Paul shifts his tone. This shift emphasizes the importance of what follows. "I urge you" is an invitation emphasizing the importance of who He is—Love.

2. In View of God's Mercy

After the invitation, Paul calls us to reflect on God's mercy. Why is this so important? Understanding God's mercy is the foundation of Christian living. God's love, grace, and forgiveness motivate us to live in a way that honors Him. Without this understanding, the call for a living sacrifice becomes a burden rather than a joyful response.

Paul's emphasis on God's mercy is crucial for several reasons:



God values what has been broken and offers a path back to Him.

Understanding God's mercy is the foundation of Christian living.

- **Mercy is our motivation:** We do not surrender to God out of fear or obligation but because we are overwhelmed by His love. As 1 John 4:19 says, “We love because He first loved us.”
- **Mercy produces gratitude:** When we understand how much we have been forgiven, our natural response is to be thankful. Psalm 103:2, 3 reminds us to “Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all His benefits—who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.”
- **Mercy transforms our perspective:** Seeing life through the lens of God’s mercy helps us realize that surrender to Him is not a loss but the greatest gain. Philippians 3:8 tells us, “I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.”
- **Mercy fuels true worship:** True worship is not just about singing songs; it is about living a life of devotion, sacrifice, and service. Hebrews 13:15, 16 reminds us to continually offer to God a “sacrifice of praise” and do good to others as an act of worship.

When we fail to remember God’s mercy, we are prone to follow our own desires, leading to sorrow. True worship begins with a heart that reflects on God’s mercy.

3. Living Sacrifice

The concept of sacrifice in the Old Testament is quite different from the living sacrifice Paul speaks of in Romans 12:1. In the Old Testament, sacrifices were made with animals—bulls, goats, and sheep—offered to God at the altar as a means of worship, atonement, and thanksgiving. However, Paul’s call to offer our lives as living sacrifices symbolizes something more profound and personal.

In 1 Kings 18, the prophet Elijah had the Israelites restore the altar of the Lord on Mount Carmel. Elijah chose to repair the old altar rather than build a new one. Why? Because the altar represented Israel’s covenant with God, a relationship that had been broken by idolatry and sin. “Then Elijah said to all the people, ‘Come here to me.’ They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been torn down” (1 Kings 18:30).

By restoring the altar, Elijah symbolized a return to God. This restoration act is significant. It shows that revival is not about starting fresh from scratch but, rather, about returning to what has been neglected. God values what has been broken and offers a path back to Him. Rather than creating something new, the focus was on restoring the old, symbolizing that God’s covenant, though neglected, could be renewed. It teaches us that true revival does not come from innovation but from a return to the foundations that were once established, even when they have been disregarded.

Today, we are no longer required to offer animals or produce as sacrifices, as the rituals of the Old Testament are no longer necessary. However, sacrifice is still required, but in a new way. Instead of physical offerings, God calls us to offer a living sacrifice. What does this sacrifice look like?

It includes a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17), praise and thanksgiving (Hebrews 13:15), acts of service (Hebrews 13:16), prayer and worship (Psalm 141:2), obedience over rituals (1 Samuel 15:22), sacrificial love (Ephesians 5:2), and mercy (Hosea 6:6).

We are also called to surrender our guilt and shame (Psalm 51:17), fear and anxiety (Philippians 4:6, 7), grief and losses (Matthew 5:4), and anger and resentment (Ephesians 4:31, 32), among many other struggles. This includes everything we face—our disappointments, insecurities, and doubts—offering them all to God by bringing them to the altar.

A living sacrifice is not offered once and for all, like the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament. Instead, it is an ongoing, daily act. A living sacrifice requires a continual moment-by-moment choice to bring it to the altar because all the things we struggle with will crawl off the altar and walk away. We must put them back on the altar as many times as necessary.

4. True and Proper Worship

Romans 12:1 concludes by calling this living sacrifice “true and proper worship.” Worship is not limited to singing songs in church; it is a lifestyle of surrender, devotion, and service to God. True worship is a daily act of offering ourselves to Him—through prayer, obedience, and sacrificial love.

