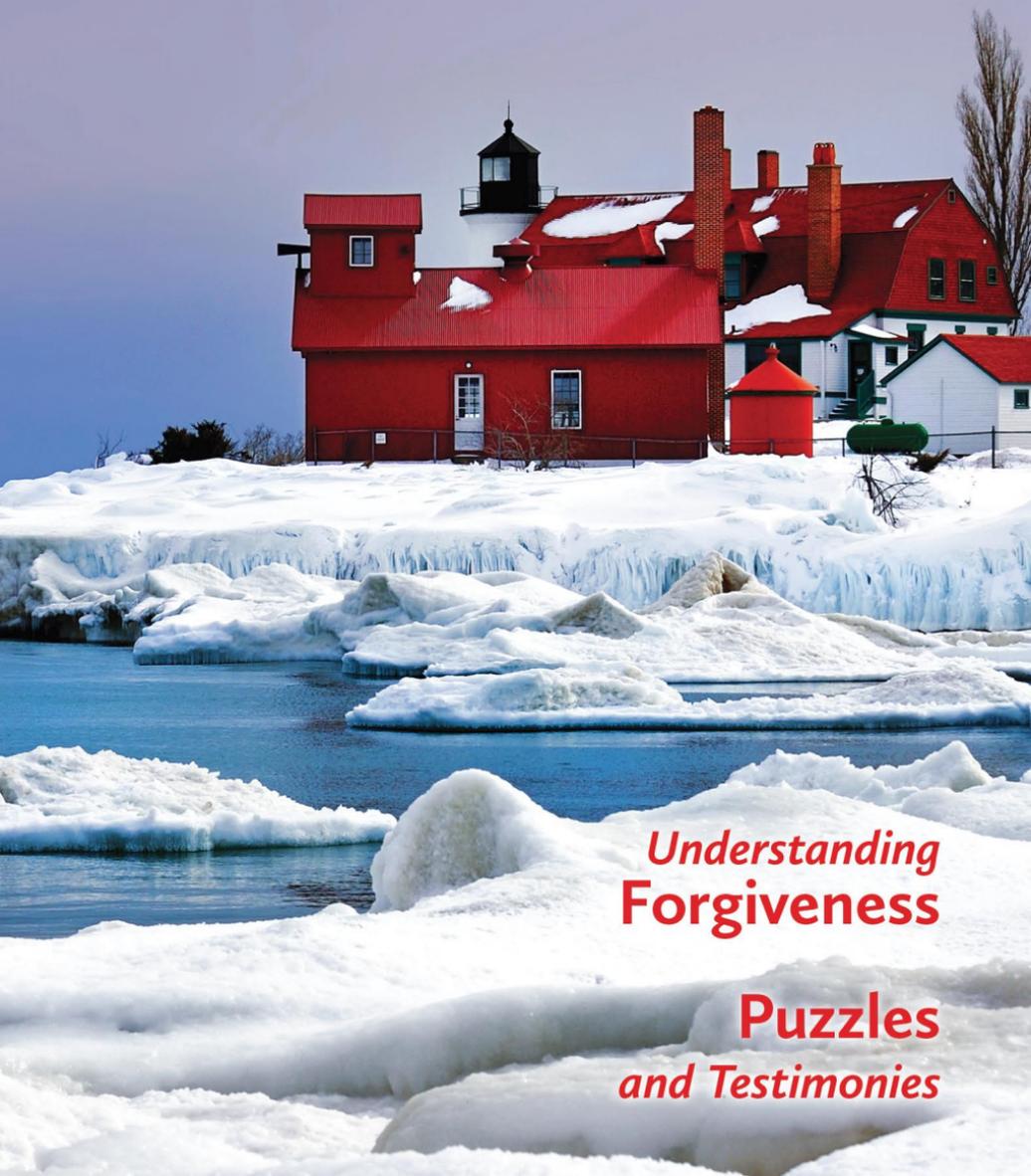


Loaves & Fishes

Issue 23



*Understanding
Forgiveness*

*Puzzles
and Testimonies*

My Savior

William R. Blake, Jr.

I never wanted to face the truth
That Jesus died for me.
So the good Lord let me
Sink to the bottom
So that I could see
That He had big plans for me.

So there I was wasting away,
My whole life torn apart.
Finally I got down on my knees
And prayed to the Lord,
And now He's given me a brand new start.

I no longer carry the weight alone
Since I have heard God's word.
Now I feel the strength of a thousand men
Because I walk with the Lord.
Jesus has given me the peace
I've searched my whole life to find.
He has cleared my conscience
By forgiving my sins,
And given me peace of mind.

Now life's daily problems
Don't seem all that bad.
I live so much more happily.
Jesus has taken away all my fears
For I know heaven is waiting for me.

Loaves & Fishes is published by Lighthouse Publishing as the Lord provides. Our goal is to point those in prison to Jesus Christ and help them experience the life, hope, and freedom of a daily walk with Him.

Subscriptions are free and funded by donations. To subscribe, send us the response form in the back of this booklet.

Pray for the inspiration and resources we need to publish this magazine.



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Loaves & Fishes

Issue 23

In This Issue...

From the Editor	2
Understanding Forgiveness	4
30 Books of the Bible Puzzle.....	8
Answer a Fool	8
Life in a Concentration Camp.....	11

Free on the Inside

Testimony of Roger L. Bundy Sr.	14
I'll Keep Stepping On.....	15
Daddy, Do You Miss Me?.....	16
Testimony of Robert Mills	17
The Fork in the Road	19
An Answered Prayer.....	20
Is Anyone Praying for Me?.....	22
Forgiveness	23
An Hour With George Mueller.....	24
Science in Creation	
Comets.....	26
The Pursuit of Godly Seed	
Father: An Anointed Teacher.....	30
Response Form.....	47

Inside Cover:

My Savior
To Touch the Sky

**Donations from your family and friends help us
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What Is Our Life?

Darold Gingerich

I'm sitting here at my desk, pondering God's control of the future and our place as humans in the world. We had our first killing frost last week, and the trees outside are gorgeous with breathtaking colors. However, by the time you read this, winter will be here, with bare trees and snow flurries.

The changing season outside reminds me of the seasons of our lives. When we are young and strong, we may think we are really going places; yet before we know it, our hair, like autumn leaves, is changing color, and soon winter comes and we pass out of this life. From a merely human point of view, this could be depressing.

Recently I came across the account in Mark 14:12-17 where Jesus sent two of His disciples to prepare a place for the Passover celebration. Even as Jesus was preparing them for some of the roughest times in their lives, his

followers thought they were on the brink of an earthly victory. They wondered how soon Jesus would be on the throne. What government positions would each of them hold? Jesus was moving forward, and it was easy to follow Him.

Yet Jesus knew the hour was at hand when He would be killed and buried for three days. He knew people would soon give up all hope of seeing Him alive again. He knew His followers would forsake Him, and that Peter would deny he ever knew Him.

In that hour, the disciples could not imagine the resurrection, but Jesus knew all about it. In Mark 14:28, He told them "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

There are times in our lives when all we can see is the cold, bare trees; but the new life of the coming spring is as real as

the present cold and darkness of winter.

Maybe you are sitting all alone in a cold concrete cell on a hard bed. Maybe you have been forgotten by your family and friends. Maybe you feel misunderstood and misjudged by the authorities. Maybe you feel like the last leaf on a bare tree, about to be blown away by the winter wind.

Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life” (John 12:24–25). Many who look like losers now will win in the end.

My friend, open your eyes to the Lord’s promises, and experience the glory of Christ’s resurrection! If we live for Him, our life here is just a shadow of a better life to come.

Jesus said in John 14:1–3, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you



**Maybe you feel like
the last leaf on a
bare tree, about to
be blown away by
the winter wind.**

to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

Compared to spending eternity with Christ, this present life seems quite temporary. Living forever with the heavenly host in the presence of God sounds like real living to me. ≈

UNDERSTANDING FORGIVENESS

Omer P. Miller

“If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Matthew 6:14–15

That is a profound statement! There seems to be nothing that seals our eternal condemnation so firmly as a refusal to forgive. But what is forgiveness?

Forgiveness is a choice, but it is more. To understand forgiveness, let’s begin by looking at what it is not. Sometimes we try to avoid facing our pain by saying something like, “He didn’t mean it,” or “She didn’t do it on purpose,” or “We all make mistakes,” or “Let’s just try to look on the bright side.”

While some of these things may be true, they are not forgiveness. Forgiveness is not excusing someone else’s wrongdoing. Forgiveness is not denying what happened or how we felt about it. Pretending we were not hurt is not forgiveness; it’s denial. Denial just stuffs the pain in the closet, where it becomes rancid and pollutes our soul.

The old saying advises us to “forgive and forget.” This suggests that once we have forgiven a wrong, we should never think about it again. There’s a problem with this idea—it’s impossible. We are made so we do remember major events in our lives, even if we don’t think of them often. Time does not erase a wrong, and even after many years, the memory of what happened can bring all the pain back to us. Trying to forget what happened is not forgiveness.

