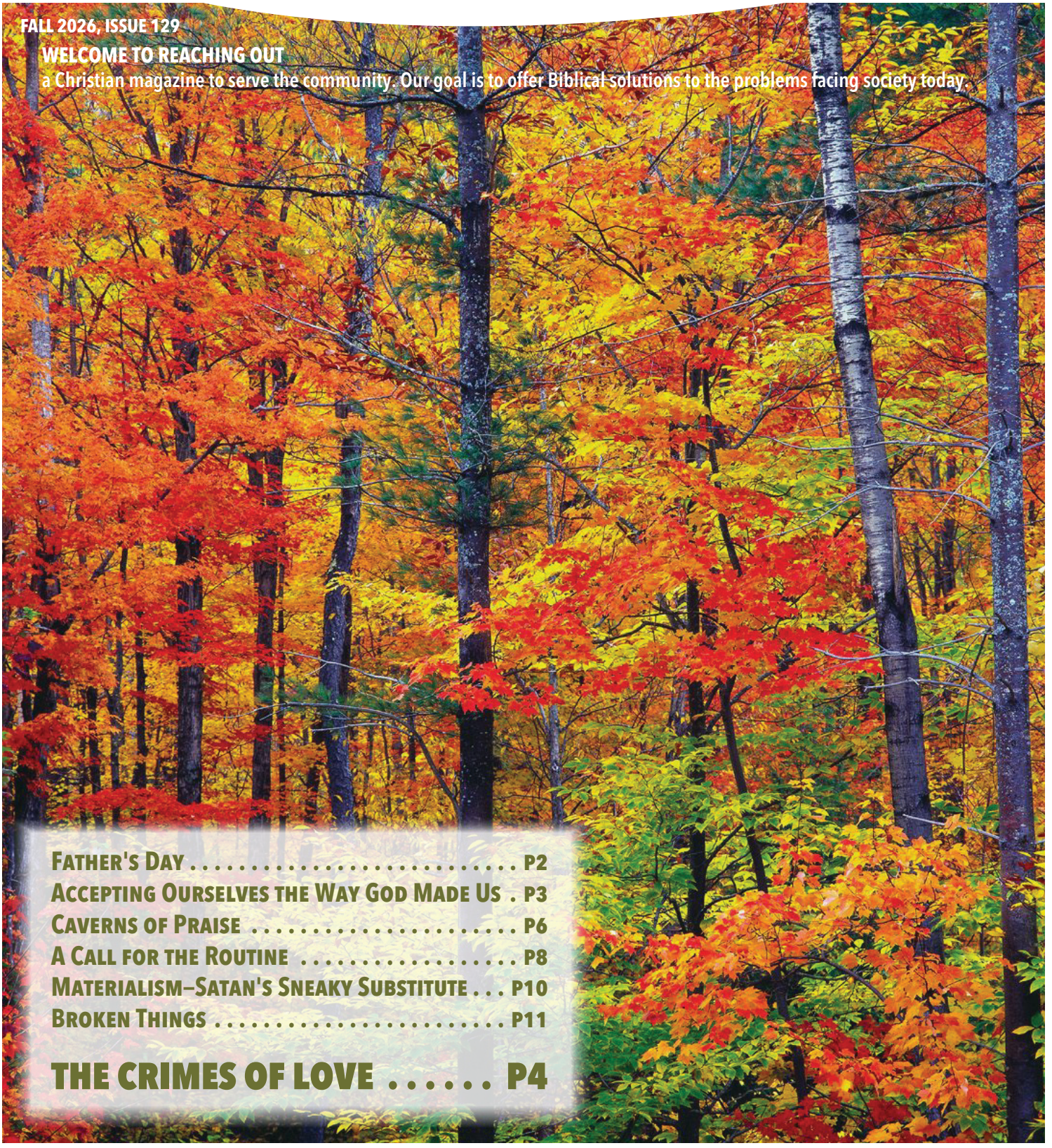
Reaching Out

FALL 2026, ISSUE 129

WELCOME TO REACHING OUT

a Christian magazine to serve the community. Our goal is to offer Biblical solutions to the problems facing society today.



