

Loaves & Fishes

Issue 24

Facing Trials
With Joy

Science in Creation:
Pearls



Flowers Don't Grow Overnight

I went to the garden yesterday;
I saw a gardener working
In a very special way.
He was planting and pruning,
And some flowers he carried away.
As I stood there and watched,
I just had to say,

Flowers don't grow overnight;
Someone has to plant that seed of life.
Buried and forgotten it may lie,
But with the sun and the rain
To help it along the way,
In a time of His own,
A beautiful flower God has grown.

I remember there was a day
When the soil of my heart
Was eroding away,
When the Gardener from above
Planted in me the seed of love,
And a new life started growing in me.

And Christians don't grow overnight;
Someone has to plant that gospel light.
Buried and forgotten it may lie,
But with our love and our prayers
To help them along their way,
In a time of His own,
Many beautiful Christians God has grown!

Terry Smith, Sequatchie County Jail, Dunlap, TN

We publish *Loaves & Fishes* 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.

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Loaves & Fishes

Issue 24

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Flowers Don't Grow Overnight
Crossroads

ALERT: THIS COULD BE YOUR LAST ISSUE

If you see "SUBSCRIPTION EXPIRED" on the back cover, use the form in the middle of this book to renew.

This applies only if you get *Loaves & Fishes* with your name on the back.



Facing Trials With Joy

Lavern Gingerich

“The dark moments of our life will last only so long as is necessary for God to accomplish His purpose in us.”

This past year has been a real test of faith in about every area of my life. The road of life has been rocky and the clouds above me have been blocking the sun. I find myself wishing for life as it used to be. Even in the ongoing battle for courage, I know God has a purpose. The above quote from Charles Stanley has been a great encouragement to me in those dark times.

Is your life filled with pain and darkness? Are you worried that God is bombarding your life with trials because He doesn't care about you anymore? Let me assure you, the opposite is true! God is *lovingly* arranging these circumstances in your life to help you mature in your walk with Him. This knowledge is an important key to facing your trials with joy.

God is lovingly arranging circumstances to help you mature.

David, whose story is told in the Old Testament, faced some dark times too. King Saul was jealous of David's success and hunted him for his life. David and his 600 men eventually found refuge in the land of the Philistines when David's new friend Achish gave him a place to live in Ziklag. David spent more than a year there and was about to become Achish's bodyguard. When the commander of the army saw David and his men in the army, he refused to take them along to battle and sent them back to Ziklag.

It took David and his men three days to travel back to their homes. When they arrived, they were shocked to see that the Amalekites had burned Ziklag



and taken all the women and children captive. David and his men cried until they couldn't cry anymore. "And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters" (1 Samuel 30:6^{ESV}).

Everything was going wrong for David. He was rejected by his homeland, rejected by the Philistine army, and now threatened by his own colleagues. Besides all this, his family was missing.

What did David do? "But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God" (v. 6). David turned to God, reminding

himself that God is in control and that God is the source of strength and joy in dark times.

"²Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4^{ESV}). When the trials come from various directions and pile up several layers deep; when you feel distressed, overwhelmed, and weighed down; when the storm drags on so long you forget the sky is blue; when you reach out in the darkness for a promise to hold on to—remember this one: the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

**There are no shortcuts;
steadfastness is the
only way to a mature
character.**

Steadfastness is loyalty in the middle of trouble and difficulty. There are no shortcuts; steadfastness is the only way to a mature character that is complete (lacking nothing). Just as

hard gusts of wind cause a tree to grow deep roots, the trials of life bring maturity and usefulness in a person's life.

⁵"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (1:5–8^{ESV}).

**Humble yourself
before God, and He
will exalt you.**

To face your trials with joy, you must have faith that God is in control. Faith is what gives us assurance for things we can't see yet, but hope for. Someday faith will be replaced with sight; until then, we walk by faith, trusting that God knows what is best.

⁹"Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, ¹⁰and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. ¹¹For the sun rises with

its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits" (1:9–11^{ESV}).

To face your trials with joy, you must tap into God's sustaining grace. God works against the proud, but gives grace to the humble (see 4:6). You will never make it through your trials without God's grace. Humble yourself before God, and He will exalt you.

¹²"Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him" (1:12^{ESV}).

If only we could see the future reward of those who endure, I believe we would gladly face the hardest trials with joy. Every good gift is from above, including the trials, which are all designed to mature us and prepare us for service in the Kingdom of God.

As you face your dark times in prison, learn to face your trials with joy. Remember, God is arranging these circumstances because He loves you. The dark times of your life will last only as long as is necessary to accomplish God's purpose in you.





NICK VUJICIC

Quite awhile back I learned about a young man named Nick Vujicic, who was born in Australia in 1982. Although Nick was born without arms or legs, he grew up to contribute more to the world than many people with normal bodies. How could this be?

As I have pondered this question, I have thought back over the great men we read about in the Bible—Joseph, David, Jeremiah, and many others. They all had one thing in common: before they became great, they went through great trials. Worldly ideas of greatness often leave out the need for trials and pain. But these things are essential to building character. Nick's trials made a great man out of him. The trial of being different from all his peers, and even being mocked for those differences, molded Nick into the evangelist and motivational speaker he is today.

Through a very difficult childhood, Nick dealt not only with the typical challenges of school and adolescence, but with a cloud of depression and loneliness. Nick constantly wondered why he was different from all the other children. He questioned whether his life had a purpose. Although his family, friends, and many supportive people he has met have helped shape Nick into who he is today, the turning point in his life was at age 15, when he gave his life to Christ and surrendered his future into the hands of God.

Pain and trials are essential to building great character.

Nick started speaking at 19 and has traveled around the world sharing his story. Now in his early 30's, Nick has already accomplished more than most people achieve in a lifetime.

He enjoys a fulfilling life as an author and speaker, and his hobbies include fishing, painting, and swimming. In 2006, Nick moved from Australia to southern California, where he is the president of the international non-profit ministry, Life Without Limbs, which was established in 2005.

In 2012, Nick married a lovely woman named Kanae Miyahara, and in 2013 became the father of a wonderfully perfect son!

In 2013, Nick completed a world tour that covered 24 countries, using his own story of how God enabled him to triumph over trials to encourage millions of other people. Because Nick has no arms and legs, doors opened for him to



In God's eyes, each one of us is beautiful.

share the gospel of Christ in places that are usually closed to such work, like Vietnam and Columbia.

His outgoing personality is contagious, and his sense of humor is delightful. But behind it all is a deep sense of belonging first to God, and also to his family and friends. That can only happen to someone who

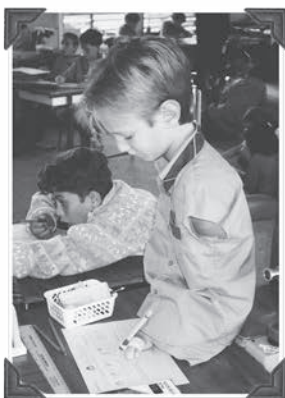
accepts himself as he is. Even if we are missing some parts, we are fearfully and wonderfully made by God, and in His eyes we are all beautiful, just the way we are. God does not create junk!

Knowing the truth about our value and purpose in God's plan helps us find our destiny. I believe Nick Vujicic is a good example of someone who has done that.

Nick says, "If God can use a man without arms and legs to be His hands and feet, then He will certainly use any willing heart!"