Forgiveness does not mean figuring out who was right and wrong. Sometimes we are blamed for things we didn’t do. Sometimes children are harmed and made to feel as though it was their own fault. Accepting blame for things we did not do is a way of avoiding the pain of forgiving the other person’s wrong, but it will not bring healing. On the other hand, we may try to avoid having to forgive by trying to get the other person to admit that we were right and they were wrong. We imagine that the damage will be reversed if they



Forgiveness does not mean figuring out who was right and wrong.

admit they did wrong. But “proving our point” is not forgiveness, and it will not bring healing.

It is true that we should be willing to suffer wrong without seeking revenge. However, it is also true that suffering hurts. When we deny that hurt, we cannot forgive. We merely suppress the pain, and instead of finding healing, we bring even more suffering on ourselves.

What is forgiveness then? Forgiveness is actually an economic term related to debt. Matthew 18 gives a good example of how receiving and extending forgiveness are related. In this story of Jesus, the king forgave his

servant an unpayable debt. Yet immediately afterward, the servant tried to collect a few dollars his fellow servant owed him. It appears the first servant didn’t believe the king had really forgiven him. After all, he had only asked the king for more time to pay the debt, not for complete forgiveness. Perhaps he couldn’t accept the generosity of his king. To extend forgiveness and to receive it, we need faith.

Face Your Hurts

The first step of faith in forgiveness is to face the reality of our hurt. If we’ve been in denial for a long time, we must dig the event up again and face the truth about the situation. The hardest part of forgiving is accepting as our own the undeserved pain we received. This is the obstacle that hinders most people from forgiving. When we forgive as God through Christ forgave us (Ephesians 4:32), we will be willing to bear shame, guilt, rejection, or whatever other pain comes from the offense.

When we think of Jesus, who never sinned, yet patiently carried all the guilt, fear, shame, and condemnation of our many sins, how can we find it so hard to forgive the few sins a brother or sister has committed against us?

Could this be the pain Jesus felt in the Garden of Gethsemane, where He finally surrendered to drinking the bitter cup? Forgiving people who deserve punishment is a bitter cup to drink. Are we willing to drink that bitter cup by accepting another's pain?

Sometimes those who sin against us need to be confronted about their fault. Matthew 18:15–17 tells us how to confront a brother who has sinned against us. This is to be done for his benefit, not as a means to get even with him. Although we may need to be open and honest with our brother about his sin, we are still responsible to forgive him.

Jesus died to save us when we were still rebellious sinners. If we believe He has forgiven us all, how can we demand revenge on those who have harmed us? Forgiveness is a result of accepting, through faith, God's grace, mercy, and love. Do we deserve forgiveness? Not at all!

Give Your Pain to God

Forgiveness enables us to give our pain to God. If we are to accept and bear the pain others cause us and if we are not to demand revenge, then what can we do with our pain? The only place we can unload our sorrows is at

the cross! Jesus not only died for our sins, He also rose from the grave to enable us, like Him, to bear the hurts of those who sin against us. That is why Jesus said if we do not forgive (bear) our brother's sins, he will not be able to forgive our sins.

Restore Relationships

The rewards of forgiveness are many. Most important, giving and receiving forgiveness frees our conscience from guilt, fear, shame, and resentment. Forgiving releases us from inventing punishments for the one who hurt us.

Forgiving others makes way for receiving forgiveness ourselves, for no one really deserves forgiveness. Breaking a borrowed tool requires no forgiveness because it can be



*Forgiveness frees
our conscience from
guilt, fear, shame,
and resentment.*



*Forgiveness allows
God to restore His
relationship with us.*

repaired, but who can repair a broken heart? How can child abuse and neglect be undone? How can an unfaithful husband make up for the damage to his marriage?

In such cases, the offender may repent, but he cannot repay. Relationships can be restored only through forgiveness. Do those who have hurt us deserve our forgiveness? No more than we deserve God's forgiveness.

Isaiah 43:25 says, "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins."

Think about this for a moment. I used to think God forgave our sins for *our* sake, but here He says He forgives for *His* sake. Why? How does He benefit by forgiving us? He gains a *relationship!*

Our transgressions stand between us and God. By forgiving

us, He opens the door to restore His blessed relationship with us. For us to profit, we must accept that gift. We can only benefit from God's forgiveness as we repent from our sins, such as unbelief and pride.

Like God, we also forgive others for our own sake. Forgiveness releases us from the need to get even with our offender. Our forgiveness does not depend on the offender's repentance. Instead of waiting for the other to make the first move, we are removing everything that stands in the way of restoring the relationship. If the other person accepts your forgiveness, the relationship can be restored. What freedom we can experience when we release our desire for vengeance to God!

To forgive others is to extend grace, mercy, and love. Grace grants the offender the release he does not deserve. Mercy shows kindness to the offender by withholding the punishment he has earned. Love sacrifices our rights by accepting the pain the offender gave us. To truly forgive others is humanly impossible, but with God all things are possible. May God empower us, through faith in His promises, to forgive our brothers and sisters from our heart. ☺

30 Books of the Bible Puzzle

There are 30 books of the Bible hidden in this paragraph. Can you find them? It's a most remarkable puzzle; my friend worked on it during a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping himself occupied for hours. He passed it on to the rest of us, including one guy who used to do puzzles in his john boat while he fished. Another friend studied it while playing his banjo; Ellen Gray, a writer, mentioned it in a newspaper column. According to a local paper, the Chronicle, some Alpha Delta Phi lemonade booth set a new fundraising record when they featured this puzzle at an event. One friend of mine judges this puzzle to be such a tough job that before she starts working on it, she brews a cup of tea to steady her nerves. There are a few easy ones, for a fact. Some of them, however, may leave you in a jam, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. The truth is, from answers I've received, I have to admit it usually takes a minister or a scholar to see some of them, at the worst. I suppose something in our genes is responsible for blinding people to where some of those are. As my friend Daniel Humana humbly remarked, "They're all hidden in plain sight!" I've heard plenty of lamentations from people who simply can't find them all. One helpful revelation is that some books, like Timothy and Samuel, may occur without their numbers. Also, punctuation and spaces in the middle of a name are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete really well against those who claim to know the answers. Don't make a disgusted exodus from the project; I assure you there really are 30 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in this paragraph. ~

Answers on page 13

ANSWER A FOOL...

An irreverent man who hated Christianity met the evangelist John Wesley on a narrow foot bridge. Recognizing Wesley, he refused to make way for him, remarking contemptuously, "I never give way to a fool!"

Mr. Wesley, stepping aside, answered with a good-humored smile, "I always do."

Can We Do This Every 3 Months?



Our readers would be glad to get a new issue every 3 months, but until this year we haven't had the funds to maintain that kind of schedule.

If you have the means to help, return this form to learn more about the needs in prison and how you can help us publish *Loaves & Fishes* every quarter.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/St/Zip: _____

Email: _____

(By sharing your email address, you give us permission to follow-up via email.)

Word Search Puzzle

Fiery Furnace

Find these words in the puzzle below.

Abed-Nego	Fall Down	Judges	Servants
Astonished	Flame	Lyre	Seven Times
Bound	Four Men	Magistrates	Son of God
Cast	Fury	Meshach	Symphony
Chaldeans	Garments	Midst	Three Men
Command	Gathered	Most High God	Treasurers
Counselors	Governors	Not Singed	Trousers
Dedication	Harp	Officials	
Deliver	Horn	Rage	

F R E M S R O L E S N U O C D
U B S E V E N T I M E S U C O
R T E S H S T N E M R A G E G
Y R G H A S P A S E N D S D H
A O D A A R T L R Z O R O E G
B U U C A S A U N T T E N R I
E S J H D I S S W B S V O E H
D E D I C A T I O N I I F H T
N R M I E N O U D R N L G T S
E S F R A E N Z L O G E O A O
G F T V N D I A L H E D D G M
O E R Y L N S N A E D L A H C
N E M E E R H T F O U R M E N
S S R O N R E V O G E M A L F
C O M M A N D S Y M P H O N Y

Life in a **CONCENTRATION CAMP** *in Russia*

Bernhard Roeder



One evening I said to Alexander, “How did you come to have such a living faith in God?”

He answered, “I have been in this concentration camp for a long time. Before, I was just like the rest of you. I had not forgotten about God, but I did not take Him seriously. That changed one day in August 1948.

“I was working in Rudnik, in the southwestern part of the city of Workuta. We were building a new mine shaft. Two Christians, one old and one young, had been sent from another concentration camp to join our crew. Although they were simple men, they were so influential that no camp officer wanted them for long, so they kept getting transferred. While they were with us, they refused to work on Sundays, even though they were beaten and imprisoned for it. They strictly obeyed the commandments of God, and we all talked about them. Some respected them, while others

mocked them, but the number of mockers grew less and less. This angered the camp officer, a bloodthirsty young secret detective, until he could not rest.