As 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 describes, true worship involves:

- **Rejoicing always:** Finding joy in God, no matter the circumstances
- **Praying continually:** Staying connected to God in every moment
- **Giving thanks in all circumstances:** Cultivating a heart of gratitude

This worship lifestyle requires a heart open to God’s refining work. David’s prayer in Psalm 51:10 expresses the essence of true worship: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”




PAUL’S FORMULA FOR A LIVING SACRIFICE

To summarize, here’s how we can accept Paul’s invitation to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice.

1. **Slow down** and reflect on God’s mercies
2. **Rebuild your altar** through prayer and Scripture (recommitment)
3. **Sacrifice daily**, bringing your struggles to the altar again and again
4. **Declare God’s promises in praise**, worshiping through His word and deed

In the kitchen or the car, at work or shopping, any moment can become an altar moment, an opportunity to bring your struggles to the altar and then . . . praise Him!

You will never out-sin the cross. As author Tim Keller beautifully said, “We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time, we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope” (*The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God*, p. 44). You cannot alter your past, but you can bring your past to the Altar. 

Jasmin Stankovic is a pastor’s wife, proud mom of three, a grandmother of one baby girl, and licensed counselor, working in a government-funded setting and private practice. She loves socializing, making new friends, indulging in Latin and Thai cuisine, playing the piano, and spending quality time with her family.

*You will never
out-sin the cross.*

THREE MUST-HAVE FIRST-AID KITS

IT TAKES MORE THAN JUST BAND-AIDS



SCAN FOR AUDIO



“Every person who prepares is one less person who panics in a crisis.”

—attributed to Mike Adamson

Three Must-Have First-Aid Kits

WHEN WE HEAR THE EXPRESSION *emergency preparedness*, we tend to think of being ready for natural disasters or catastrophic incidents. However, most of us are more likely to be involved in smaller-scale injuries and accidents in our day-to-day lives. It follows then that we tend to ignore steps we could take to ensure we are prepared to provide the healing aid needed—not only when bodies are hurt but also in times of emotional and spiritual injury and pain. We need those first-aid kits stocked and ready.

PERSONAL INJURY FIRST-AID KIT

Has something like this ever happened to you? You're going about your everyday activities when suddenly someone near you gets hurt. It could be a paper-cut injury to a coworker, a knife wound to Grandma while cutting up potatoes, or a neighborhood kid with a skinned knee from a fall. The injured person is bleeding and looks to you for help.

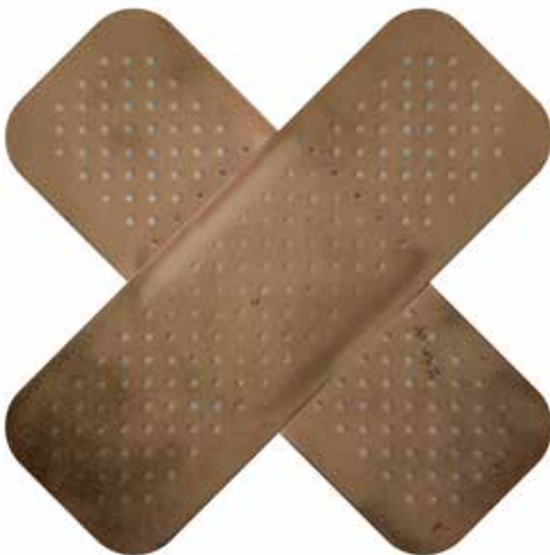
You scramble to find the Band-Aids. Finally, after an extensive search, you locate an old box of them stuck way back in a cupboard. The Band-Aid you pick from the box is so old that it appears yellowish, and the brittle wrapping falls apart when handled.

Any variety of injuries and accidents can unexpectedly happen at home, work, school, during sports events, while camping, gardening, traveling, and more. A well-stocked, handy, and

portable first-aid kit lets you respond immediately with what is needed to provide quick basic care for most common injuries and emergencies. Being prepared decreases the risk of complications, including blood loss, infection, and pain, especially for children and the elderly—the most susceptible to mishaps.

Make a physical injury first-aid kit.