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Father's Day

by Clay Zimmerman

In America, every third Sunday in June is officially Father's Day. Many other countries also have a special day to honor fathers. What is behind this effort?

There are several reasons this recognition is in place. Several thoughts for honoring our fathers are:

- Fathers bring mental security to the home. Just knowing Father is there and is taking care of things brings a degree of trust and rest.
- Fathers usually represent a degree of discipline that brings some stability and keeps things from getting out of control.
- Fathers sacrifice for their family. They provide a house, food and personal time to make things work.

At least this is the way it is supposed to work. Fathers are not perfect and sometimes things could be better. Should we honor fathers only once a year? No, if we only honor someone once a year, it is not really honoring.

What about God? Is He not the Father of us all? Yes, God is our Father in the sense that He created every one of us. Jesus said that we should pray to God as "Our Father."

And what a wonderful Father God is!

- **God loves us:** We love Him because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19)
- **God provides for us:** He has given us all things to enjoy. (1 Timothy 6:17)
- **God disciplines us:** He disciplines every child whom He receives. (Hebrews 12:6)
- **God sacrificed for us:** He loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son. (John 3:16)

So, with God being the Supreme Father, should we not have a Father God Day? Well, just as once a year is not sufficient to honor our earthly fathers, so much more is one day not enough for truly honoring God. Most Christian churches have a weekly service but that also is not adequate in truly honoring God.

We honor God by giving Him our all. The first commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). That involves an all-of-life, everyday honor.

We honor God by our obedience. *"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments"* (1 John 5:3).

We honor God by giving. *"Honor the Lord with thy substance"* (Proverbs 3:9), and *"He who honoreth* [God] *has mercy on the poor"* (Proverbs 14:31).

God once mentioned a people who "honor me with their lips but their heart is far from me." Saying the right things and going to church is not enough. God wants us to daily honor Him with a life of surrender, faith, and obedience.

Would you like to receive each issue of ***Reaching Out,*** *or do you know of a friend who might? Send your requests to the church represented on your back page. If you do not wish to receive this paper, please notify the church represented on the back page.*

Do you care to respond to any of the articles? Send your thoughts and comments to:

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Wisdom for Youth

Accepting Ourselves the Way God Made Us

by Gardell Strite

Did you ever wish something was different about yourself?

Do you wish you were taller or maybe shorter? Maybe you wish that your eyes were stunning blue, or that your hair was a different color. Possibly you would like a different complexion, or maybe you just feel unattractive and wish you could be extraordinarily beautiful like someone else you know. If you are a young man, you may want to be admired by the girls. If you are young lady, you may want to be more attractive to the boys.

Many young people wish they were not so painfully shy and uncomfortable around others. They wish they were able to converse naturally and freely and be the "life of the party" in social situations, able to use witty comebacks to make others laugh. It is often considered desirable to have a magnetic personality and be well-liked and popular.

Maybe you wish you were more intelligent so people would look up to you for answers. Life would be easier at school or on the job if you were intellectually smarter. Possibly it seems that most people can do things better than you, and you wonder if you have any gifts or talents at all.

What if you could change yourself to be the perfect person you wanted to be? Would that make you happy? Would others accept you better? Of course not! Many beautiful, talented people have testified to the emptiness of their lives. They worry that they will lose their position to people who are more beautiful or talented than they are, and they often have relationship issues because of their self-centeredness. Their position often stirs envy in others which can cause difficulty for them. Over time, man's beauty will fade away, and we will wither and die. (Psalm 39:11)

A person's basic value does not come from their talents, looks, personality, or the amount of money they have. God has a completely different value system than man does. The human soul that is inside your physical body (the real you) is of eternal worth, and God values all people equally because of their soul. God has created you the way you are and loves you regardless of your looks, abilities, or social standing.