“One Sunday, when the two Christians again refused to work, the officer decided to make an example of them the next day. On our way to the pit the next morning, we noticed something was wrong: instead of the two regular watchdogs, there were six, and they were howling as if they had not been fed.

“After we started work, the camp officer appeared and ordered the two Christians to go out to the tundra. Everyone knew what that meant. The officer would let them get out of camp, then report that they had been killed while trying to escape.

“It was an unlawful command, and they could have refused to obey it, but that would have been against their

The officer planned to force the Christians out of camp, then report that they were killed trying to escape.



faith. They went quietly through the gate, the younger following the older. They had taken off their caps and carried them in their folded hands, praying as they walked. We all gathered at the fence to watch.

“After they had gone about sixty yards, the secret detective sent the dogs after them. When the two men heard the dogs coming, they turned around. The older man took the younger man’s hands and crossed them on his chest, then did the same with his own. They lifted their eyes to the sunny sky and moved their lips. Although we couldn’t hear them above the howling of the dogs, they seemed to be singing. The dogs closed in, and most of us covered our eyes to avoid seeing what would happen next.

“When the enraged dogs reached the men, they seemed confused, running around them in a circle instead of attack-

ing. Their howling changed to a puzzled whine, then to a friendly whimper. Wagging their tails, the dogs crawled to the men’s feet and licked their shoes. Now we could hear the men singing. All the prisoners, and even some secret detectives, crossed themselves. Many of us began sobbing. The camp officer turned pale and left the pit. Finally, one of the secret detectives whistled to the dogs and called the two men to come back.

“This miracle was talked about in every concentration camp in Workuta. That same evening the commanding officer sent the two Christians away; he didn’t dare touch them again. We heard they were taken to a concentration camp in the forest lands toward the south, where no one would know what had happened at Workuta.

“Since that day I am a Christian. Many others were saved that day, although not all with-



*Instead of attacking,
the enraged dogs
wagged their tails
and licked the
prisoners' shoes.*



stood the testings that followed. I had seen something stronger than the power of communism, which has conquered half the world. God is alive, and He speaks to us and does miracles, just as He did in the past, because He loves us.”

Is your God as real to you as He was to these two men? Do you

know the God of the Bible heroes listed in Hebrews 11? Do you know Peter's God in Acts 5:17-34 and Acts 12? Do you know the God of the three men in the fiery furnace in Daniel 3?

That God can be your God. Believe in Him, repent of your sin, and know the joy of His salvation!

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Answers to 30 Books of the Bible Puzzle on page 8

There are 30 books of the Bible hidden in this paragraph. Can you find them? It's **a most remarkable** puzzle; my friend worked on it during a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, **keeping** himself occupied for hours. He passed it on to the rest of us, including one guy who used to do puzzles in his **john** boat while he fished. Another friend studied it while playing his **banjo**; **Ellen Gray**, a writer, mentioned it in a newspaper column. According to a local paper, the **Chronicle**, some Alpha Delta **Phi lemonade** booth set a new fundraising record when they featured this puzzle at an event. One friend of mine **judges** this puzzle to be such a tough **job** that before she starts working on it, **she brews** a cup of tea to steady her nerves. **There** are a few easy ones, for a **fact**. Some of them, however, may leave you in a **jam**, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. The **truth** is, **from answers** I've received, I have to admit **it** usually takes a minister or a scholar to see some of **them**, **at the worst**. I suppose something in our **genes** is responsible for blinding people to where some of **those** are. As my friend **Daniel Humana** humbly agreed, "They're all hidden in plain sight!" I've heard plenty of **lamentations** from people who simply can't find them all. One helpful **revelation** is that some books, like **Timothy** and **Samuel**, may occur without their **numbers**. Also, punctuation and spaces in the middle of a name are **normal**. A **chipper** attitude will help you **compete** really well against those who claim to know the answers. Don't make a disgusted **exodus** from the project; I assure you there really are 30 books of the Bible **lurking** somewhere in this paragraph.



Free on the Inside

Prisoners Encourage Prisoners

TESTIMONY OF ROGER L. BUNDY SR.

In 2004, I was going to church not far from my home, and I truly thought I had given my life to Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, I had not. I had fooled myself and everyone else, but I did not fool Jesus Christ. All I was doing was living for the devil. The result was that I was arrested, and was looking at up to ten years in prison.

When I was arrested, my wife left me, and within a few weeks she was with someone else. I was so hurt and upset I tried to kill myself.

One day I was asking the Lord, “Why do you put a family together and then break it up?”

He said to me, “My child, do not worry about your family or about tomorrow, because tomorrow may never come.”

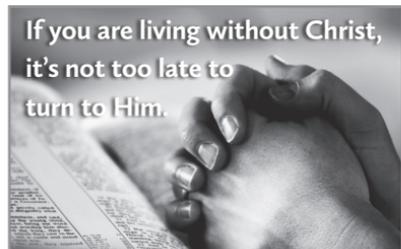
Then I said, “Lord, please forgive all my sins and come into my heart. I am going to let you do your work on my behalf.”

As crazy as it sounds, I thank Jesus Christ for allowing me to end up in prison. He knew I needed to have my eyes opened somehow.

To the One who helped me throughout my life, I say, “Thank You, Father in heaven, for helping me through all this. I love you, Jesus!”

Remember, tomorrow may never come. If you are living without Christ, it’s not too late to turn to Him. Repent of your past sin, surrender to God, and ask Him to forgive you and come into your life.

May God be with you all and bless you. Amen. 



I'll Keep Stepping On

Jimmy Robertson
Rutledge State Prison, Columbus, GA

The roads that I've traveled
Have been rough and wide,
But I'll keep stepping on,
With the Lord by my side.
My friends have criticized me,
And some have put me down;
But I'll keep on serving Him,
And some day I'll wear a crown.
This mountain that I climb—
I can reach the top,
But I've got to keep on stepping,
And never, never stop.

'Cause when I take one step,
The Lord is taking two,
And when I wait patiently,
He will see me through.

Sometimes I may be troubled,
And my heart be filled with doubts;
But I'll give them all to the Lord,
And He will work them out.
I might feel confused at times,
When I'm all alone;
But I'll always remember—
I've got to keep stepping on.



Daddy, Do You Miss Me?



Daddy, do you miss me? Do you remember me? Do you ever think of me?

I know you are out there somewhere. I feel your call to me, pulling me to find you, but it seems the more I turn, trying to find you, the more you are hidden behind the crowd.

I miss you, I love you, and I remember our short times together. I think of you often, wondering where you are, how you are, what you are doing, and whether you miss me as I do you.

Daddy, where are? Why can't I find you? Do you want me to know you? Will you be happy or mad at me for finding you?

I wish you were here, holding me in your arms; reassuring my fears; comforting me that our tomorrows will be better; brushing my hair from my face. Looking down at me with fatherly love and adoration, as I find solace in listening to the rhythm of your heart beating in your chest. I remember how, when I was little, you were my hero, always the best, because you never tried to be like the rest.

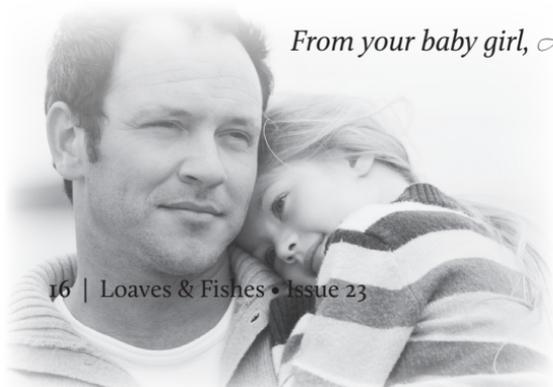
I miss you, Daddy! I wish you were here with me, for me. I wish I could see you, be with you, talk with you, hear all the old things from you that would be always new to me.

I love you so much, daddy! I wish we could become what we were meant to be—spending time together, father and daughter, just you and me. All the times we cherished, as brief as they were, in my mind's eye I clearly see.

Daddy, this is to you, hoping one day you'll find me, or I will find you. I'm still holding tight the dreams and memories of the man my daddy will always be—a treasure untucked from my heart for all to see.

From your baby girl, Anjela

Anjela Michelle Smith
Crain Unit Sycamore
Gatesville, TX



TESTIMONY OF ROBERT MILLS

I am an inmate at Great Meadows Correctional in Comstock, NY. I am writing this to share a message of hope that may save your life.

Before I begin, I want to say that this would not be possible without the guidance and direction of my Lord Jesus Christ, through which I can do all things.

I'm from Buffalo, NY. I grew up in a broken home, and both my parents were addicted to drugs and alcohol. As a young child, I was physically and emotionally abused, and I was bounced between family members and foster homes until I turned 18 in 1998.

When I turned 18, I thought, "Hey, I'm finally free! No more rules, no more abuse; I can live as I please!"