- **Pick a suitable container** that is adequate in size, waterproof, simple to open and close, and portable.
- **Include medical supplies** such as adhesive bandages of various sizes, sterile gauze pads, bandage tape, antiseptic wipes or solution, antibiotic ointment, medical tape, tweezers, small scissors, hydrocortisone cream, anti-itch and anti-sting pads, a small flashlight, safety pins, antiseptic wipes, instant ice packs, eye patches, a thermometer, a barrier device (pocket mask or face shield), a small blanket, and gloves.



The Band-Aid you pick from the box is so old that it appears yellowish, and the brittle wrapping falls apart when handled.

No matter what is causing your emotional pain, you can take action to minimize its impact.

- **Add over-the-counter medications**, including ibuprofen, aspirin, acetaminophen, antihistamines, throat lozenges, and cold medications.
- **Keep a list of emergency contacts** in your first-aid kit, such as the primary care provider for you and your children, poison control, local police, fire department, ambulance services, and veterinarian.
- **Tuck in a booklet of instructions** on providing treatment for various emergencies.

Remember to go through your first-aid kit regularly to check for and replace expired supplies.

EMOTIONAL INJURY FIRST AID

Physical pain differs from emotional pain in that the first results from injury to some part of the body structure and the second from hurt and disruption to your feelings, thinking, and sense of well-being. In most cases both types of injuries are caused by outside events and sources. Sources of emotional pain can include:

- Loss and disappointment, as in:
 - The death of a special person or pet
 - The distancing or loss of a friendship
 - Loss or change within your family circle
 - Hurtful words or actions inflicted by others
 - Loss of a job, familiar routine, or social status
 - Loss of, or change in, health status
- Anger and anxiety caused by:
 - Personal injustice and lack of fairness
 - Financial difficulties or loss
 - Job dissatisfaction and work conflict

Emotional distress and pain, if not dealt with and resolved, can have a major impact on the quality of life, health, and relationships. Having a first-aid plan in mind for dealing with emotional injury can help you recover a little faster.

What could an emotional injury first-aid kit look like?

You must take charge of the situation at the onset rather than remain a victim. Here are some strategies to aid in drawing strength and resilience:



Three Must-Have First-Aid Kits

- **Accept the emotional experience**, realizing that your feelings are real and legitimate.
- **Tap into your true source of strength**—God.
 - Pray. Matthew 11:28–30 admonishes all who are weary (and haven't we all felt weary sometimes?) to come to Jesus for rest. You can talk with God wherever you are, day or night!
 - Read Bible passages such as:
 - "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3)
 - "Do not fear, for I am with you" (Isaiah 41:10)
 - "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness" (Jeremiah 31:3)
- **Engage in what usually comforts and restores** your mood and spirit. Ideas include exercise, gardening, journaling, reading a favorite book, and volunteering.
- **Embrace your personal values.** Core values could include God's promises, family, courage, kindness, honesty, loyalty, service, fairness, forgiveness, thankfulness, and living as far as possible at peace with others. You may conclude that there is something you should do to restore peace with the person (or persons) who are instrumental in your distress.
- **Seek support.** Healing doesn't often occur in isolation. Many move forward better with support and connection with others. Mental health professionals can be very helpful in providing support techniques to gain a deeper understanding of underlying emotions.

*You can
make up
a spiritual
first-aid
kit too.*



No matter what is causing your emotional pain, you can take action to minimize its impact. Acknowledge your emotional experience. Use calming tools that work for you. Let prayer and Bible readings assure and guide you. Reach out for help and support.

SPIRITUAL INJURY FIRST AID

Spiritual injury can shake your belief system and your core sense of who you are. It can lead to negative outcomes like isolation and emptiness. Causes for spiritual injury could include:


- Loss of meaning or purpose in life
- Intense guilt or shame
- Profound doubt about God's existence and purposes in this world following a traumatic event
- Conflict and confusion over what you believe and what is being taught or practiced by leadership or friends

Make a spiritual injury first-aid kit.