Too often, we focus on things that we cannot change in our lives and ignore the things that we can change! We can be more helpful to those around us. We can reach out to hurting people, and we can be a positive influence in others' lives. We should evaluate ourselves for flaws in our character and change them with God's help.

I once knew an older lady who most people would consider to be ugly. In fact, that was my first impression of her. But when I learned to know her self-sacrificing ways, I began to think she was beautiful. I have also known beautiful people who became "ugly" over time because of their selfish ways.

It is not wrong to work to improve our talents, our minds, and even our looks, but when that becomes our primary focus, we will become wrapped up in ourselves. When we accept the way God has made us, we can focus on helping others, which is the true path to happiness.

What Does the Bible Say?

The Crimes of Love

by David L. Martin

"Liberty, equality, fraternity!" They were fine-sounding words; they were the motto for the leaders of the French Revolution. But during this time, thousands of French people lost their lives on the guillotine, a device for slicing off the heads of political enemies. One woman approaching a guillotine exclaimed, "Liberty! What crimes are committed in thy name."

She could have said the same about the word *love*. Many crimes and misdemeanors have been committed in the name of love. Here are a few examples.

During the 1500s, mainstream church leaders discussing their disagreements with Anabaptists made one thing clear: everything was to be done in love! But when the Anabaptists did not "love" them enough to agree with their doctrines, they stuck them in prison and even drowned or beheaded them—still in the name of love, one may suppose.

Many people marry, thinking mostly of the pleasure the other person will give them. They love others for what they get out of it. One writer put it, "Instead of loving others as myself, I love myself in others."

People commit adultery in the name of love. They say love disappeared from the first marriage, so all they can do is find someone they truly love. This time, they hope, someone will suit them. They say, "It can't be wrong when it feels so right." Or "You can't help who you fall in love with."

People commit all kinds of perversions in the name of love. If challenged, they say, "Well, yes, there are passages in the Bible that seem to condemn what we are doing. But the Bible also speaks of love, tolerance, acceptance, companionship, kindness, forbearance. We must love!"

In other words, one might do things in the name of love that aren't love at all.

What then is love?
It is what God says it is.

- God says love is a choice. *"Thou shalt love"* (Mark 12:30) may seem strange at first. How can anyone love in response to a command? Can someone turn on a switch and instantly produce love? No, but love can be cultivated—that is a choice we can make.
- God says love can hurt. *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten"* (Revelation 3:19). The hurt can go in both directions. God never exactly said, "This hurts me more than it hurts you," but the story of Calvary says it. Love isn't always "the happiest feeling in the world."
- God says love lasts on and on. *"Can a woman forget her sucking child? . . . Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee"* (Isaiah 49:15). *"I have loved thee with an everlasting love"* (Jeremiah 31:3). For people who have crippling illnesses or accidents, the divorce rate soars. Maybe those couples never learned from God the love that loves *"unto the end"* (John 13:1). But a godly couple finds new ways and reasons to love.
- God says love gives. *"For God so loved . . . that He gave. . ."* (John 3:16). Jesus said, *"Love your enemies . . . bless . . . do good . . . pray for them"* (Matthew 5:44). Our heavenly Father loves and gives to His enemies, and His children do the same.
- God says love has no substitute. *"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor . . . and have not charity* (love)*, it profiteth me nothing"* (1 Corinthians 13:3). Tokens of love sometimes pass for love. Parents who neglect their children might give them gifts to make up for the

quality time and attention they are failing to give.

- God says love brings security. *"Charity never faileth"* (1 Corinthians 13:8). Genuine love is the rock on which homes are built, homes where children grow up seeing Father and Mother love each other. How different from the child of a broken home who ends up in crime, leaving the experts to wonder what went wrong! That child's foundation caved in a long time ago, and it had a lot to do with lack of love.
- God says love loves the unlovely. *"While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8). The unlovely can be our own brothers and sisters sometimes; they can be hardest to love and forgive. But *"this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also"* (1 John 4:21).