—Darold Gingerich

Some photos courtesy of Life Without Limbs





Science in Creation

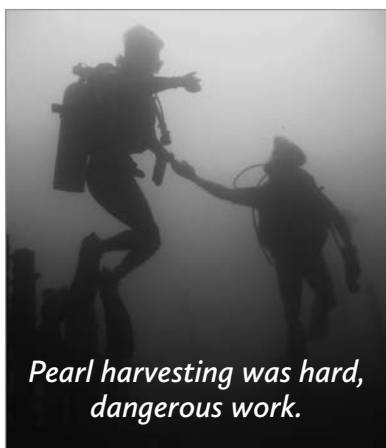
Pearls

Andrew Zimmerman

With a splash, the diver entered the cool water. He descended rapidly through the emerald green, toward the sea floor. The heavy rock he carried for weight made the descent fast and effortless. A wooden *stam* sealed the water out of his nostrils. On the sandy ocean bottom were dozens of oysters, just waiting to be collected. The pearl diver picked up his harvest as quickly as he could, stowing the mollusks in a basket hanging from his neck. Eighty feet above him, on the surface, was the boat. Working quickly, he gathered twenty oysters in the minute and a half he could hold his breath underwater. A tug on his rope, and he was quickly pulled to the surface by his partner in the boat.

A single boat had a crew of forty to one hundred men, including divers, rope pullers, the cook, and the captain. Each diver would make thirty or more dives per day. Pearl harvesting was hard, dangerous work. Sharks and poisonous jelly fish were

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.



constant threats. Other hazards included hypothermia and oxygen deprivation.

The oysters would be opened under the watchful eye of the captain. Carefully cutting and examining each one, they might find three or four pearls in a ton of oysters. The precious gems would be stored in a wooden box on the boat until they were sold to the pearl merchants.

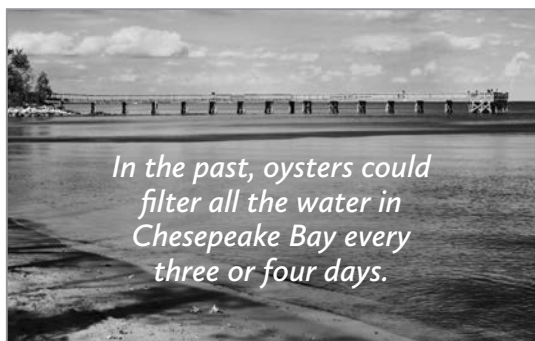
The boats would work the oyster banks all summer, from about May until September or October. The rest of the year, the water was too cold for extended diving. The return to home port was a time of great jubilation, both for the crew and those who stayed behind.

For centuries, perhaps millennia, the Persian Gulf was the primary source of pearls.

Kuwait, Bahrain, and Kish Island hosted well-known pearl banks. There is evidence that the pearl trade was important in the region before the birth of Christ. Before the time of cultured pearls, and before the discovery of oil, pearl harvesting was the only livelihood for thousands of Persians. Japan also had a booming pearl trade. Japanese divers were known as *ama*, and were mostly women.

Oyster is the common name for several types of *bivalve mollusks*. The two shells, or *valves*, are composed of calcium carbonate, and are hinged together. When the oyster is feeding, the shells are partly open. The oyster draws water through its gills, which sift out plankton and other particles for food. A single oyster can filter more than a gallon of water per hour. In the past, the oyster population of Chesapeake Bay could filter the entire volume of water in the bay every three or four days. Today, with fewer oysters, that would take a year.

Some types of oysters are edible. These are known as *true oysters* and belong to the family *Ostreidae*. They are eaten raw or cooked, and are rich in vitamins and high in protein. Though a true oyster may occasionally



In the past, oysters could filter all the water in Chesapeake Bay every three or four days.

contain a pearl, because of the color and shape, these pearls have little value.

The pearl oysters are in the family *Pteriidae*, or saltwater clams. Commercial pearls are also harvested from some freshwater mollusks. Natural pearls are still harvested in many parts of the world, including the Persian Gulf, the South Pacific, the Gulf of Mexico, Japan, Australia, and parts of Europe.

How do pearls form? An oyster produces a substance called *nacre*, sometimes referred to as *mother-of-pearl*.

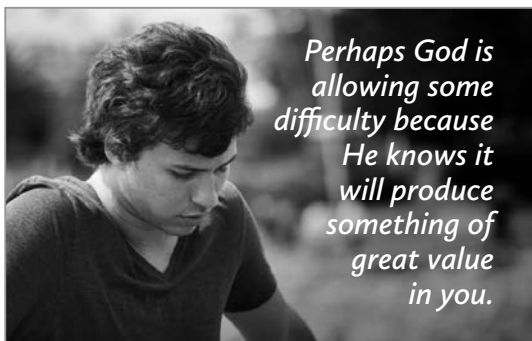
This is what gives the inside of the oyster shell a shiny, lustrous appearance. Mother-of-pearl has been used for decorative inlays since ancient times.

The Creator has designed these mollusks with a special

mechanism of defense against parasites and other irritants. When a bit of foreign matter gets into the *mantle*, the fleshy tissue of the oyster, the same nacre that produces the hard, shiny coating on the inside of the shell is used to

coat the intruder. Layer upon microscopic layer, the pearly nacre collects around the irritating object, rounding it off, rendering it harmless to the oyster. Over the course of several years, the irritant can become a good-sized pearl.

The most valuable pearls are large and spherical. Recent research seems to indicate that spherical pearls may actually rotate as they form. As the layers are built up, a chemical reaction releases a tiny bit of energy that can move the pearl.



Perhaps God is allowing some difficulty because He knows it will produce something of great value in you.

In the early 1900's, at the peak of the pearling industry, as many as 80,000 men were employed in the Persian Gulf harvesting pearls. Then Japanese pearl farmers perfected the technique of producing cultured pearls. Instead of harvesting lots of oysters in the hope of finding a few with pearls, they seeded oysters with beads of shell material to induce them to produce pearls. By the 1930's, the Japanese pearl farms were taking over the market with cultured pearls, which were much cheaper to produce than natural pearls harvested in the Gulf. In more recent years, China has developed freshwater pearl farms and produces quality pearls in great numbers.

Without cutting a pearl open or x-raying it, natural and cultured pearls are very hard to distinguish from each other. Pearl diving is now primarily a tourist attraction, rather than a serious production method.

An oyster that never encounters an irritant or threat doesn't produce a pearl. The pearl forms only when something gets into the flesh of the oyster—and it

usually takes more than the legendary grain of sand. Then the coating of nacre neutralizes the irritant, producing something precious in the process.

Is there a hardship or trial in your life? Perhaps God is allowing some difficulty because He knows it will produce something



of great value in you. With a near-sighted view we may see only the present trouble, but with an eternal perspective, we can see that our trials make us better, and we won't let them make us bitter.

Jesus told a story about a merchant who spent a fortune on one pearl. He willingly paid everything he had because he knew the pearl was worth much more. In the same way, a place in God's kingdom is worth far more than anything else we are holding on to. We must be willing to give everything for that treasure.



BE A PEACEMAKER

Is there someone you wish would walk out of your life and never come back—someone who makes you cross and irritable, or whose personality grates on yours? We all have trouble getting along with people sometimes. It's not fun to be constantly clashing with someone we can't stand to be around. It's not the right thing to do either. There is a better way.

The Bible tells about Jesus and His disciples sailing across a lake one night. After Jesus settled down for a nap, a fierce storm blew up. Several of the disciples were experienced sailors, but this time they were scared.