You can make up a spiritual first-aid kit too. Identify ordinary things you can use to heal from hurt, confusion, and disruption to your faith experience. Tools that will help anchor you while providing comfort and hope during spiritual upheaval include:

- **A Bible.** Go to it daily for assurance, clarity, and grounding. Jesus said the Scriptures tell us about Him (John 5:39). They are the surety we need to test everything and know what to hold on to (1 Thessalonians 5:21).
- **A unique stone, leaf, or picture** to trigger a pleasant memory. Spend time in nature to let the beauty of God's creation provide reassurance, inspiration, and thankfulness.
- **Encouragement sources** such as favorite helpful books, stories, quotes, poems, and Bible promises.
- **Journal notebook and pen.** Write your thoughts, feelings, and gratitude.

- **Music and media.** Listen to uplifting music or a recorded sermon, or watch an inspiring movie.
- **Volunteer help and service to others.** Review pictures or notes of moments of personal joy in service.
- **Check your lifestyle.** Include in your kit an item that reminds you to rest when tired, get good nutrition, balance work and play, and engage in a daily spiritual retreat by praying and meditating.

Physical, emotional, or spiritual injury can happen to anyone, often when least expected. Preparing these first-aid kits now can not only help you in your time of need but also allow you to help others more readily. 

RESOURCES:

<https://www.pickeringsafety.com/blog/10-reasons-to-keep-a-first-aid-kit-in-your-home-and-office/>

<https://www.quora.com/How-would-you-put-together-a-simple-home-first-aid-kit>

<https://www.webmd.com/first-aid/features/tip-sheet-what-to-keep-in-your-first-aid-kit>

<https://www.marywashingtonhealthcare.com/news/2018/february/the-basic-first-aid-kit-every-home-should-have/>

<https://www.verywellmind.com/physical-pain-and-emotional-pain-22421>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/emotional-distress#tips-to-cope>

<https://www.challies.com/articles/a-spiritual-first-aid-kit/>

https://www.saintritawebster.org/assets/gallery/documents/vbs/Spiritual_First_Aid_Kit.pdf

<https://sacredfeminineawakening.com/have-you-looked-in-your-spiritual-first-aid-kit-lately/>

<https://scatteredredquirrel.com/2014/08/always-prepared-first-aid-kit/>

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.



HELP! I AM A WORRIER!

JESUS IS A VERY PRESENT HELP

PEACE OF MIND IS a valuable commodity that cannot have a price tag placed on it. If worrying was a product, I would be rich. Peace of mind is precious and closely aligned with our mental health and well-being. So many things seek to distract us from what is truly important and what gives us true peace. This is a struggle for me. I need a piece of peace! A big slice. Whopper version, supersized.

Women are confronted with many issues that impact their peace of mind. The woman with the issue of blood was in

a deep place for twelve years (Mark 5:25–34). Mary and Martha watched their brother die and wept (John 11:1–44). The woman at the well was searching for deeper meaning in her life without knowing it until she encountered Jesus (John 4:1–26). Hannah was troubled at home and could find no peace until she had her victory, the boy Samuel (1 Samuel 1:1–20). Leah was not loved and bore several sons, with each name identifying her struggles and her deep desire to find peace (Genesis 29:31–35). I seem to do all the worrying for my family!



SCAN FOR AUDIO


Our contentment does not rest in our circumstances but in the God we trust.

As a child, I struggled with my emotions, and sometimes when I remember my past experiences, they trouble my thoughts and emotions. Truth be told, I am in a better place because I have learned the power of forgiveness. I still need some help at times. Thank you, Jesus!

When facing challenges, it is sometimes difficult to see the light at the end of the tunnel or even to consider that there is a light. Jesus has promised that He will never leave nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). In fact, He declared, “Surely I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20). You can find hope and peace in knowing that God is our refuge and strength, a present help in times of trouble (Psalm 46:1). Our contentment does not rest in our circumstances but in the God we trust. We can weather the storm because we know Who holds nature in His hands (Mark 4:39–41). Why do I still worry?