Many good things are done, not only in the name of love, but out of real love, compassion, friendship, and brotherhood. Thank God, who loved us and teaches us to love in a right way.

"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

1 John 4:16



How Great the Wisdom and the Love

How great the wisdom and the love
That filled the courts on high,
And sent the Saviour from above
To suffer, bleed, and die!

His precious blood He freely spilt;
His life He freely gave,
A sinless sacrifice for guilt,
A dying world to save.

By strict obedience Jesus won
The prize with glory rife:
"Thy will, O God, not mine be done,"
Adorned His mortal life.

He marked the path and led the way,
And every point defines
The light and life and endless day
Where God's full presence shines.

How great, how glorious, how complete
Redemption's grand design,
Where justice, love, and mercy meet
In harmony divine!

-Eliza R. Snow (1887)



The Bible & Science

Caverns of Praise

by Denton Ford

"Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein." Psalm 69:34

I enjoy exploring local caves, trying to squeeze in farther than I have before, only to once again realize it is simply too small. Yet I continue to try. There is something fascinating about caves. For those willing to endure dark, wet, tight spaces, caves offer adventurous opportunities for exploration. But it seems most cave tours usually reiterate the common idea that caves and cave formations are the result of slow, gradual processes over tens of thousands of years. So, how do caves reconcile with the Bible's approximately 6,000 years of earth history? Let's see whether they are caverns of doubt or echo-chambers of God's praise.

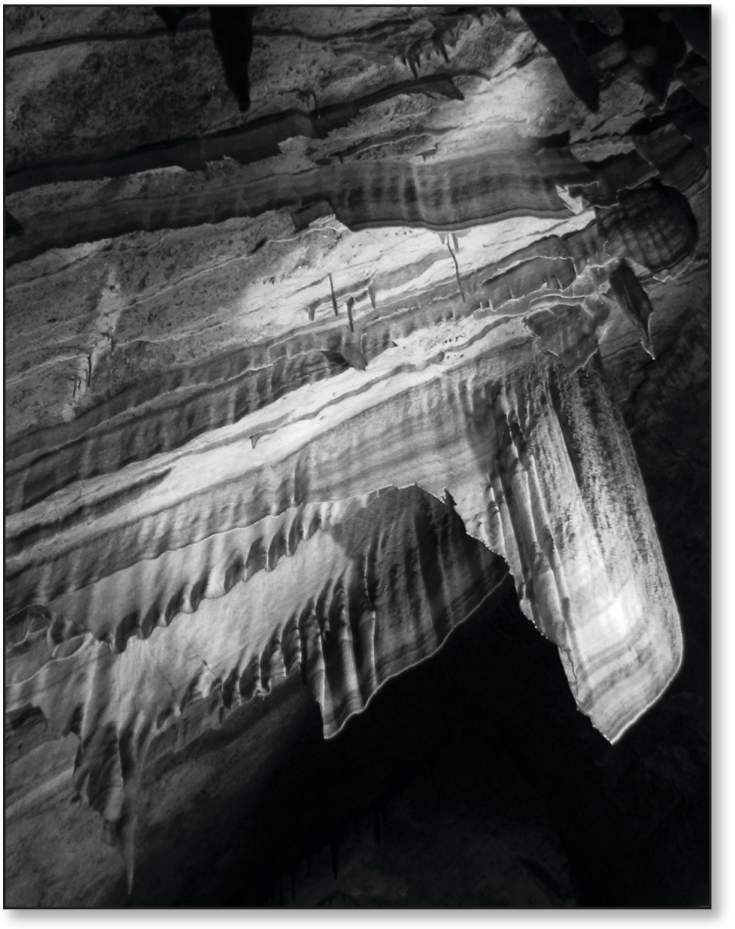
Caves in the Bible

First, the Bible mentions caves quite a lot. Lot and his daughters lived in a cave after the destruction of Sodom. Abraham bought a cave from Ephron the Hittite at Machpelah in which to bury his wife Sarah. Five kings hid in a cave after being defeated by Joshua and the Israelites. David hid from King Saul in the cave of Adullam.