At first I honestly tried to live a decent life. I got a job and a nice woman, and everything seemed okay. However, the newness wore off after about six months, and I felt as though something was missing from my life. I was missing Jesus, but I didn't know it yet.

I got involved in street life, drugs, and multiple women. For a while I felt like I had a purpose again, but this path led me to the prison cell where I'm sitting now.



**When I turned 18, I thought,
"Hey, I'm finally free!"**

Since I was young, I believed in God. However, I didn't put my faith in Him, and I didn't allow Him to work in my life. For years I felt like a victim—as though the world owed me something better. Only recently did I realize that no one owes me anything. I've found that life is about our choices and how we handle each situation.

By the time I was about 23 years old, I was addicted to cocaine and heroin. I was a lost soul, living in self-pity. I often tried to straighten out my life; I went through twelve different rehabs and jails, but nothing seemed to work. I always went back to the streets and drugs. I didn't want to feel, I didn't know how to deal with my emotions, and I didn't trust Jesus.

One day I was in serious withdrawal from heroin, so I went to my mother's ex-boyfriend's house to get money he owed me. We got into an argument, one thing led to another, and he lost his life. Until that day, I had never considered myself a violent person, and I told myself my drug problem was not that bad.

Not a day goes by that I don't think of the pain and hurt that I've caused my family, friends, and children. Everyone around

me was harmed by my destructive lifestyle. There is nothing I can do to bring that man back, and I am truly sorry for what I have done. Maybe, just maybe, I'll be able to help some other lost soul before they get to where I am now!

Three or four months ago, I got down on my knees and cried out to Jesus to help me be strong and to forgive my sins. I even started a Bible study course through the mail, which is helping me a lot. For the first time in my life, I feel free—I am not physically free, but I'm free from the self-made prison I've been living in all these years. I am no longer holding on to the horrible things in my past. This is possible only through Jesus as I put all my faith in Him.

I'm learning to forgive myself and others who sin against me. We will never be flawless, but change and mercy are available to anyone who seeks it through the salvation of Christ! For Christ to change us, we must put all of our faith in Him; we can't pick and choose when to trust Him.

Because of my family's lifestyle, I recently learned that I have hepatitis C, and that my mother is in the final stages of complete liver failure. No matter

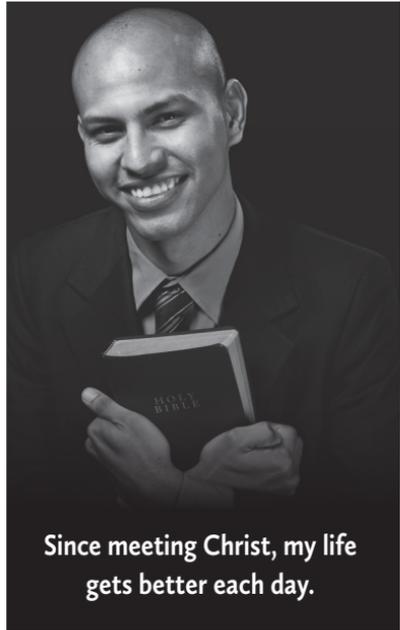


what, there will always be trials and tribulations in life here on earth, but always remember, anything is possible through Christ if we just believe in Him.

Since meeting Christ, my life and outlook have changed much already, and life gets better each day. My glass is now half full instead of half empty.

In the future, I want to take a message of hope to young people, so that maybe they will choose a better direction than I did.

Remember, my friend, the message is hope and the promise is freedom! ~



Since meeting Christ, my life gets better each day.

The Fork in the Road

William Billington
CCI Chester, Cheshire, CT

You're walking down the road of life
When you come to a fork in the road.
The road divides, it splits in two;
You must choose which way to go.

To the left you will be walking
On moss and fine grains of sand;
All that you want is there for the taking;
You'll need only to extend your hand.

Go right, and you will stumble
Through thickets and jagged stones;
There you will work, struggle, and build,
And there you will learn to grow.

Left is the way that many will walk,
But the walk is gilded by sin;
Only few will choose the way that is right,
To the life that is waiting in heaven.

AN ANSWERED PRAYER

Franky Hamilton
Baldwin State Prison, Hardwick, GA

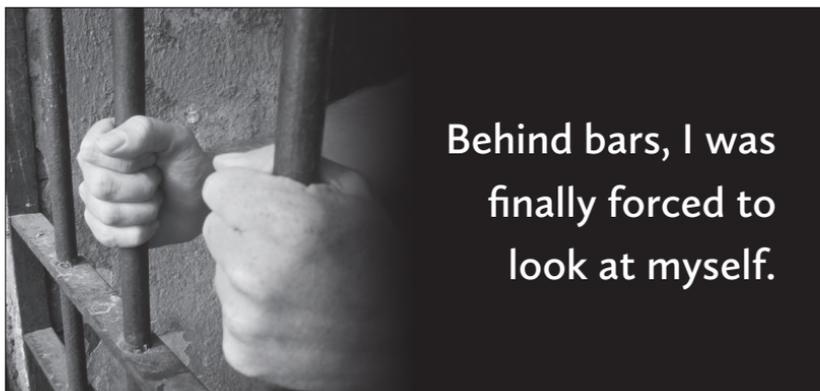
I am almost 39 years old, and I have been incarcerated since the age of sixteen. I am serving a twenty-year sentence at Bostick State Prison. My mom died when I was eight years old, and my dad died when I was twelve.

Reacting to these and other painful experiences, I became bitter toward life. Many times I asked myself, “What is the purpose for my life?” This question always seemed to be answered with silence. I felt lost, and tried to cover it up with drugs, alcohol, fighting, and crime. I gained a reputation for irresponsibility and violence. No one trusted me, including myself. I didn’t dare slow down enough to look at

myself, and I never knew what I was going to do next.

Behind bars, all alone, I was forced to do what I had avoided for so long—to look at myself. I hated what I saw: a lost boy who still hadn’t received an answer to the question, “Why was I born?” I kept looking; I wanted to know why I had breath in my lungs, blood in my veins, and thoughts in my head. All this couldn’t have been put together for no reason, but why was I here?

One day, after searching through all the possibilities I could think of, I went into my room, looked out the window, and said, “God, please come to me and take away this lonely



Behind bars, I was
finally forced to
look at myself.

**My answer had come;
I finally knew why I
had been born.**



pain that I can't escape. Show me why You have put this body together and breathed Your breath into it. I believe Your Son Jesus Christ died for my sins, to cleanse me of all unrighteousness. Please wash me with Your cleansing blood, and give me Your Spirit, so I can learn the reason for my existence."

Immediately I was flooded with peace, as if everything would be all right. It was as if God Himself had His arms around me, saying, "Your answer has come; you shall preach my word to the lost souls of this

world and shall be called a child of God."

Finally! No more silence; my answer had come! I finally knew why I had been born, and all it had taken was to ask the right person—God.

Since that time, I have been diligently studying the Bible, praying, and meditating on the words of my heavenly Father, so I can do what I was born to do.

I am sharing this story to show that no matter how long and hard you search, you will only find what you are searching for if you seek God. ~

**In prayer it is better to have a heart without
words than words without a heart.**

— John Bunyan

Is Anyone Praying for Me?

Art Mayse

Deberry Special Needs Facility, Nashville, TN

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Lord, I've been reading the Bible;
There is so much I don't understand.
I'm not sure what I should be saying,
But I'm praying the best that I can.

You see, Lord, I'm locked up in prison,
But I know that prayer is the key;
For men were set free in the Bible
Because someone prayed they would be.

Lord, who prayed for Paul and for Silas
While they were both locked up in jail?
For they were both free before daybreak,
And the Bible mentions no bail.

And I wonder who prayed for old Daniel
And made those lions leave him alone.
Who prayed for one little lost sheep
And caused a whole flock to come home?

Who all prayed for you, Jesus,
While you were nailed to that tree?
I guess, Lord, I'm really saying,
"Is anyone praying for me?"



Forgiveness

Why should I be forgiven
If I cannot forgive?
Should I think I'm righteous
When this is how I live?
We all have sinned
And fallen short of God's glory.
Who do I think I am
In light of that fact?
God, teach me true forgiveness,
So I don't feel like the weight
Of the whole world is on my back.
Must I forgive everybody,
For all the wrong they've done?
If I want to share in the blood
Of your only begotten Son.
Lord, I want the blood
Of Jesus all over me.
Teach me how to forgive, Lord,
So I can finally be free.

Marcus L. Williams
Holmes Correctional Institution, Bonifay, FL

An Hour With George Mueller

by Darold Gingerich

This little 26-page book can be read in about an hour, but it could change the way you approach your Christian life! It offers a short glimpse into the life of a man who believed God.

George Mueller was a Christian evangelist and director of the Ashley Down Orphanage in Bristol, England, during the 1800s. During his life, he cared for a total of 10,024 orphans. He also established 117 schools, which provided Christian education to over 120,000 children, many of them orphans. Amazingly, he did all this in the 1800s without a fundraising board; in fact, he refused to ask for donations, preferring to trust God's provision in answer to his prayers. He died in England in 1898, at 92 years old.