We can have peace and assurance of blessings and healing because we know the Great Physician (Jeremiah 8:22) and the Balm of Gilead (Jeremiah 46:11). We are not alone because we have a friend in Jesus (John 15:15). We are not broke and empty-pocketed because our Father is rich in houses and land (Psalm 50:10–12). This assurance ought to give us hope, peace, joy, and contentment since we know who our Father is and what He will do for His children.

Therefore, I intentionally align what I know with what I profess. Oh, what peace I often forfeit when I worry so much! Sometimes worrying gets the better of me, and I struggle for a while. Then Jesus steps in, and I am reminded that Satan is seeking after our minds, and I need to be sober and vigilant.

I rise above worry today and will take a dose of tonic from God’s Word each day to keep me on track. Let us all pray daily, acknowledging the worries we carry. Then thank Him for reminding us that despite our circumstances and trials, we can find peace and joy in His promises. He will help us have faith during the process and give us the peace that transcends all understanding in our journey (Philippians 4:7). He is there, with us and for us. 

*Sharon Campbell-Danvers is an educator, counselor, Shepherdess, and initiator of *Daughters Arise!*, a devotional series written by women in the Cayman Islands.*

This article is adapted from a January 11, 2025 post, available at <https://daughteroftheking24.blogspot.com>.

YOU ARE BLESSED!

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

ONE DAY JESUS SAT down on a mountain with His friends. He looked around the crowd and saw many tired and worried faces. So He blessed them and told them many wonderful and surprising things! We call these sayings of Jesus the Beatitudes, and you can find them in Matthew 5. His beautiful words bless us today too!



SCAN FOR AUDIO



BLESSED ARE
THOSE WHO
FEEL SAD

Jesus blessed the sad people because He longs to wipe away all our tears forever. When our friends know we are sad, they comfort us and help us feel better.

- Tell each other when you felt sad this week. Then describe how you most like to be comforted. Take a very large sheet of paper and divide it into twelve rectangles like a patchwork quilt: four rows of three squares. Draw or write something in each square that helps to comfort you or someone else in your family.
- Ask your parents to wrap you in a blanket and give you a big hug! Imagine God is giving you a big comforting hug too! What would God whisper in your ear to comfort you today?

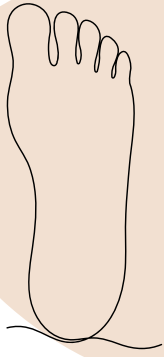


BLESSED
ARE THE
POOR IN
SPIRIT

Jesus blessed the people who didn't feel spiritually good enough. He told them not to be discouraged. When we know we are spiritually weak, we make space for God to work in our hearts!

- Hold an empty cup in your hands as you pray. Tell God you feel empty and want Him to fill you with His love and peace. Pour some delicious juice or fresh water into the cup and drink it slowly. Just as the water we drink reaches every part of our body and makes it feel alive and healthy, so God wants to fill all our empty parts with His love so that we can have a healthy relationship with Him!
- Draw a big heart on a piece of paper. It's empty. Fill the heart with pictures and words that will remind you of God's love, even when you feel poor in spirit.





BLESSED ARE
THOSE WHO
DON'T NEED
TO BE FIRST

Jesus said that meek and humble people will inherit the earth! In God's kingdom, the people who serve others are the greatest. When we feel safe and loved by God, we don't need to win all the time or boss others around.

- What did Jesus do to serve others? Read John 13:1–17. Washing feet was a job for the lowest servants, but Jesus was happy to care for His friends. Act out the story with your family, or take turns washing each other's feet kindly and gently.
- Draw around your feet on a sheet of paper. Inside each foot, write different ways you could serve others.



BLESSED ARE THOSE
WHO WANT TO PUT
THINGS RIGHT

Jesus knew that many things in the world needed to be made right. Whenever people are being hurt, put down, robbed, teased, bullied, or misused, or don't have enough food, clothes, or a safe home, we need to help put things right for them.

- Find a local newspaper and look for stories of people who are making your town a better place. Who feeds hungry people? Who protects people who don't have a home? Who cares for refugees? Who looks after abandoned animals or picks up trash? Choose someone who is putting things right in your community and make a card to thank them.
- What are the sad things in your community that your family wants to put right and make better? What could you do to make a tiny difference? Look for ways to tidy up the streets, donate food and clothes, and make things better for people who are poor and have difficult lives.