Then there is the cave where Obadiah hid one hundred prophets from Queen Jezebel, who wanted to kill them. And the cave on Mt. Sinai where Elijah the prophet stayed and heard God speak in a still, small voice. Even the tomb in which Lazarus was buried, whom Jesus raised from the dead, is described as a cave. There are many caves in the Bible. From shelter, a place to hide, or even as tombs, caves were useful throughout history.

Cave terms

Some names and terms used about caves may be unfamiliar to people. Speleothems refer to rock formations inside caves. There are many different types of speleothems, but probably some of the most well-known are the dripping speleothems: stalactites, stalagmites, and columns. Stalactites are formations that hang down from the ceiling, while stalagmites are similar formations that extend up from the floor. A column is formed when a stalactite and stalagmite join each other. An interesting variant of a stalactite is known as soda straws. These



are very long, thin stalactites that, as the name suggests, resemble soda straws.

There are also speleothems formed by gravitational flow across cave surfaces, like flowstones and draperies. Draperies form as thin sheets hanging from the ceilings and walls of caves. Sometimes draperies can be thin enough that light shines through them, showing different colored bands. These types of draperies are called "cave bacon." There are other types as well, like cave popcorn, cave pearls, shields, rafts, etc. (Note that neither cave popcorn nor cave bacon are edible!)

Don't Caves Form Very Slowly?

Many people assume that caves and cave formations form very slowly over thousands, or even hundreds of thousands of years. As the calcite making up many of these speleothems is leached from the surrounding limestone, other minerals come with it, some of which contain radioactive elements that can be used for radioisotope dating. Now, radioisotope dating relies on several very large assumptions about the origin and history of the rocks, assumptions of conditions that are simply unknown. We don't know the exact conditions of the rocks from their formation to their present condition, so the assumptions of radioisotope dating are unreliable.

Still, radioisotope dating is used on speleothems, sometimes yielding dates of over a hundred thousand years. That is a long time for a cave formation to grow! Just think: not one change in where the water drips for tens of thousands of years. No major changes in growth rate. These are some big assumptions that I think are better to avoid.

Evidence of Rapid Speleothem Formation

So, let's examine some of the problems with the assumption that cave formations take long periods of time to form. First, it is known that different speleothems form at different rates, sometimes varying from place to place in the same cave. It all depends on the rate of water seeping through the conduits feeding the formations, and the amount of mineral content leached out of the surrounding rock. As the water flows through a small seam in the rock, it removes minerals from the sides of the seam, enlarging it over time. We would expect, then, that the rate of speleothem growth should vary over time anyway. As we see, cave formations are much more complex than many have been led to believe.

Another interesting clue are recent objects that have been covered quickly by cave formations, such as old mining equipment, dishes, even bats that have been covered quickly enough to preserve more than just bones.[1] With the right conditions, speleothem formation can happen fast, and we would expect that the conditions in Noah's flood that quickly formed the rock layers could also have helped to speed up the initial formation of caves in those rock layers.

There are also instances of "speleothems" that have formed from man-made objects like basements or drainpipes. I once noticed a highway overpass in the mountains of Transylvania in Romania that appeared to have "soda straws" hanging underneath.[2] I don't know when the bridge was constructed, but it is safe to assume it was not tens of thousands of years ago!

There is much more about caves that could be addressed, but I hope that what we have covered here serves to communicate this truth: the actual scientific evidence from the caves themselves turns out to be in perfect harmony with the Bible's account of history.