Excerpt from page 15:

Charles Inglis, the well-known evangelist, relates the following remarkable incident:

"When I first came to America thirty-one years ago, I crossed the Atlantic with the captain of a steamer who was one of the most devoted men I ever

knew; and when we were off the banks of Newfoundland he said to me: 'Mr. Inglis, the last time I crossed here, five weeks ago, one of the most extraordinary things happened that has completely revolutionized the whole of my Christian life. Up to that time I was one of your ordinary Christians. We had a man of God on board, George Mueller, of Bristol. I had been on that bridge for twenty-two hours and never left it. I was startled by someone tapping me on the shoulder. It was George Mueller.

"'Captain,' said he, 'I have come to tell you that I must be in Quebec on Saturday afternoon.' This was Wednesday.

"'It is impossible,' I said.

"'Very well, if your ship can't take me, God will find some other means of locomotion to take me. I have never broken an engagement in fifty-seven years.'

"'I would willingly help you, but how can I? I am helpless.'

"'Let us go down to the chart room and pray,' he said.

"I looked at this man and I thought to myself, 'What lunatic asylum could the man have



George Mueller cared for over 10,000 orphans without ever asking for a donation.

come from? I never heard of such a thing.’

“Mr. Mueller,’ I said, ‘do you know how dense this fog is?’

“No,’ he replied, ‘my eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living God, Who controls every circumstance of my life.’

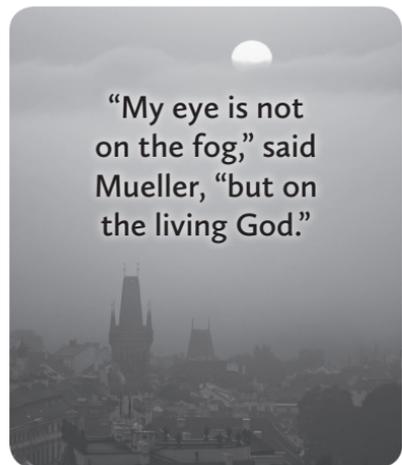
“He went down on his knees, and he prayed one of the most simple prayers. I thought to myself, ‘That would suit a children’s class, where the children were not more than eight or nine years of age.’ The burden of his prayer was something like this: ‘O Lord, if it is consistent with Thy will, please remove this fog in five minutes. You know the engagement You made for me in Quebec for Saturday. I believe it is Your will.’

“When he had finished, I was going to pray, but he put his hand on my shoulder and told me not to pray.

“First,’ he said, ‘you do not believe God will do it; and second, I believe He has done it. And there is no need whatever for you to pray about it.’

“I looked at him, and George Mueller said this: ‘Captain, I have known my Lord for fifty-seven years and there has never been a single day that I have failed to gain an audience with the King. Get up, Captain, and open the door, and you will find the fog is gone.’ I got up, and the fog was gone. On Saturday afternoon George Mueller was in Quebec.” ~

We were so impressed with this book that we reprinted it a few years ago. We still have quite a stash and would be glad to send you a copy if you would like to read the rest of the booklet. Just check the box on the order form.





Science in Creation

Comets

Andrew Zimmerman

We drove down the dark, deserted farm lane and parked next to a pond. My home-built telescope, along with its disassembled stand, was carefully stowed in the trunk of my car. It was a clear, black night, late in 1985.

In anticipation of the return of Halley's Comet, I had built an eight-inch Newtonian reflector telescope. Using homemade testing and measuring apparatus, I had ground and polished a hefty chunk of Pyrex to within a millionth of an inch of the ideal parabolic curve. Now we set up the telescope and went to work.

Studying the star chart with the comet's track superimposed on it, I star-hopped to the location for the current date. Sure enough, there was a fuzzy ball

exactly where it was predicted to be! Having anticipated this moment for years, I was thrilled to actually find the faint object. It didn't even matter that the comet's visit during my lifetime was one of the least spectacular on record.

Andrew has had an avid interest in science since he started studying it in his early years of school. More recently, he has been blessed by studying the work of creation scientists such as Henry Morris and Ken Ham. Because of his interest in science and his belief in a literal six-day creation, he enjoys telling others about creation science. He lives in Central Pennsylvania with his wife and children.



Comets have long fascinated and frightened sky observers. The appearances of Halley's Comet, every 75 to 76 years, have been recorded since 240 BC. In ancient times, such appearances were associated with disasters. For example, Halley's Comet appeared around the time of the Jewish rebellion before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Because the orbital motion of heavenly bodies was not understood, it seemed that comets appeared abruptly, moved erratically, and just as abruptly disappeared. As late as 1910, many people were afraid of being poisoned when the earth passed through the tail of Halley's Comet.

The most spectacular comet of recent decades was the Hale-Bopp Comet, discovered in 1995. Dubbed the Great Comet of 1997, it was visible to the naked eye for a record eighteen months. The previous record holder was the Great Comet of 1811, visible for 9 months.

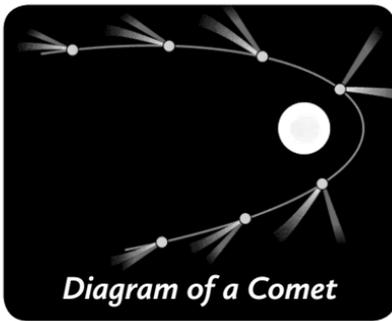
Comets appear as balls of fuzz against the background of stars on a dark sky. The word comet comes from the Greek word *komhth*, meaning *long-haired*. Some comets are bright enough to be seen with the naked eye, even in daylight, but most are small, dim fuzz-balls that require binoculars or a telescope to find them.

A comet consists of three major components: the nucleus, the coma, and the tail. The nucleus is composed of ice and dust, like a gigantic, dirty snowball, and is usually only a few kilometers across. The coma and tail make up the comet's atmosphere. The coma is a ball of gas and dust surrounding the nucleus, and can be 10,000 to 100,000 kilometers across. Comets lose some of their mass when they pass close to the sun. The ice of the nucleus sublimates, or changes to a gas, when heated by the sun. The sun ionizes the gas and dust particles released from the nucleus, making the coma visible. The solar wind from the sun pushes the dust particles away from the sun, forming the long, spectacular tail of the comet.

As the ice evaporates from the nucleus, some of the dust particles are left behind, creating a dark crust, much like the

crust of dirt you can find on melting snow piles around a parking lot. Comet Halley was photographed by five different spacecraft in 1986. The photographs show the black crust of the nucleus, which absorbs heat from the sun.

The easiest comets to observe are those with long, elliptical orbits. The shape of such orbits brings them in from the distant regions of the solar system, closer to the sun and earth, where we can see them. A comet's tail grows longer as it gets closer to the sun, and it disappears when the comet moves away from the sun once more.



Since Comet Halley's return, there have been other spacecraft fly-bys of comets. In 2004, after a five-year spaceflight, the spacecraft Stardust passed through the coma of comet Wild 2, captured samples of the comet's atmosphere, and returned to

earth. In July 2005, the spacecraft Deep Impact flew by Comet Tempel 1 and dropped a 370-kilogram impactor of copper and aluminum onto the comet. The mother craft watched the impact and the resulting crater and sent the data to earth.

Because comets are partially "burned up" every time they pass close to the sun, they suggest that the universe is relatively young. There are still thousands of short-period comets passing close to the sun. This raises a question: were the comets we observe today created along with the solar system, or is there is a mechanism for generating new comets?

Evolutionary astronomers explain the existence of comets by proposing an "Oort Cloud," thought to be made up of as many as a trillion comet nuclei, 50,000 AU away. (An AU, or astronomical unit, is the distance from sun to earth.) They theorize that collisions between the comets, or the gravitational pull of stars, may occasionally eject a comet from this cloud. Some of these may travel toward the sun and be observed as newly discovered comets. The Oort Cloud has never been observed, however. Another part of the explanation involves the Kuiper

Belt outside Neptune's orbit, thought to contain a billion comets.

The creation model has a much simpler explanation: God created the comets with the other heavenly objects on the fourth day of creation. Since this was "only" 6,000 year ago, many of the comets are still traveling in their original orbits around the sun.

Comet hunting is a fascinating hobby. Comet hunters use wide field telescopes to photograph large areas of the sky. Photographs from two different times are compared, and any object that has moved against the background of stars is investigated. Comet hunters need detailed knowledge of the Messier objects—fuzzy sky objects, such as galaxies, that are easily confused with comets.

Besides losing mass through evaporation, there are two other "loss mechanisms" by which comets can disappear from the solar system. Very rarely, a comet can collide with a planet, bringing an end to the comet's journeys around the sun. In addition, interactions with a planet's gravitational field can divert a comet from its orbit, swinging it out of the solar system.