Convinced their ship was going to sink, the frightened disciples woke Jesus. Jesus stood up, looked around, and commanded the storm to stop. "Peace! Be

still," He said. Immediately the wind and waves were calm.

Do you have some stormy relationships? Stilling the storm is symbolic of what Jesus can do to relationships. Jesus can bring peace into our hearts, and following His teaching brings peace into our interactions with people.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9).

Peace-breaking seems to be easier than peacemaking, because all of us were born with a selfish nature. Selfishness causes conflict. What are some common causes of conflicts that break the peace between people?

- Pride—thinking we are better than others.



Following Jesus
brings peace to our
relationships.

Peacemaking is Jesus' way of relating to people.



- Jealousy—hostility toward someone who is in some way better than we.
- Anger—not controlling our tempers.
- Greed—wanting the best for ourselves.
- Lying—cheating and putting up a false front.
- Unforgiveness—holding grudges and becoming bitter.

Maybe there are times we only pretend to get along with someone. *Peace-faking* is trying to ignore the relationship problem and pretend everything is okay. When we choose to fake friendship, we can be smiling on the outside but boiling with anger or resentment on the inside. *Peace-faking* may keep the relationship peaceful for a time on the surface, but what's in our hearts is another story altogether.

Jesus' disciples had some of these same problems getting along with each other. When they thought Jesus wasn't listening, they argued among

themselves about which of them was the greatest. Which one would get to be Jesus' right-hand man when He became king of Israel?

Jesus showed His disciples they were thinking the wrong way. Instead of trying to be the best and the greatest, they should try to be humble and helpful to each other.

Jesus set a child beside Him as an example and said, "Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great" (Luke 9:48).

Another time, Jesus told them that whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted (Matthew 23:12). Jesus taught his disciples that being great comes by doing things His way, not by being better than everyone else.

Peacemaking is Jesus' way of relating to people. It means being humble, swallowing our



Only the Prince of
Peace in your heart
can enable you to
keep peace
with others.

pride, forgiving those who wrong us, and trying to help and serve others. What are some things we can do to be a peacemaker?

- Apologize—ask forgiveness for unkind things we have said or done.
- Be humble—be willing to admit when we are wrong.
- Give—don't be always wanting, taking, or receiving.
- Forgive—extending forgiveness gives relationships a fresh start.
- Compliment—find good things to say instead of accusing or criticizing.
- Sympathize—try to understand the other person's struggles.

A good way to be a peacemaker is to follow the Golden Rule: do to others as you would have them do to you. Treat others the way you wish to be treated. Show others the same respect

you would like to receive (see Luke 6:31).

To sum it up, the way to have good relationships is to be an unselfish person. That's what Jesus was. Instead of scrambling up the worldly ladder of success, He did kind deeds for others. He gave His life to save the lives of others. He is our example, and He can be our helper in our peacemaking efforts.

To be a peacemaker, you need Jesus. Only the Prince of Peace in your heart can enable you to maintain peace with others. He said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (John 14:27). Come to Him, ask Him to forgive your sins, and He will give you "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). ~

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THE BIBLE

The Holy Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable.

Read it to be wise, believe it to be enlightened, and practice it to be successful. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's character. Herein paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand object, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life and will be opened in the judgment. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

It offers protection for infancy, happiness for childhood, inspiration for youth, strength for maturity, assurance for the aged, comfort for death, and salvation, riches, glory, and reward for eternity.

—Anonymous



KEEP GOING

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
And the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh;
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.
Life is strange with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about,
When he might have won had he stuck it out.
Don't give up, though the pace seems slow—
You may succeed with another blow.
Often the goal is nearer than
It seems to a faint and faltering man.
Often the struggler has given up
When he might have captured the victor's cup,
And he learned too late, when the night slipped down,
How close he was to the golden crown.
Success is failure turned inside out—
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are;
It may be near when it seems afar.
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit—
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit.

Edgar A. Guest, adapted



Can We Do This Every 3 Months?



Our readers would be glad to get a new issue every 3 months, but it's been a stretch financially to maintain that 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

Proclaim the Name - Psalm 71:14–18

Find these words in the puzzle below.

ACTS
DEEDS
LONG
MIGHTY
POWER
SALVATION
YOUR
ALONE

EVEN
LORD
MORE
PRAISE
SINCE
YOURS
ALWAYS
FORSAKE

MARVELOUS
MOUTH
PROCLAIM
SOVEREIGN
YOUTH
COME
GENERATION
MEASURE

NEXT
RIGHTEOUSNESS
TAUGHT
DECLARE
GRAY
MIGHT

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

James C. Hart, 218790147, Forrest City, AR



Exercise Your Mind With a

Sudoku Puzzle

To solve this puzzle, fill the blank squares with words from the Bible verse below, arranging them so that each row and column and each of the 3x3 grids contains the entire verse.

Answers on page 48.

LORD							AND	GOOD
			TASTE	AND		THE		
	GOOD	OH			THE			
TASTE						GOOD		
	OH		GOOD	IS				AND
GOOD	THE		AND				IS	
THE					AND	LORD	THAT	
SEE			IS				TASTE	
OH	LORD			TASTE				THE

“Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.”

Psalms 34:8



Free on the Inside

Prisoners encourage Prisoners

A True Friend

For a long time I traveled
Through sin and much despair,
Not knowing who to turn to;
I thought that no one cared.

My life was full of turmoil,
But you could never tell
That I was hurting deep inside,
And on my way to hell.

But then one night it happened—
I heard a voice within;
I gave my heart to Jesus Christ
And repented of my sins.

My life will never be the same;
We will never be apart.
I have a friend until the end;
He lives within my heart.

So now I walk in victory,
And you can do the same.
He is waiting at the door;
Just call upon His name.

Bart Werdelin, WCI, Crawfordville, FL

The Sounds of Silence

Tom Miller

The smiling beggar captured my attention as he sat on the street corner asking for donations by holding out his tin cup. In addition to his being an obvious paraplegic, the pad and pencil around his neck informed me that he was a deaf mute. His smile was radiant and looked to be genuine. I stopped and watched; he smiled out of his silence while a torrent of deadpan faces rushed past.

I wondered where his beaming smile came from. Was he smiling just to enhance donations? I dropped some money into his cup, and thinking he couldn't hear me, I muttered out loud, "How on earth can you be so happy?"

To my surprise, he tugged on my coat to get my attention. Pointing two fingers at his eyes and then one finger at my mouth, he made me understand that he had read my lips. Then he poked his right index finger into his left palm and his left index finger into his right palm. I understood "Jesus Christ". Then he cradled both hands to his heart.

I do not know American sign language, but I got the message. He loved Jesus and Jesus loved him.

It was obvious to me now that his happy smile came from a deep-seated contentment. His smile radiated the warmth of God's love all around him. His was the best testimony that I have ever heard. ~



TESTIMONY OF ANGELICA GONZALES

CCA, San Diego, CA

I am writing to share my testimony with all who need some encouragement, hope, and faith in their lives.

My mother abandoned my two brothers and me, and I was raised in group homes, foster homes, and the streets from the time I was three. I was in a Catholic girls' home in Rosemead, CA, when a young man came along who convinced me he loved me. I had felt unloved all my life, and I thought this would answer my need. I ran away at thirteen, became pregnant at fourteen, and had my daughter at fifteen. But instead of love, I experienced a nightmare.



"When you see God," I told them,
"you let me know."