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART

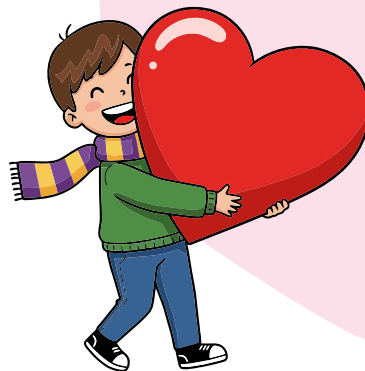
Jesus explained that people who have pure hearts will learn to see God clearly. We have pure hearts when we are honest and want the best for others.

What's in Your Heart?

- Go on a scavenger hunt to find objects that depict your values, your priorities, and the things you love.
- Arrange your objects on a tray. What do they say about your heart? Does anything stop you from seeing a clear picture of God's love? Is there anything you want to change or add?
- Ask each person in your family to do this so you can see inside their hearts, too.
- Make a collection of objects that represent what God loves and display His values. How is it different from each of your collections?

How Do You See God?

- We all see God differently. Draw a picture of how you imagine God to look. Around your picture, write some words that describe Him.
 - Compare them with the pictures of God drawn by your family. What can you learn from each other's pictures of God?





BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE KIND

Jesus came to show us how much God loves us! We are like little lights shining on God's love each time we are kind to others!

Light Up Jesus' Love!

- Find a jar, a piece of white paper, scissors, tape, a red pen or crayon, a black pen or crayon, and a battery-operated candle (or a real candle if an adult supervises).
- Cut a paper strip to fit around the glass jar with a little overlap. In the middle of the strip, color a red heart about 2 inches wide and high. Use a pen or crayon that does not leak through the paper.
- Write the name of Jesus with the black pen or crayon, back-to-front, inside the edges of the heart shape. Ask an adult to help you if this is difficult.
- Tape the paper around the jar with the heart on the inside so that the paper around the jar looks white. Place a light or candle inside the jar and watch the heart and the name of Jesus appear when the light shines through the paper. If it doesn't look right, try again!

Kindness Names

- Write the letters of your name down the side of a sheet of paper.
- Think of one kind thing you could do for others, beginning with each letter of your name.
- Each time you do something kind, draw a heart next to the idea.
- How quickly can you complete all your kindness challenges?

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS



Jesus told us that when we help people to be friends instead of enemies, we show the world that we are God's children.

Making Peace

- Read the story of Abigail, Nabal, and David in 1 Samuel 25.
- Search for all the lovely things Abigail did to make peace with David after her husband, Nabal, had been rude to him.
- Think of ten things you could do to make friends with someone.

Peace Project

- Ask family members and friends what they do to make peace again after an argument.
- Can you list ten things you could do to help make peace? Here are some ideas to get you started: listen, show you understand, care, and apologize.

BEAUTIFUL BEATITUDES!



Explore the Beatitudes with these beautiful ideas.

- Create a different action with your body to illustrate each verse.
- Draw pictures or posters to illustrate each Beatitude.
- Take photos to illustrate each Beatitude.
- Write a poem or song about the Beatitudes. Or write a short story that illustrates each Beatitude. ❤️

Karen Holford writes from England. She loves reading the Beatitudes and making them a part of her life.



CULTIVATING A MINDSET OF TRUST



SCAN FOR AUDIO

GOD’S TIMING IS PERFECT

ONE OF OUR SHARED HUMAN tendencies is making specific plans and worrying when everything does not work according to our blueprint. What helps, though, is contemplating Romans 8:28: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to his purpose.” I am grateful for experiences that have helped me cultivate a mindset of trust in my heavenly Father, like when God guided my doctoral research.


DOCTORATE DETOUR

When I began my doctoral program in 2018, I planned to complete everything by a specific timeline. However, two years later, when I was about to delve into the research aspect of the program, an amendment to the curriculum was introduced, which delayed me for an entire semester. I was told I must complete a particular course before starting my research project. Understandably, I was rather upset as I looked ahead at my increased time in the program and the financial implications.