The Cave That Changed the World

Of all the caves in the world, and of all the caves mentioned in the Bible, there is one that changed the world more than any other. This cave, unlike many caves visited today for the beautiful speleothems inside them, is significant because of what is not in it. Two thousand years ago, our Creator came to this world to become one of us. Jesus died on the cross to redeem us and save us from our sin, after which he was laid in a hand-hewn tomb, or man-made "cave." Three days later, He rose from the dead, defeating death, and offers us forgiveness and new life if we will repent of our sins and believe in Him. The tomb is still empty. What have you done with His offer?

1 Emil Silvestru, *"The Cave Book"* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008) p.68

2 This is the bridge where E79 crosses over Strada Timișoara in the town of Petroșani in Hunedoara county.



The Christian Home

A Call for the Routine

by Caleb Martin

You might be asking, "Does my home need structure?" I think so. Let me explain.

You might know by now that I'm a father of eight. I'm blessed and grateful. However, eight children highlight the need for organization. A household this size can easily devolve into chaos. You could say that I'm living in an extreme situation and you might be right. But I think that even smaller families stand to benefit from simple routines.

If you've been a parent for more than an hour, you probably know that children cry a lot. Wise parents pay attention to the cries of their children. Your baby is communicating with you through its tears. Your job is to serve your baby in the best possible way. One of those methods of serving is building a healthy routine.

Happy homes are successful homes, and an imperfect routine could be a minor hiccup that destroys the atmosphere of your home. For example, you might be a nearly perfect parent but if your children are constantly tired, your home will suffer. Your tired children will cry over minor issues, which creates frustrated parents and a chaotic home. A simple fix could be a consistent structure. Your eleven-year-old might need eleven hours of sleep each night. And not all bedtimes are equal. Maybe it works best if your child goes to bed at nine every night. This simple routine could transform your house from mostly grouchy to mostly cheerful.

Don't let me oversell routines. They won't fix everything. They are simple things that can make a big difference if all the fundamentals are in place. For example, a parent with unchecked anger will never fix the devastating effects of anger with a routine. A schedule can never take the place of love, patience and repentance.

But schedules do provide structure and that structure gives your children a sense of security. Schedules create norms and expectations. They provide a baseline from which children can operate. Once they know where the baseline is, their curiosity can push them off into new areas of exploration. This sense of regularity could provide the freedom that your children need to overcome boredom.

An insecure child may struggle to settle into his play. He may be distracted by worry and fear, feeling a constant need to be near his parents. This can create a cycle of decline. Parents become frustrated by a high-maintenance child, and the child becomes more insecure with each burst of frustration from his parents.

Are routines easy to build?

In one sense, yes. They are simple. Children don't need elaborate schedules. However, routines, by definition, take a lot of time investment from Mom and Dad.

For example, I've found it very helpful for both parents to start the day with their children. Morning is so crucial for helping to set the tone for the rest of the day. Fortunately, well-rested children are typically about as cheerful as they will ever be. So, if mornings begin without warmth, connection, or clear expectations, some children may start the day feeling unsettled rather than secure. A cheerful, predictable morning routine can help them begin the day with confidence.

I don't naturally build routines. My personality



"Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord."

Psalm 128:1-4

tends toward a more freewheeling schedule. My wife has picked up so many of the "loose ends" in our home. She is the one who wakes the children up at seven every morning when I would be tempted to let them sleep until eight. She is the one that has breakfast on the table at 7:15.

I'm giving you these examples because I want to highlight the beautiful way that both parents can work together to create this structure. I'm much more sensitive about smoothing out the morning for the children. She is much more intent on keeping up with the clock. Both instincts are needed, and my wife and I strive to work together to create a well-rounded atmosphere.

What are some practical examples of routines and their benefits?

Do you struggle to know what to feed your children? Maybe pizza every Saturday night and scrambled eggs every Sunday morning can eliminate some stress out of your life. Another benefit is that even your young children can get a sense for the length of a week. Time feels unmeasurable to young minds. But if the next time they go to Grandpa's is "after pizza night," or some other regular event, they might be able to sense the amount of time required.