I was physically, verbally, and mentally abused by my in-laws and my husband. Trying to succeed and become somebody, I started selling counterfeit tapes at swap meets and got into more and more business. I started manufacturing and became very wealthy, but money wasn't doing it for me; I was still in need of love. At 24, I had three businesses and all the houses, cars, and clothes I could wish for, but I wasn't satisfied.

Sometimes people invited me to church, but I always turned them down. "When you actually see God," I told them, "you let me know." I worshiped money and power. And God took it all away and put me in prison, not for a few years, but for life. I lost my children, my money, and my freedom.

Left with nothing I had valued, I became very depressed and ended up in a mental institution, tied down to a bed or in a stripped cell rubber room. I just wanted to end all my suffering and pain. I figured I was just a mistake and didn't belong



Even knowing I might spend
my life in prison, I felt happy
and peaceful.

in this world, and I told an officer that.

He said, “Angelica, Jesus doesn’t make mistakes,” and he gave me a Bible to read. I started to see my life in a different way, and I started to pray with all my heart for Jesus to get me out of this situation. However, I used my time in prison to learn more about Jesus. I started loving myself and others, and I started telling others about Jesus. I felt happy and peaceful, even knowing I might have to spend the

rest of my life in prison; but in 1995, I had my conviction reversed. This was a rare miracle, and I believe Jesus made it possible.

I’m still serving Him! Even though He is in my life, trials still come my way. Right now I’m detained in an immigration facility facing deportation, and in SEG due to false allegations, but I know our enemy is behind all this. I trust in Jesus, and the Bible tells me in Hebrews 13:6, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” Keep on trusting Jesus, and He will make everything good.

I don’t regret that I went to prison because there I found the love of my life. I would never exchange Him for anything in this world.

Be encouraged, brothers and sisters; Jesus lives in our lives when we drop everything and follow Him. Keep on praying; He loves you! ~

Blessed is the man who endures temptation;
for when he has been approved, he will receive
the crown of life which the Lord has promised
to those who love Him. *James 1:12*

God Still Does Miracles



God still does miracles
And they're just as easy to see
As when, for the nation of Israel,
God parted the great Red Sea.

I see your look of disbelief;
I hear you saying, "Yeah, right."
Now, look in a mirror and behold
The power of God's might.

The trouble with mankind today
Is that too much is taken for granted.
No longer are we impressed by
The stars, the moon, or this planet.

Every time you see a tree, consider
How it knows when its leaves should turn.
Think of the subtle complexities of our minds—
Our amazing ability to learn.

These are real miracles;
Not the result of some "big bang."
Let me see any human being
Get the stars to hang.

Walk through a forest, climb a mountain;
Experience the beauty of nature therein.
Or understand the depth of the Love
That laid down its life for sin.

I say to you in all sincerity,
Great miracles are still God's way.
Slow down; watch a sunset,
And see a great miracle today!

Paul G. Sampson
SCI Mahanoy
Frackville, PA



TESTIMONY OF CHARLES W. VARN, SR.

BRCI, Columbia, SC

I'm incarcerated at BRCI in Columbia, SC, on charges of third-degree arson, first offense. I'm doing a 10-year non-violent sentence; I've been down almost three years.

In my past I used drugs and alcohol for thirty years, and have been to numerous NA-AA meetings and rehab centers, but I always seem to fall right back into the trap.

Back in 2005, when I was sentenced to prison, a preacher came in one night at the Kirkland Institution and the Holy Spirit led me to be saved. Unknown to me, my wife and two boys had been saved three days before! Act 16:31 says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household," and we know God's word is true! At the beginning of my prison time, I thought my life was over, but it had just begun. Ever since February 27, 2005 my life has changed in every direction for the good.

Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who

love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

God has restored me, just as Psalm 23 says! He has given me strength to overcome smoking, cursing, drinking, and drugs!

Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." I've never felt and looked better in my life, and I owe it all to my Lord and Savior. God has kept me and my family together through all of this, and even brought my immediate family here to BRCI on weekends to visit me. This is only a small portion of what I give glory to God for; I'll be thanking Him for the rest of my life.

May the Lord bless you all in Jesus' name! ~





I Will Rise Again

I will rise again out of this pit;
I'll go forward and not quit.
What happened to me will work out for my good,
Trusting in Christ as I should.

Life doesn't have to be
A revolving door for you and me.
I once forgot my purpose in life:
Being reconciled to my Father through Christ.

When sin came in, I fell away;
Entangled in a web of sin, I went astray.
I ultimately committed a crime;
Now I'm sitting in prison doing my time.

Everyone calls me the scum of the earth;
They don't care if I had a spiritual rebirth.
My sins are as far as the east is from the west,
Thrown into the sea of forgetfulness.

By faith I've seen my Lord's face;
He welcomed me back with a warm embrace.
Now on the Gospel I take my stand,
Leading other inmates to the Promised Land.

Richard Smith
Hutchinson Correctional Facility
Hutchinson, KS

Rag Man

I approached Him, clothed
in my grim rags, tattered and
spoiled,

Encumbered by the guilt of all
the wrong I'd done, my soul
completely soiled,

And stood, head bowed, to
face Him, in fear of the im-
pending blame,

Drenched and consumed by
the weight of sin's permeating
shame.

A sound of many waters filled
my ears, as I heard His voice
say,

"Fret not thyself, for I am He
who speaks to the wind and it
does obey."

It sounded penetratingly
peaceful, so calming to my
spirit—

Even the noise of the thun-
dering storms of life, couldn't
forbid me to hear it.

His countenance shone as the
sun above; as I looked up to
Him,

And He spread His arms wide
open, with love and mercy that
did overwhelm!

Within His eyes I perceived
power, will, and might, to annul
the cost,

Because He alone possessed
the right to remove the guilt
and redeem the lost.

Still, I felt horrifyingly dirty,
even condemned, as my sins
were mountains high;

Expecting eternal judgment,
all I heard in His voice was a
patient sigh

As He reached to me, plac-
ing His gentle hands upon my
filthy, vulgar rags.

He rent them from me, and my
body began to buckle and sag.

"My child," He said. "I give
you a garment fresh, neither
sodden nor torn,

A garment of freedom from sin;
one that has never been worn.

With it you have armor, for as a
soldier you will defend

Your right as holder of eternal
life, and the Savior you did
befriend."

So now I am free from the
woes of my plight, clothed in
courage, honor, and peace;

I now can fight for the kingdom
of God; His purpose, order and
domain;

To stand steadfast against evil,
to uphold the integrity of His
holy name!

Isaiah 1:18–20

Anthony Guidry

STSR Correctional Facility

Pikeville, TN

TESTIMONY OF COREY LADD

OPP, New Orleans, LA

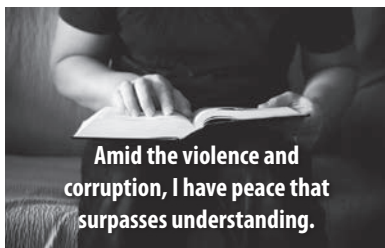
I'm 27 years old, and I've been incarcerated at Orleans Parish Prison since December 2011. CNN recently named OPP one of the worst facilities in the country. Yet amid all the violence and corruption here, I have a peace that surpasses all understanding.

I've accepted the Lord Jesus as my Lord and Savior and allowed Him into my heart. He's transformed my mind and shifted my desires. I've come so far and never want to look back; I just want to continue to serve the Lord all the days of my life. I also want everyone to know the things I know and to see the things I've seen.

Only God can change the heart of a man, so I make intercession for everyone I know that they may be saved.