As a comet passes near the sun, it leaves behind a trail of debris. When the earth passes through this debris cloud, we can see the particles entering earth's atmosphere and burning up. These "shooting stars" are called meteors.

Earth's yearly passage through the debris clouds of various comets produces annual meteor showers. The Eta Aquarids, in May, and the Orionids, in October, are from previous passages of Halley's Comet. The Perseids, in August, are from Swift-Tuttle. The Leonids, in November, are from Comet Tempel-Tuttle. The Leonids produced some spectacular meteor storms in 1998 to 2002; I once counted over 500 Leonids in 45 minutes!

Along with the whole creation, astronomical objects like comets proclaim the greatness of the Creator. Depending on when you are reading this, you may be able to see Comet Ison for yourself. Whenever you marvel at the wonders of creation, give the praise and glory to God!

"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."

Revelation 4:11



The Pursuit of Godly Seed

Father: An Anointed Teacher

Denny Kenaston

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” Deuteronomy 6:6–9

Father, you are a teacher. You are the leader and head of your home, and that makes you a teacher. The terms teacher and leader are so closely connected that it is hard to say a man is a leader if he is not a teacher. Just as God called Abraham the “father of many nations” (Genesis 17:5), He calls you a teacher. The Lord has called each of you fathers to preach and teach in your home. The ability to fulfill the task is included in

the call; the Lord, He is God. When God said, “Thou shalt teach,” He intended to give you everything you need to do it.

Do you believe this? Dear brothers, we are dealing with “God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did” (Romans 4:17b). I wonder if we understand this life of faith we are called to. According to the

.....
Denny Kenaston and his wife, Jackie, were delivered by God from the drugs, drunkenness, and immorality of the hippie culture of the 1970’s. Denny’s book, *The Pursuit of Godly Seed*, shares the wisdom God has given him during many years of raising a godly family and serving as a pastor. On July 4, 2012, after struggling for several months with brain cancer, Denny finished his race and went to his eternal reward. We pray that this selection from his book will challenge you and change your heart and home.

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Bible, without this kind of faith, “it is impossible to please Him” (Hebrews 11:6a).

Why am I speaking so firmly and confidently? Most men I meet who are coming to grips with the needs in their homes say they can’t teach. They are reluctant to begin because they believe they are not able. That is absolutely not true. That is like looking at an acorn and saying it can’t become an oak tree. Those who believe in its ability will put it into the ground and watch it grow. Faith works in the same way.

I have seen dozens of men who “could not teach” become effective preachers and teachers in their homes and in the pulpit. By faith we look at an acorn and say, “You are an oak tree.” This is exactly how faith works with you men. You are a teacher.

When God called Jeremiah to be a prophet, He said to him, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5). That is how God works.

Jeremiah replied, “I cannot speak, for I am a youth” (Jeremiah 1:6b). God would not accept that excuse; and brothers, God will not hear our excuses ei-



I have seen dozens of men who “could not teach” become effective teachers in their homes.

ther. God said to Jeremiah, “You are a prophet,” but Jeremiah said, “I am a youth.” Who was right, God or Jeremiah?

Brethren, we need to rise up, believe God, and “step into the water” of teaching our children. Most men who “can’t teach” grew up without being taught; it was not passed on to them by their fathers. We must break the chain of disobedience and pass on a legacy of teaching to the next generation. I believe God will meet you at your point of need as you trust Him and

obey His precept to teach. The Bible is filled with men who felt inadequate, yet moved ahead, trusting God. Their willingness to trust Him is the reason their stories are in the Bible.

When God wanted Moses to build Him a tabernacle in the wilderness, He put His Spirit on certain men to build it. He called Bezaleel to lead out in the work. Look what God did for Bezaleel.



If your children are to turn out as God wants them to, you must become a teacher.

God said, “I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship” (Exodus 31:3). In this manner, a place was built where God could dwell.

God works the same way today. He is building Himself a habitation by the Spirit. It is not a physical tabernacle, but a spiritual building. For “the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands” (Acts 7:48), but in the hearts of men and women who are set apart for Him. We fathers are called to this eternal work. God will give us abilities for the task, just as He did the men of old.

If your children are to turn out as God wants them to, you must become a teacher. It is not an option; it is imperative. My burden in the beginning of this chapter is to create a desire. You do not have to start out as an apt teacher; all you need is a desire to communicate the Word of God into the hearts of your children. If you truly have the burden, God will teach you how to be a teacher.

Let’s reflect again about the family I met in Canada long ago. When I visited that family, I received a vision that changed my life. God placed in me a desire and a burden to go home and train my children. That father did not sit me down and teach me anything I needed to do when I went home. I saw a godly family having a godly influence, and I said, “Lord, I want it. I’ve

got to have it. I will have it by the grace of God.”

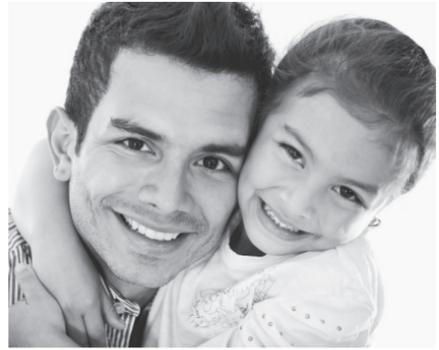
I went home with that desire, and I started. I was not a good teacher, but I started. I made a lot of mistakes, but I started. And because I had a desire and moved forward with purpose, God taught me how to teach the children.

Allow me to reflect a moment on who should do the teaching. This is a very important question in our modern American society. I believe the father is to be the primary teacher of the Word in the home. This is very clear as we stay close to the Word in our studies. At first, as I began to write, I thought to myself, “Does the father do it all?”

No, the father does not do all the instruction of the family. Mother is also to be active in teaching the children. We can see allusions to this in Proverbs. She is to come alongside her husband’s primary teaching with more of the same as she walks in her house. She is in the supportive role, a helper for her husband.

Many people today feel strongly that the woman is more suited to relate to the children on a teaching level. This is very wrong, and as always, it has dangerous repercussions. God, who

made man and woman, knows who is best suited to carry out this most important task.



**Children naturally
want to please
their parents.**

A God-Given Door of Opportunity

Several times in the preceding two chapters, I mentioned the natural desire of children to please Mom and Dad. This desire is placed there by God, who had special training purposes in mind. While we fan the flames of these desires by building close relationships, God wants us to be busy teaching them how they can please us. We have been given an open door of opportunity. This special period of grace is given to us and our children by

Almighty God. It is His design. Consider some clear signs of this special grace period:

Children want to please their parents.

The hearts of children have a natural desire to please their father and mother. They feed on our approval and live to see us smile at what they are doing. I have already covered this blessed desire. Since they want to please us, why not teach them how they can do it?

Children love to learn.

Children have a natural desire to learn. They come into life knowing nothing, but longing to gain information and skills. This is the teachable stage of life for them. If they are crawling, they want to walk. If they are talking, they want to learn to read. We need to seize the moment, teaching and training them with all we have.

Children do not see our flaws.

During the first years of their lives, because they are ignorant, they don't see their parents' very real flaws and failures. This adds to their admiration of us, leaving them open to receive all we teach them. Once, when Elisabeth was about ten

years old, I felt the need to make a confession to the family during our devotion time. Elisabeth came to me later and said, "Papa, you don't need to do that. You never do anything wrong. You're the best Papa in the whole world!"

I just smiled at her and said, "Well Elisabeth, when you get a little bit older, you will feel differently about this."

This is even true in the ghettos of Chicago. Dad may be a drunk, who has left the family, and Mom may drink and beat the children in anger. Yet the children are still proud of their parents. Proverbs says "the glory of children is their father" (Proverbs 17:6b).

Children have quick, sharp minds.

When children are young, they can learn very quickly. Their minds are sharp, fresh, and impressionable. They can memorize with ease.

Children's minds are uncluttered.

Their minds are not loaded down with cares, distractions, and many things they want to do. A mind free of these things can learn easily. The process of meditation and application comes naturally to them.

Children are masters at imitation.

This is where the little cliché, “monkey see, monkey do” originates. Because of their admiration of you and their ability to mimic and learn by example, they want to be just like you; be someone they can copy.

Children are gullible.

They will swallow anything you give them. They believe in you, and they believe your words. You can teach them anything you want, and they will believe it. The nonsense of Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny are good examples of this. Why not take advantage of this and pour truth into them?

I think I have listed enough examples to make my point. We have been given a special door of opportunity. We dare not bypass this door and do other things. It is open only for a short time. I am not a child psychologist, and I have no formal education about how all this works. I have, however, studied by observation, and it seems to me that a child is in this stage of openness for about ten years. If parents do their homework during these crucial years, the heart stays open and the training process continues. However, if you



**Your children want
to be just like you;
be someone they
can copy.**

have missed these years, don't despair. God is for you and for your child. Press on. I am giving the ideal for the sake of teaching and for the sake of those parents who are just starting.