Nevertheless, in the midst my frustration, I heard a still, small voice saying, “God’s hand is in this.” And my perspective began to shift. While working feverishly on the last-minute course, the COVID-19 pandemic appeared on the scene to disrupt the education sector on a global scale.

Nevertheless, in the midst my frustration, I heard a still, small voice saying, “God’s hand is in this.”

Lo and behold, God used the events of the pandemic, together with the surprise course, to fuel a contemporary and significant research topic in my head. Of course, this turn of events was a clear fulfillment of Romans 8:28. I saw the delay contributing to a successful and highly commendable research project.

I dare you, my friends, to cultivate a mindset of trust in our heavenly Father. Begin by putting your plans in His hands, and whenever you encounter a diversion on the way, regardless of the delay, believe that He will work it all together for your good. 

Grace Eversley-Jacott, EdD is an educational leader at a university in Trinidad, where she zealously shares the Word of God with students. She serves as the chaplain of the South Caribbean Ministerial Spouses Association and an advisory member of the women’s ministry committee of the conference.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Euro-Asia Division (ESD)

The division had a wonderful year with separate meetings for spouses, children, and families of ministers serving in the ESD. The following is a pictorial report.



The ESD held a congress for pastors' children at Zaoksky Adventist University in June 2024. Called PK Congress, the event was organized to unite children from ministerial families, help them find new friends, strengthen their faith, and inspire them with the love of the Lord so they entrust their lives to Him.



Over 500 children participated in the PK Congress organized by Vyacheslav Buchnev, ministerial association director, and Svetlana Velgosh, ministerial spouses coordinator for ESD.



A choir blessed attendees of the 2024 PK Congress at Zaoksky University.



Six young people were baptized at the PK Congress.



ESD leadership participated in Back to the Altar training in February 2024.



The Belarus Union of Churches met for a pastors' spouses meeting coordinated by Ekaterina Derkach.



The East Russian Union Mission held meetings for pastors' wives, led by their coordinator, Nina Ostrovskaya.



Eastern Siberia ministerial families gathered for meetings, inspiration, and fellowship.



Pastors' wives from the Georgian and Armenian fields enjoyed good food and fellowship while strengthening their faith.



Central Siberia ministerial families were blessed by the meetings they attended.



Meetings for Western Siberia pastoral families included something for everyone.



Georgian and Armenian pastoral wives had a meeting led by Lilia Krupskaya, ministerial spouses coordinator.



Pastoral wives from the Far Eastern Union of Churches Mission encouraged one another during meetings coordinated by Svetlana Bondarchuk, ministerial spouses coordinator.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD



Irina Protasevich, ministerial spouses coordinator, organized a meeting with wives of seminary students at Zaoksky Adventist University.



Pastors' wives in West Russia had meetings in Moscow.



Caucasus Union Mission held meetings for pastors' wives, organized by Elena Koltuk, ministerial spouses coordinator.



Pastoral families in the West Russian Union Conference held weekly meetings for public school children in Severodvinsk. They met in a rented room. At the end of the year, there was a health exhibition and children, school teachers, and the public school received books donated by the local SDA church.



Maria Lyahu is the ministerial spouses coordinator for Moldova Union.



Ministerial families held a congress in Moldova.



Pastors' wives from Moldova gathered for support and instruction.



Ministerial families in Moldova participated in Back to the Altar training.



A pastoral family dedicated their little one during Back to the Altar training in Moldova.



The ESD has a ministry for children with disabilities.



The Southern Union Mission in ESD held meetings for pastoral families, which resulted in pastoral families rededicating themselves to further ministry. Larisa Zubkova, ministerial spouses coordinator, led the meetings with the theme of Revitalized for the Mission.



ESD administration leaders' wives and union leaders' wives gathered for a photo during last year's meetings.

Northern Asia-Pacific Division

Raquel Arrais, NSD ministerial spouse coordinator, met with ministerial spouses in Nepal. They have many challenges but are faithfully serving the Lord. They were each given a chocolate "gold medal" for their service.



Ministerial spouses met together in Nepal.

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