I would like to share a quick testimony of how I stumbled on *Loaves & Fishes*. A few days ago, I was praying for some new spiritual reading material for my prayer/Bible study group. The prison here is very limited in spiritual resources and material, but I know the Lord will provide, especially for spiritual growth.

The very next day, before lock down, I passed a guy who was cleaning up his storage bag. It looked like he hadn't cleaned it up in a while, and he had a pile of trash. I offered him a hand throwing the pile away. As I threw the stuff away, the last two pieces seemed to be balled-up magazines. I looked closer and saw spiritual material, all mangled up! One man's trash is another man's treasure! I found your *Loaves & Fishes* book and a Billy Graham magazine. Upon reading *Loaves & Fishes*, I fell in love with it and just had to subscribe. I would really like to have it sent to my mother as well. I'm sure it will be helpful for her as well as for myself. Amen! ~



CRIMES PAID

In a cold prison cell,
With a Bible, blanket, and sheets.
With time on my hands,
I kicked back to read.

Somewhere on life's journey,
I had lost my way.
Now prison life was the price,
For all the trouble I made.

I opened up that good book
To see what I could see.
And the more that I read,
The more I believed.

I knelt at my bedside;
Yes, I cried and I cried.
Then I asked Jesus,
To come into my life.

Now God gets all the glory;
You might say "Crimes Paid."
See, by coming to prison,
I found the time to pray.

Yes, by coming to prison,
I found the time to pray.
And now Jesus and I,
We talk every day!

Charles R. Harrison
Charles Bass Correctional Complex
Nashville, TN



The Pursuit of Godly Seed

Train up a Child

Denny Kenaston

“...but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4b

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6

In chapter twelve, I likened the training process to raising a fruitful garden. By now, as you can see, the list of things to do is growing. It makes my heart sing as once again I look at all the wisdom God has revealed to us about our children. He has not left us in the dark, not knowing which way to go. You may have felt as though you were in the dark, but now you can see; God is very clear. Jackie and I felt the same way in the early days of our family; but as we cried to the Lord for wisdom, He made many things clear to us. Hallelujah!

The opening verses condense all we have been learning into a nice blend of several child

training principles. As I studied the word *nurture*, I found its meaning to be full of this blend. Raising a plant for production is referred to as *nurture*. The very word *nursery* means “a place to nurture.” A nursery can mean either a place to grow plants or a room for a new baby. The meaning of this word is a beautiful blend of teaching, discipline, and the actual guiding of the life into the right paths of the Lord.

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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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The Greek word translated *nurture* here is found in some interesting passages in the New Testament. It is found several times in Hebrews 12:5–13, where God teaches us about chastisement. We could easily read Hebrews 12:5 this way, “Despise not the nurturing of the Lord.” God uses this blend of principles to mold us into the holy image of His Son. Look at all the different aspects of child training found in this text.

Our heavenly Father teaches us His Word by the Spirit of God, thus showing us the way that will please Him. He surrounds us with His love, as He moves in on areas of our lives that He wants to change. He admonishes us, warns us, and eventually “spanks” us, to get us to change a habit pattern in our lives. As we are receiving discipline, He is admonishing us about what we should change. And when the peaceable fruit arrives, He smiles on us, to encourage us in the future.

Like our Father in heaven, we are seeking “the peaceable fruit of righteousness” in the lives of our children. This is child training in all its beautiful balance. There is so much we could learn about child training from our heavenly Father, if only we

would meditate on His ways. All the teaching that has been given so far comes together in the words *train* and *nurture*. The goal of these is to change and direct a life.



**We are seeking the
peaceable fruit of
righteousness in the
lives of our children.**

Training children is an active, hands-on affair—and I do not mean spanking. Spanking is a part of the training process, but only one part. I am fully convinced that the use of the rod diminishes as the other aspects of training are given their proper priorities. To train our children, we must be actively and daily engaged in their lives. This is full-time work, not a sideline job we can fit in here and there.

We parents must pick up the tools God has given us in His Word and begin to mold

the nature of our children into godliness. The Bible likens us to clay in the hands of a potter. The potter picks up the clay and molds and shapes it into the desired vessel. This is the kind of relationship we parents have with our children.

There is urgency in this illustration. For now, the clay is soft and easy to shape. But the day will come when it is harder to shape. Another analogy of this is a small tree and a large one. When a tree is small, it is easily trained into place. But when the tree gets big, it is extremely hard to train it. The point is to bend the tree while it is young. That is the basic message of our verse in Proverbs—do the work while they are young.

In Proverbs 22:6, we have another one of God's "exceedingly great and precious promises" (2 Peter 1:4). This promise, which was available to Old Testament saints, is much more effective to us parents who choose to live under the blessings of the New Covenant. Again, this promise is conditional. God wants to enter into covenant with His people.

Many grieving parents have wondered over this verse as they watched a child go out into the world. They wonder what went wrong. As they look back over

their sincere attempt to raise the child for the Lord, they question whether they understand the verse correctly. I have heard them say, "We don't understand what went wrong. We put them in a good school and church. We showed them the right way. What went wrong?" Some have even said that the verse doesn't work, because it didn't work for them.

We must be careful how we evaluate these setbacks in life. God does not change; His promises are always sure. I have learned that if a promise is not fulfilled, it is not God's fault. Either we have done something wrong, or we don't understand the promise. It is important that we understand the conditions of this promise.

What It Means to Train

We need to understand what God means when He says "train up a child." The word "train" means "to narrow." We could read the verse this way: "Narrow up a child in the way he should go."

We are starting at a wide place and moving toward a narrow place, like the "broad" way and the "narrow" way. What a beautiful way to describe the way it is with our children! God gives us

little children who are innocent, yet sinners, and we know it. It doesn't take long for us to realize they are sinners. They are made of the same kind of flesh we are. Nobody has to set them down and give them any lessons on how to be evil. Nobody taught little Hannah to lift her hand and hit her brother when he did something she didn't like. She got that from her father Adam.

So, we start in a wide place, but God says, "I want you to end up in a narrow place." Day by day, we slowly teach and train the child into this narrow place; we start moving toward the goal. The goal is much more than just to make them a good moral person. The goal is to raise a disciple of Jesus Christ, completely dedicated to God—a young adult who joyfully walks on the narrow way that "leads to life."

This little phrase "train up a child" also means to "catechize." I have covered this word already, but I want you to be aware that teaching and instruction is part of this process of bringing a child from where he is to where God wants him to be.

The last definition on which I would like to focus is very enlightening. I like this one best because it gives the positive side

of training up a child. "Train up a child" means to stimulate the palate. Here we have a picture of a Hebrew mother who is beginning to wean her child. She takes the food and chews it up in her mouth. Then, when it is well chewed, she takes it back out and puts it into the mouth of her child. This is how she stimulates the mouth of the child to like the right foods. Isn't that beautiful?

Except for the chewing, we did this with each of our children when it was time to wean them. Jackie was very wise in this. We didn't introduce deserts to the children, but foods that would be good for them. To this day, David loves carrot juice because Jackie introduced it in a positive manner.

This gets very exciting. Picture this in the spiritual sense. The child training implications are powerful. We could read the verse this way, "Stimulate the palate of your child in the right ways that he should go, and he will still love them when he is old." What a picture of how a parent trains the children! Day by day, we introduce the good and the holy. This is done in a positive way, with joy, by a motivated parent. We want them to love this new habit, discipline, or activity we are introducing



We should train our children with positivity, joy, and motivation.

because we know it will be a blessing to them in the future.