When you pull all these natural, God-given desires together, it is awesome. What an opportunity God has given to us parents! Think with me. You have a child who wants to please you, so you teach and train him in the ways of God. You have a child who admires you, believes in you, and can see no wrong in you, so you fill his heart full of truth and righteousness. You have

a child whose mind is a blank piece of paper, so you spend your days writing on the tables of his heart “all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20b). You have a child whose quick mind can memorize dozens of things, so you teach him to memorize the Word of God, and it makes him prosper. Finally, you have a child

in their minds. They think the children need them most when they become youth. Until then, they imagine it is Mom’s job to care for the children. I have heard many fathers confess this false idea. These fathers miss the formative years, then wonder why their older children won’t listen to them.



Many fathers miss the formative early years, then wonder why their older children won’t listen.

who loves to imitate you, so you live an example before him that he can follow, and you back it up with the teachings of the Bible.

Dear parents, we can’t go wrong on this one. All we need is to do it—just do it! Many fathers have this opportunity confused

What Is a Teacher?

Websters 1828 dictionary says that to teach is “to instruct or communicate knowledge to one who is ignorant; to impress truth upon the mind; to admonish or counsel by words and example.” These are good definitions. We all have the ability to communicate something that excites us. In a sense, we all are teachers when we find something we want others to know about. If a man finds a way to get five miles per gallon more from his car, he will find a way to tell it to others. Even the stuttering man can get his point across if it is important enough to him. A true teacher is one who is convinced of his subject and wants others to be persuaded also. He will find a way to get it into his hearers.

To broaden our definition a bit more, let’s look at Isaiah 28. In this chapter, God is pleading with apostate Israel, who is un-

der His judgment, to learn her lessons and come back to Him. In the midst of His pleadings, God mentions the easy way to teach and learn lessons. As an example to them, He refers to the teaching of children, and how it is done. It is a beautiful insight for us as we consider what it means to be a teacher.

“⁹Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts?”¹⁰For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little” (Isaiah 28:9–10).

These verses give us a good biblical definition of a teacher. The Bible interprets itself. One of the definitions of the word train is “catechize,” and that is what we see in these verses: line-upon-line teaching, with questions, answers, and open discussion. I get the picture of an instructor engaging his students in meaningful dialogue, with learning in mind. The students are interested, asking questions and giving thoughts about the subject at hand.

This is teaching. It is much more than sitting with the family and reading the Bible to them. Praise God if you do this, but I

want to stretch you on to higher ground. God requires more of us. It is not enough to put the children in a good church and send them to a Christian school. We must develop the spirit of a teacher.

Father, God’s Anointed Teacher

In Deuteronomy 6:4–7, we find more insights into being a teacher. This is the most powerful outline defining a teacher you will find in the Bible, and guess what—it is written to fathers, not to preachers.

“⁴Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! ⁵You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deuteronomy 6:4–7).

This portion of Scripture is rich with revelation from God’s heart about our dear children. I encourage you to read from the beginning of the chapter. We are going to plumb the depths of what a teacher is. Allow me to go below the surface here. I

want to give you the fullness of God's heart although it may be way beyond you at this point in your life. I want you to get a glimpse of who you can be if you sincerely, in brokenness, step into the water and begin to teach.

In this most famous text, we have a lovely picture of an anointed father teaching the next generation to love his God. You will not find the word "anointed" in these verses. However, when we look at this man with New Covenant eyes, we see he is an anointed teacher. As we look at this inspired snapshot, please don't be discouraged. Let us dream together. There are five holy qualities about this man to which I want to draw our attention.

He loves God.

He loves the Lord with all his heart, and God has the first place in his life. This dear father has a single eye. The eye of his heart is fixed continually on God, to love Him, to worship Him, and to walk with Him. There is nothing halfhearted about this man. His heart is yielded to God and His ways. Nothing turns him aside for long. Here is the inner foundation that supports this teacher. This first

point is, without question, the most important. The lack of love for God is the prime reason for most of the devastation we see in our homes in this land. Our fathers have not loved God with all their hearts, and many of us have followed their halfhearted ways. Although this is a book on raising godly children, I feel an urgency to permeate its contents with this, our greatest need.

He loves God's Word.

In a sense, this point is part of the preceding one. "These words shall be in your heart" is a basic principle for any teacher. A teacher must love his subject and be excited about the textbook he is using. Such a teacher can inspire students with a love for almost any subject. This is an important factor in our effort to make true disciples. We need to understand the depth of what "in your heart" really means—it is way, way, more than reading the Bible or memorizing verses.

I wrote earlier about the power of the human heart. That is what is implied here. The Apostle John said, "The word of God abides in you" (1 John 2:14b). Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). This applies on the positive side as well as

on the negative side. Therefore, this is a strong requirement for a teacher of the Word. These two words heart and mouth are so closely linked that God refers to the mouth at times when He means the heart. Teaching is the natural outflow of a full heart, whatever the subject may be.

He loves to obey the Word.

This anointed teacher is not merely passing on information; he has obeyed what he is teaching. He has been “careful to observe it” (Deuteronomy 6:3a). He knows it works. Therefore, he teaches. Living his subject gives a teacher a powerful influence over his students. The true teacher does not have to obey, he gets to. He has tasted of the fruit of his teaching, and he is excited about it.

He loves to teach the Word.

Here we have a picture of a wholehearted teacher. “You shall teach them diligently.” Such teaching is not haphazard, but purposeful and enthusiastic, born of the teacher’s love for the task. The teacher’s methods will flow out of his desire to motivate his children.

Notice the word *teach*. This father is not merely reading the Word to his children. He is

finding ways to put it into their hearts. Teach means “to sharpen or whet.” This father will find a way to simplify the precious Word of God so he can put it into the heart of his child. The picture is of the father whetting his sword and sticking it into the heart of the child. Isn’t that beautiful? The second definition in Webster’s 1828 dictionary is also worthwhile. It says to whet is “to provoke; to excite; to stimulate; as to whet an appetite.” I see another clear aspect of teaching demonstrated in this word *whet*. Either way, these are



**The anointed teacher
obeys the precepts
he is teaching.**

beautiful pictures of a father's responsibilities.

He loves to talk the Word.

We have here a second method of teaching the Word to our children. As I see it, the previous method is planned, prepared for, and carried out with purpose at specific times of the day, as in family devotions. But to "talk of them" is more of a casual instruction as you walk through life, day by day. That is why four different settings are mentioned here. In this example, I see a father sharing and applying the Word while he is working in the field with his son or while the family is traveling together. This is not hard, because the Word is deeply embedded in the father's heart. It is simply natural for the Word to flow out as he "walks by the way" with his family.

This is God's inspired revelation of what He wants us fathers to be. Don't be discouraged. Let's dream a bit more as we expand on this picture. Let's consider these two methods and how they work together to produce godly seed in the next generation.

We have a father who loves God and His Word with all his heart and wants to pass this love on to his children. He says, "I want my children to love my

God, and I want them to love and obey His Word."

He is like Ezra, who wanted others to taste what he was enjoying from the Lord. Ezra's testimony is recorded in Ezra 7:10: "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel." In this example we have a true teacher whom every father can follow. He was a student of the Word, and he sought to learn for himself. He became a doer of the Word, thus tasting the blessings that come from obeying. Then, having tasted this good fruit himself, he rose up with joy to teach others also.

With these motivations, a wise father will seek to sharpen the Word so it will enter the hearts of his family. Early in the morning, he is alone with God with his Bible open. He finds a Scripture he can teach his family. As he continues to seek, God gives him wisdom to sharpen the passage, to break it down, and to simplify it so his children can grasp it. With that Word, he sits the family down at devotion time and teaches it to them.

What a beautiful picture! This is teaching the Bible to your family. According to Jewish history, this was done morning and

evening in devout Jewish homes. I wonder what impact it would have on our families if we started gathering them twice each day. This is catechism at its best—“precept upon precept, line upon line,” as it says in Isaiah. Fathers, we need to come to God in the morning and ask Him, “How can I break this verse down and make it easy to understand?”

I use all kinds of object lessons to open up a verse to the children. Once I got up right in the middle of family worship and disappeared out into the shop. The children didn't have a clue what was coming. I came back with a rope, grabbed little David, and tied him up on the floor. I had everyone's attention, including Jackie's! David loved it, and Joshua longed to be the one on the floor. I taught on the subject of sin binding you up so you can't move spiritually.

Another time I jumped up and went into the kitchen, returning with a butcher knife. All eyes were on me when I returned. We had a lesson about using our tongue wrongly, and how destructive the tongue can be. These are simple ways to illustrate divine truth to the heart of a child. This is sharpening the Word, so you can stick it into their little hearts.

Maybe your heart is saying, “Brother Denny, I can't do that. I'm not you; I'm different.” Listen, when I got converted, I was not a teacher. Speaking was very hard for me. I remember the first time I was asked to share my testimony in a youth meeting. It was a disaster. I was given thirty minutes to share with the youth. It was terrible. I stood up there behind that pulpit, and they just stared at me. I spoke for three painful minutes and then sat down in utter humiliation. Jackie stood up to finish the half hour and saved the day. My issues were fear and insecurity.