I want my child to love family devotions, so I introduce it with enthusiasm. Day by day we go through this exercise, until the child is saying from the heart, “Papa, I love family devotions. When I grow up, I will have them for my children.”

As this exercise is repeated over and over, the children develop a taste for what is good. This is augmented with some discipline if needed, and, of course, we teach them what the Bible says about this new activity.

Remember, this truth also has a negative side: if we allow the children to develop a taste for what is not good, we also set lifelong patterns. I will write more on this later.

The Role of the Mother

“...But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother” (Proverbs 29:15b).

A horse left to itself is wild, dangerous, and of little value. A dog left to itself will embarrass you and trouble your neighbor. And a child left to himself will reflect on the character of his mother. This is what God is implying in this opening verse.

We can learn much from the dog trainer and the horse trainer. Both these trainers have a clear plan for what they want to do. They use very little punishment to accomplish their goals. They know what they want to instill in the animal they are training, and they work purposefully and methodically. They invest lots of time and patience. This is how we ought to approach the training of our children.

Father and mother should sit down together, plan out what they want to instill in their children, and then go for it. Here is where the powerful influence of a mother comes in. Obviously, Dad cannot be around all the time. Someone does have to work and provide for the needs of the household. The supportive wife steps in and begins to walk through these many training exercises

with the children. These should be approached from a positive perspective, even though you may use the rod at some times during the process.

The Sports Nut

Let's see what we can learn from the sports enthusiast. If a father is a sports nut, he may want his son to be an outstanding baseball player (this seems odd to me, if we are supposed to train their palates in righteousness). But let's say that is what he wants for his son. This father will get very active in his son's life. He will approach his goal with much positive input. He will not pursue this goal in a haphazard way. Consider some of the things he will do for and with his son.

- He will begin to talk about baseball with his son to motivate and create desire.
- He may get a baseball magazine and spend time looking at it and discussing it with him.
- He may plan a special trip to the store, for just the two of them, where they buy the baseball gear.
- Mom will join in the excitement when they come home from the store.

- Dad will spend much time with his son teaching him the rules of the game.
- He will get right down to the game with his son, training him to throw the ball, catch the ball, and hit the ball.
- He will praise the boy for every bit of progress made in these skills.
- He will be firm with his son, pressing him to practice.
- He will even use disciplinary methods when the little fellow gets a bit tired of the whole thing and wants to go on to something new.
- He will get his son involved with a team so he can play with others and increase his skills. He will go to the games and sit on the sidelines, cheering his son on as he plays.

I have made the list long enough for you to get the point: this father is determined to develop his son's baseball talent. This illustration comes closer to home than many of us admit. Such scenarios are lived out millions of times in our country for goals with no eternal value. We can learn from this example. Fathers and mothers, what do you want? If you approach the building of godly character with

this kind of purpose, you will be amazed at the results.

Positive Learning Experiences

Many years ago, it was time for Joshua to lay aside the diaper thing and become a “big boy.” This was not a new thing for us; he was the seventh child. Let me tell you about Jackie’s positive approach to this lesson.

I was sitting on the small couch in our bedroom at about six o’clock one morning. Jackie came into the room to wake up Joshua and go through his morning routine. The first words that little fellow heard were the sweet, loving words of his mother saying, “Joshua, it’s six o’clock. Time to get up my

son. I love you.” What a way to wake up in the morning!

Then she reached down to pick him up and gave him a big hug. The next thing I heard was the enthusiastic words of Mama saying, “Joshua, let’s go potty on the potty chair.” Joshua marched in there to take care of business with a big smile on his face. I could hear Jackie praising him for keeping his diaper dry all night. She put his “big boy” underwear on and asked him, “Are you going to keep them dry all day?” He nodded his head with an emphatic “yes,” and down the stairs they went.

I sat there and pondered what I had just heard, thinking to myself, “That lady is a master at this!” And she is. The children learn very quickly with this kind of positive encouragement. Now, Joshua did get a few spankings before he mastered the goal of keeping things dry, but they were sandwiched between all the other training. Once we knew he clearly and willfully had refused to stay dry, he was disciplined for it in the manner I have already described.

Someone said to me when the children were younger, “Brother Denny, how do you get your children to sit through a long church service?”



If you approach the building of godly character with purpose, you will be amazed at the results.

I responded with a question: “How do you keep your children from playing in the street?”

They knew the answer, and all of us do. You make it a top priority, teach and train, take them near the road, and go through the big no-no scene. You watch them a while, test them, go over the lesson again, and praise them for staying out of the street. It doesn’t take long until we are confident that they will stay out of the street.

This routine can be duplicated over and over with different issues in the children’s lives. Consider a few suggestions.

- You can teach them to sit and listen during family devotions. (By the way, that is how you get them to sit in church. You do your homework, then transfer the lesson to the church service.)
- You can teach them to eat all the food on their plate every time they sit at the table.
- You can teach them to eat foods they don’t like. Walk them through the whole exercise, instructing them about what you expect from them. After a good time of training, you give them some food they don’t like,

and tell them, “This is the lesson we have been talking about. I know you are going to do very well in this.”

- You can teach them to put all the toys away when the day is over, or when you are going to have visitors. You can even teach them to put some of them away before they get others out.
- You can teach them to have good manners by routinely going over what is expected in different situations. Walk them through it. Set up practice times of meeting new people or excusing themselves from the table.
- You can teach them to wake up cheerfully and get up promptly when called in the morning. This doesn’t happen naturally; they need to be trained. Train them up in the way you want them to go. Some adults have yet to learn this basic lesson.
- You can teach them to lay their head down and take a nap without any fuss. Wouldn’t that be nice, mothers? You can just lay them down in the crib with some sweet words of love and blessings, and they will submissively go off to sleep.

- You can train them in simple chores when they are still very young. Get excited about it and walk them through it with positive encouragement. You would be surprised what a five-year-old can do.
- You can train them to receive a spanking with a yielded heart and no extreme crying.
- You can root out all the complaining and whining that children often express when they don't like what is happening in their lives.
- You can teach them to win souls, just as the sports nut teaches his boy to play ball. That would be a good ten-year goal; that is about how long it takes that father to get a good baseball player.
- You can teach them to memorize Scripture at an early age. Start working with them and helping them do it when they are about six years old. Two verses a week. By the time they are seven or eight, they will do it on their own. Two verses a week for fifteen years is about fifty chapters in the Bible.



Memorizing two verses a week for fifteen years adds up to fifty chapters of the Bible.

This is called stimulating the spiritual palate of your children, guiding their desires in the way they should go. The list is endless, and probably a bit different for each family.

Dear parents, we need to walk our children through these basic lessons. There are husbands who still don't clean up after themselves or pick up their clothes in the bedroom—to the shock of their wives. Some mother failed that man when he was a boy. There is no end to what you can do; use your imagination. The mothers in Africa train their small babies to tell them when they have to relieve themselves.

The mother then takes them into the bush; they do their job and go on their way. Hey, if you didn't have Pampers, you might go after it sooner too!

Developing Character by Responsibility

Character is defined as “virtues, qualities of moral right, and holy habits of the heart.” This definitely qualifies as “the way he should go.” We are preparing our children to be servants of the Most High God. They are going to represent Him someday, so they must develop inner character. I have found that responsibility can be an effective tool to help mold these traits in a child.

We have a little farm that consists of fifteen acres of land. It doesn't make much money at that size, but it does some other things far more valuable than money. I often tell people, “It makes godly men and women out of boys and girls.” We also have a family business that is designed to do the same thing. The boys and I build picnic tables for a living, and Hannah is the secretary. When things get busy, Mama and the girls get out in the shop and help, too. We always have a ball on those days, and the girls love the change. I know

many fathers in our society don't have the blessing I have, and I want to be sensitive to that as I write. However, I want to share the treasures I found when I decided a professional career would not be the best for my family.

Twenty-three years ago, Jackie and I lived in a typical American suburb. There was nothing for the children to do there but play. As the principles I have been sharing with you grew in our hearts, we became increasingly burdened about training the children. I started looking for chores they could do. You can take out the trash only so often, and the garage doesn't take long to clean if you clean it once a week.

With this burden, I began to long for a country setting where we could provide more learning experiences. We had no television and had taken a stand against the things in the world, but there was nothing to replace what we had separated from. There were beer parties at the swimming pool on one side of us and drug parties with motorcycles on the other side. I told the children these activities were bad, and we all agreed that we wanted nothing to do with them. But the children would

look out the window and listen to all the frolic. It seemed to them that the people were having fun.

What does a father do, and how long do you continue in limbo? Sometimes I felt like Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (2 Peter 2:7–8). Although the



To train a child in godly character, you need to work joyfully and diligently alongside him.

evil around us was troubling, our main motivation was to provide training opportunities. With these things driving us, we moved to the country—a big task for two city slickers.

To train a child in godly character, you must be willing to get intimately involved. You must be willing to come alongside

your child and work with him joyfully and diligently. You need the tools of daily responsibility to aid you in this task. These inner qualities of virtue are developed over the long haul. A sense of duty carried out daily over a long period results in character. I well remember Daniel, at age seven, getting up at five in the morning to milk the goats. We approached the project the same way as the father of the baseball player I described earlier. After I worked through the learning stage of this project with him, he did it faithfully on his own for two years. Was I making money? No way; I was making a responsible man.

Old McKeenaston Had a Farm

The farm and the family business are tools in my hands, tools to mold and shape children into respectful, responsible, God-fearing Christians. They provide a natural flow of demands with varied experiences. The cows get out of the pasture, and the little boys have to face that big cow and help chase it back in. The fence needs repair, so the boys and I spend three hours fixing and talking as we go.

We need a loft in one of the barns, so we figure out how to build one, and we all learn

together. Every day, eleven-year-old Joshua and eight-year-old David have to face the rats in the barn when they feed the cows, morning and evening. They must do it when it is hot; they must do it when it is cold and dark outside. They must do it when they are having fun riding their bikes, and even when visitors have arrived. All of this is a tool in my hand to build character.

We even get the girls out there from time to time for some good old down-on-the-farm experiences, such as chasing a steer around the barnyard in slushy manure. You may ask, "Brother, where are you going with all this?" How about a mud hut in Africa with all the trimmings? It is time we raise up some gospel soldiers in our land.

There are lots of things for Mama and the girls also. They take care of the garden and put up the fruit during blessed days of canning and freezing, when Mom and the girls can "talk by the way." There is bread to bake, meals to cook, and children to help care for. The girls help with the homeschooling, which is excellent training for their homesome day. Sewing their own dresses has been a real blessing, with skills increasing every time.

By the time the girls are twelve, they can easily manage the house with all its varied responsibilities. Many times I hear mothers say, "I don't have time for all the work a large family brings." They are missing some secrets. Make a disciple, share the load, and raise a responsible young lady, prepared to guide her own home someday. All this works together. God has beautifully tempered all these needs and responsibilities together, for the good of all, even for the good of society.

I view the family business the same way I view the little farm. It is packed full of learning experiences. We do have to make a living, and the boys help to carry the load of this. But even this becomes training for them. Someday they will be the providers. I look at the family business this way: I use the business to build my children; I do not use my children to build my business. I have a problem with some fathers who have their own businesses. They see children as moneymakers, and direct them accordingly. I feel they have it mixed up. The goal is a well-balanced servant of God, not money.

We used to have a retail lawn furniture business before Dan-

iel went to Africa. This was a hands-on experience for the boys in how to operate a business. When Daniel was twelve, he could run the sales lot for me when I was away. He answered the phone, dealt with the customers, solved problems, wrote up orders, and even faced an unhappy customer. He learned all these skills as an apprentice; he stood beside me and listened, then began doing what he had heard. Again, the business was a tool in my hand to develop many aspects of godly character.

Samuel is now twenty years old. He is running the whole family business while I write for five months. Joshua and David both help him in the shop. They help build picnic tables, using no big equipment, just carpenter tools like a hammer, a measuring tape, and a hand drill. This little business provides a multitude of learning experiences for the boys and the girls. Let me walk you through a couple of examples.

The Little Boys Become Men

The boys want to be with the men. They grow up playing at our feet in the woodworking shop. From the age of two, they are there watching us work, playing, and playing at working. It is natural for them to get

involved and help. One day we were all working together, and Joshua was really helping that day. He did the job of a man, working from morning till night building benches. Little David was five at the time, and he was with us playing. I noticed him crying softly in the corner and asked him what was wrong.

He said, "Papa, I want to help. It is not right for me to be playing while others are working."

The Lord prompted me, "Denny, don't miss this one!"

I told David I would have something for him to do the next day.

That evening, David and I went to the hardware store.

I told David, "We are here to buy your hammer and tape measure." His eyes lit up with excitement. As we picked out the tools, I told him he would have a job to do tomorrow. I told him how much we needed his help. This whole story was carried out very purposefully in the manner I have already described. I knew where I was going.

In the shop, we anchor the table tops together with screws placed in a wooden brace. I knew this was something David could do. Hundreds of screws needed to be tapped slightly into holes for assembly later.

As we finished family devotions that morning and headed to the shop, how do you think David was feeling? He walked down to the shop like a man, hammer in hand, ready to join the work crew. At first, I set the screws with his hammer. Then I let him try. I put my hand on his hand, and we did a bunch of them together. Then I did some, and he worked at his beside me. Soon he was doing them all on his own.

We figured out how many screws he set by lunch—about three hundred. Guess what David talked about at the lunch table that day? He sat down at the table like one of the men, proclaiming how many hundreds of screws he had set that morning. Guess how Mama Jackie responded when she heard his proclamations?

“Oh, David, Mama is so proud of you! You work just like the men do!”

Now, three years later, David is a valuable part of the shop operations.

Last year I built Joshua his own special work bench; he can’t reach the others. I set it up with a new hammer, a special wrench, a drill, and a tape measure. “Joshua,” I said, “This is your very own work bench.” His eyes lit up with joy.



Children catch the spirit of diligence as they work with us.

Some time ago, Joshua was busy working in the shop, and one of the workers was standing in the corner watching him. I walked up to the worker and whispered in his ear, “Shhh, he thinks he is playing. Don’t tell him any differently.” That is exactly how it is. Many times the boys are just as anxious to go to work as they are to play. There are hard times in this whole training process; the boys are still boys and sometimes want

to play when it is time to work, but that is where the character is built.

Qualities of virtue are instilled in a child as parents set them up for learning experiences like these. They catch the spirit of diligence as they work alongside us, whether in the shop or scrubbing the floor next to Mom. If we love to work, they will pick up the same attitude. If we hate housework, so will they. We are making disciples either way, by neglect and laziness or by purposeful apprenticeship.