By God's grace (and I mean that deeply) I overcame my obstacles, and today I am a teacher. God will help you. Just step into the water. Trust Him to lead you and help you each day, and soon you will find things going much better. If you transfer only twenty percent at first, who cares? It's better than nothing, isn't it? That twenty percent will become fifty percent sooner than you think.

Jesus Christ is our clearest example of One who made disciples. As we look into His methods of teaching, we notice that He used both these methods to train His disciples. We see Him sitting them down and



When I got converted, I was not a teacher.

preaching a sermon to them. He used stories, objects, and parables to get His point across to them. At the same time, we see Him teaching as they “walked by the way.”

As they passed the widow casting her two mites into the treasury, Jesus taught them the deeper meaning and motivation behind giving. He taught about humility by using a little child. He could do this because the Word was abiding in Him. When we are filled with the Word and filled with the Spirit, the whole world becomes a giant classroom with endless illustrations to draw from. This is effective teaching at its best.

A Motivating Teacher

“Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, and give attention to know understanding;

²for I give you good doctrine: do not forsake my law. ³When I was my father’s son, tender and the only one in the sight of my mother, ⁴he also taught me, and said to me: ‘Let your heart retain my words; Keep my commands, and live. ⁵Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. ⁶Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; Love her, and she will keep you. ⁷Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding” (Proverbs 4:1-7).

In these verses, we have another glimpse of a father who is a teacher. I see a father setting his son down and instructing him about wisdom. He is stirring him and motivating him to be hungry for wisdom and to obey the instructions and the authority of his father. I believe the father here is David, and the son is Solomon. Solomon is now writing to his sons, telling them how his father taught him when he was a boy.

The main thing I want to draw out of this text is the element of inspiration in teaching. It is clear by the words used in this passage that David wanted to move his son to action. He used motivating words and urgency in his words to do this. We

know that in this case, it worked very well. Solomon became the wisest man on earth.

God woke Solomon in the middle of the night and gave him quite an offer. I wonder what we would say if God came to us and said we could have anything we asked. Solomon passed the test. Maybe his father's words came ringing back to him: "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom." Solomon asked for wisdom that night, and God gave it to him. The point here is this: the father passed the desire on to the son through teaching, and the son received the desires of his heart.

Family Devotions

I want to take a few minutes to share with you a little about devotions at our house. Many different terms are used to describe this special time in the daily life of a godly family:

- Family devotions, because we seek God together.
- Family worship, because we all enter into the worship of our God.
- Family altar, because there the family fires are kindled, and sacrifices are made.

- Wisdom search, because we are searching for wisdom in the Word.

These terms describe different aspects of the activities that take place during the family devotional time. All of the above should be taking place as the family gathers to seek God together.

Devotions are very important at our house. It is not something that we "get out of the way" so we can go on with our day. It is very high on the priority list, up there with eating and sleeping. We do not merely read a chapter in the Bible, have a little prayer, and go our way. No, devotions have a very high priority at the Kenaston household. If this is what you do now, thank God; keep going, but I want to lift your sights much higher than this.

I want to encourage you fathers here. Be a bulldog about family devotions. Let me explain: when a bulldog gets his teeth into something, you can hardly pull him loose. Do you get the picture? We live in America. There are many activities to pull you away from this most important task. Many of them are good things, but they become the enemy of the best. These

distractions pull the priority of devotions down to “every now and then.”

When I travel, I often ask questions about family devotions. Most of the people I ask admit that they rarely have a time of the day when they gather to seek God. They usually answer that they have devotions “every now and then.” These are not halfhearted Christians either; they really want to do right. But when the priority of your family devotional time drops to this level, you are losing the battle; it is time to press the reset button. Fathers, be a bulldog about devotions.

We have our family devotions morning and evening. Sometimes we miss them in the evening, but rarely in the morning. I have learned that other things tend to bump it out of the way, so we aim for twice each day. The most important thing is that you give it a specific time in your day.

Our devotions last about forty-five minutes. They often go beyond that, because the time just gets away. Devotions at our house are not boring. They are enjoyable and very interesting. It is always a pleasant, relaxed family time. We talk; we share things about the day. If a younger child

says something cute, we all laugh about it and have a good time. We don't just sit firmly and soberly and read the Bible the whole time. Sometimes it is a revival meeting with brokenness and confessions. Sometimes I have to steer it a bit, but most of the time it flows right along, and I am able to cover the main goal that I have for the time. It is a spiritual time, but it is an interesting time, with all kinds of different things in it. Let me share some of the specific things we do:

1. We have a good time of singing. We usually sing three or four songs, and sometimes we will sing for twenty minutes if we sense an unusual spirit of worship. We teach the children to sing with the whole heart, and we always have a good time singing. When we had younger ones, we sang a few of the songs for younger children, adding some actions to the words. Each time we have a three-year-old coming along, I select about twenty-five hymns to sing. We sing the same ones for quite a while until the child can sing them by memory. This doesn't take as long as you would think. We want them to have these solid hymns, filled with doctrine, hidden away in their memory from an early age.

2. Sometimes we have an open sharing time, when each one is called on to share something out of his or her life. If we have had some special meetings at the church, I open it up for all to share how God dealt with them or inspired them during the meetings.

3. I have the children share from the Word at times. I give them all an assignment at the end of devotions for the next day. They are given a portion of Scripture to meditate on, and then we all share what God is saying to us from these verses.

4. We always have a time where the Word is opened and taught in the manner already mentioned. I believe the father is to be the interpreter of the Bible in the context of the time in which the family lives. Our world is changing all the time. There is no verse in the Bible that says, “Thou shalt not watch television,” but there are principles there that must be taught and then applied. I do this all the time during family devotions. The children grow up knowing Bible verses for everything we do—and they should. If we don’t do this, we will pass on mere traditions instead of living principles. Our church sisters wear a veiling to



**Use the Bible to make
the faith practical for
the next generation.**

cover their heads. We explain this with the verses from the Bible. However you define “the faith,” it must be interpreted to the next generation. We must take the Bible and make it practical, applying it to the real world where we live. And every generation lives in a different world.

5. We have a time of family prayer. Sometimes I am the only one who prays, and other times we have an old-fashioned family prayer meeting. It depends on what is happening in our world at the time. If the children in Africa are facing some real battles with sickness or evil attacks, we have a longer prayer time. If the church is having one of their fasting and prayer weekends,

we might spend the whole time in prayer.

This gives you some idea how we conduct that special time each day at our house. I vary it even more at times as God leads. Brothers, imagine. If you do this every day except Sundays, for twenty years, what kind of children will you have? That is more than six thousand sessions in the Word with your children. They will know the Bible. It will be in their hearts. Not only will it be in their hearts, it will be in their lives. They will live it.

People ask me at times how we could send our son to Africa to be a missionary when he didn't go to Bible School.

I answer, "He did go to Bible school for 21 years!"

This is home schooling at its best, isn't it? He has been disciplined by his father for 21 years.

Well fathers, I need to draw this chapter to a close, although my heart is still full of more to say on this subject. I want to encourage you to "step into the water" and move ahead. God will meet you. I didn't know how to be a teacher, but I wanted to be one. I came back from a godly family's house with a desire and nothing else. I stepped into the water and just kept going, crying and praying as I went. I turned

around a couple of years later and realized, "Hey! I'm teaching! These children are learning! They are grasping eternal truths, powerful truths, out of the Word of God. I am a teacher!" And so are you.

The same thing will happen to you if you will just step into the water, brother. You know, the Jordan River doesn't part until you step into the water (Joshua 3:13). How long are you going to wait for the water to part? God is saying to us, "Step into the water! You just move ahead by faith, and I will meet you and help you. I will make you a teacher!"

Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, I pray for each of the parents reading this chapter. I pray that You will baptize them with the Spirit of a teacher. Fill them with confidence. Strengthen them with might, and make them teachers. I pray for all the trembling fathers. Give them courage and boldness, to do what you are commanding them. I pray for their wives, that they will get under their husbands and support them. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



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TO
Touch
THE
Sky

*So many times I wish that I
Was tall enough to touch the sky—
The lovely blue so bright and real,
That makes God's wondrous world ideal;
To find it all in vast amount,
More loveliness than I can count.*

*To touch the sky, O treasured thought;
To capture dreams my heart has sought.
So far above this world so fair,
With little cloud steps playing there,
And stars at night that light the earth;
No wealth can match their precious worth.*

*The springtime when the raindrops fall,
The snow that welcomes winter's call;
Each sunrise, sunset, shadows dim,
Every precious part of Him;
Each tiny bird that dares to fly,
And bids me reach to touch the Sky.*

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**“You do not know what will happen tomorrow.
For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears
for a little time and then vanishes away.”**

James 4:14