I know many of you do not have the tools I am describing in this chapter. Some of you probably long for this kind of opportunity. I'm sorry for that, and my purpose is not to overwhelm you. But I wanted to show you what can be done. There are times when I weep for joy as I stand in my shop and realize what God has given me. I get to work with my sons. Thank You, Lord!

There was a day when I didn't have a shop or a farm to use. I found other means to make learning experiences happen. I chose to burn wood to heat the house just so the boys and I could go out and cut the wood in the forest. This provided many

manly exercises for both the boys and this city slicker.

In closing this chapter, I hasten to say I am not telling everyone to leave the city and find a place in the country. That is hardly possible in this society. What I am saying is that we must find ways to build character in our children. We must have some tools in our hands to aid us. I believe the sports world is a poor second choice for building character in our children. So much of it is motivated by pride of life, money, and fame. These are destructive motivations. Good old-fashioned hard work, guided with the daily call of duty, will instill humility and responsibility in our children.

Prayer

Father in heaven looking down upon us all, we cry unto You for our children. We want to train them in these ways. Please help us find our way. Keep us from extremes, but guide us down a clear path of godliness. I pray for all the parents who are feeling overwhelmed right now. Draw near to them and encourage them as they seek to walk the right way. Lead them in paths of righteousness for the sake of a godly seed and for Your name's sake. ~

MISTAKEN FOR A PIRATE

"Maybe he ain't home," said the older of the two shabby sailors, knocking at the door again. They were standing in front of a house in the seacoast town of Briel, in South Holland.

"But it's late," said the other. "Where else would he be?"

"Probably just asleep; we'll wake him up!" The sailor pounded the door again.

At last the door opened, and Heyndrick Arendt stood there blinking at them. "Who are you? And what's your business, that you must wake a man from his sleep?" he asked.

"I'm captain of a sailing ship which is anchored in the harbor," explained the old sailor. "She's leaking, and we need repairs quick. You're a ship's carpenter, no?"

"I am."

"You can caulk, then?"

Heyndrick held out his hands, barely visible in the shadows. "What do you think makes these fingers so black?" he asked. "I have spent years repairing ship timbers and putting on pitch."

"Can you come in the morning?"

"I think so," said Heyndrick.

"And many thanks to ya," said the younger sailor. "If our men tire of bailing, the vessel will soon go to the bottom. There's no time to lose."

"Hold, before you go," called out Heyndrick. "Where are you from, and where bound?"

"What business is it of yours?" snapped the captain.

"I think it's my business, if I am to repair the ship."

"We'll pay, never fear. We're honest seamen bound for Dordrecht."

"That's right, that's right—Dordrecht," said the other sailor.

The next morning, Heyndrick squinted at the squat vessel anchored a mile off shore. By the looks of her, it was no wonder she leaked.

The captain rowed Heyndrick out to the ship. As he boarded the huge vessel, which was riding high in the water, Heyndrick smelled fish and rotting timbers, but there was no sign of a cargo.



**BY THE LOOKS
OF THE SHIP, IT
WAS NO WONDER
SHE LEAKED.**

“Empty holds, eh?” remarked Heyndrick, making small talk.

“Nothin’ but water in the hold,” growled the captain. “But keep your eyes in your head an’ do your job. We didn’t hire you to inspect the holds.”

Heyndrick smiled to himself. He had worked for more courteous employers. This was an odd captain and an odd crew. Well, the sooner he started, the sooner he could finish and move on.

Two days passed while Heyndrick worked on the ship. On the third day, about noon, he heard the captain yell, followed by a commotion on deck. He hurried up to see what was happening.

The captain was staring eastward, where a fleet of ships had fanned out in the bay and appeared to be encircling the stranded ship.

“Have they seen us, or is it just happenstance?” asked the captain of his mate.

“I fear it is us they are after, Captain, and we may as well surrender. We’re outnumbered, and as you know the ship is not fit to flee.

The captain cursed under his breath as the ships drew nearer. “The imperial

ships from Rotterdam,” he muttered. “Oh, that we could flee!”

The soldiers boarded the pirate ship and captured the crew, who surrendered quietly. As Heyndrick expected, they were not interested in his explanation of how he came to be there. He would have to wait and tell the court at Rotterdam.

The judge at Rotterdam lost no time punishing the pirates, whose record was notorious. The whole crew was sentenced to be hanged.

“But I am not one of the crew!” objected Heyndrick.

“You were with the crew when it was captured,” answered

the Commander of the imperial ships. "One and all must die."

After the sentence had been read in the courtroom, Heyndrick Arendt raised his hand to be heard. "My lords;" he began. "Is this a city of justice, or of violence? Do you condemn the innocent with the guilty?"

The governor interrupted him. "If you have a complaint, prisoner, state it."

"I have not been arrested on account of any crime. I am a citizen of Briel, a ship's carpenter, and these sailors hired me to repair their vessel. I did not know they were pirates. If you inquire at Briel, you can learn what kind of person I am and what is my faith."

"What does he say about faith?" asked the governor. "We had best question him to be sure he is not a heretic."

It didn't take long to learn that Heyndrick was an Anabaptist, as he freely confessed to having been baptized on his confession of faith.

When the questioning was finished, the governor thun-



**"THIS MAN IS WORSE
THAN A PIRATE!"
THE GOVERNOR
THUNDERED.**

dered, "This man is worse than a pirate; he is an *Anabaptist*! Hanging is too good for him; let him be burned!"

Heyndrick was kept in prison at Rotterdam for two weeks, then burned at the stake in the year 1568. ~

Based on pages 736-737 of the *Martyrs Mirror* by Thieleman J. van Braght; Mennonite Publishing House, 1951. Taken from *The Drummer's Wife*. Used and adapted by permission of Pathway Publishers.

Mountain or Molehill?

Have you ever had a problem
That seemed too big to face,
Though you've tried to live each day
Within God's love and grace?

It seemed just a little molehill
When it first started out;
Then it became a mountain,
Causing fear and doubt.

Did you somehow help it grow
As you began to doubt,
Instead of calling on the One
You knew could work it out?

God can move those mountains
And all the fear and doubt;
If we only call on Him,
He'll help us work things out.

Tracy Daniels
TCI, Turbeville, SC

Sudoku Puzzle Answers from Page 19.

LORD	TASTE	THE	SEE	OH	IS	THAT	AND	GOOD
IS	SEE	THAT	TASTE	AND	GOOD	THE	OH	LORD
AND	GOOD	OH	LORD	THAT	THE	TASTE	SEE	IS
TASTE	AND	IS	THE	SEE	OH	GOOD	LORD	THAT
THAT	OH	LORD	GOOD	IS	TASTE	SEE	THE	AND
GOOD	THE	SEE	AND	LORD	THAT	OH	IS	TASTE
THE	IS	TASTE	OH	GOOD	AND	LORD	THAT	SEE
SEE	THAT	GOOD	IS	THE	LORD	AND	TASTE	OH
OH	LORD	AND	THAT	TASTE	SEE	IS	GOOD	THE

CROSSROADS

Now at the crossroads
At the stop sign of life,
With only two ways to go—
Is it left or right?

In life we have choices,
With different options to take;
Will we choose that which is righteous,
Or again opt for a mistake?

So many times in the past
I thought I had chosen my own fate,
Not knowing God already knew
What would happen on that date.

So, if you think you're in control,
Step back and take another look;
He's walked with you hand in hand
Through every step you ever took.

Ray Healey
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Lovelock, NV

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**“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet
trials of various kinds, for you know that the
testing of your faith produces steadfastness”**

James 1:2–3^{ESV}