To raise godly children, you will need to set up regular Bible teaching. Daily devotions, regular church attendance, Sunday schools, Bible school programs and other godly instructions provide an invaluable baseline for your children's developing faith. Also, moral habits and courtesy should be ingrained in every step of your routines. Requiring a "please" or "thank you" helps to set a godly tone in your home.

Regular chores and tasks provide a sense of belonging and worth and start the process of maturity. A chart that lists out the jobs assigned to each child can set expectations and cut out much of the complaining that young children are tempted with. Dishes need to be washed. Toys need to be put away. The list could be long: beds made, floors swept, garbage emptied, and much more. These minor tasks are the vital beginnings of a disciplined life. And how will a child mature unless he learns the regularity of faithful discipline?

Every good home is a finely tuned balance between kind-hearted warmth and routine structures. The Bible says, *"Let all things be done decently and in order"* (1 Corinthians 14:40). Your child can thrive as he rests in the simple joy of a well-defined world.



Money and Me

Materialism—Satan's Sneaky Substitute

by Gary Miller

In 1682, John Bunyan published a book that attempts to portray the battle that goes on within the mind and the importance of defensive warfare in the life of a believer. This book, *Holy War*, has never been as popular as *Pilgrim's Progress*, but it does present a vivid illustration. He portrays the mind as a city—the city of Mansoul. Mansoul has five gates, and each gate represents one of our natural senses—sight, touch, smell, taste, and hearing. Passage through these gates is the only hope the enemy has of victory, so the gates become battle sites.

Throughout the book, Diabolus (representing Satan) tries different strategies to penetrate the gates and persuade the city to let him be king. At times the citizens of Mansoul choose to have Shaddai (representing God) as king, at other times Diabolus. But toward the end of the book, after Diabolus has repeatedly attacked with violence, tried various attempts at deception, and fought many bloody battles, a demon called Legion presents a plan of which we should take note.

In the story, Legion proposes an entirely different strategy. Instead of threats, insults, and violence, Legion suggests they start blessing the people materially. "Stuff them with goods!" he suggests. "They will be forced to make their castle a warehouse instead of a garrison fortified against us!"

Instead of fighting them at the gates and along the walls of the city, Legion suggested they take the battle to the marketplace. Give them so much stuff to enjoy that they forget the battle. Feed them anything they desire, and they will grow sleepy and apathetic. In short, Legion was proposing they use the weapon of materialism. Instead of trying to persuade the people to serve Satan, they would provide a sneaky, subtle substitute. Satan is the master of substitutes. If he can't win with direct confrontation, he'll try an alternative.

It has been over three hundred years since John Bunyan wrote the *Holy War*, and there is no way he could have predicted the materialistic climate we find ourselves in today. Yet it seems clear we are living in the exact scenario Bunyan depicted in his account. The god of this world is flooding our lives with goods and stuff. Materialism is stealing our resources, our time, and our thought life. It is time for the church to confess that we have given ground in this area and renounce the god of this world.

But deciding not to buy more stuff is only half of the equation. We can live very frugal lives and still be of no value to our Lord. There is no value in poverty without purpose. Our real need is recommitment to the Kingdom. Jesus is calling us to be His hands and feet and accomplish His work here on earth. We are to use His resources for His purpose.

Sometimes we speak of Sodom and Gomorrah, and we think of them as so immoral that God finally destroyed them. But was this all that God was angry about? Notice what the prophet Ezekiel said about the sin of Sodom: *"Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy"* (Ezekiel 16:49).

As God views the world today, I wonder what He would say about us. I wonder how far we are from the sin of Sodom. How does He view our lives? Is our way of living really different from the world's? Or are we neglecting God's best and finding satisfaction in materialism, Satan's sneaky substitute?

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The World Today

Broken Things

by Daniel Allgyer

The world today is full of broken things.

A broken window, a broken plate, a broken basket.

Broken branch, broken porch, broken fence.

Broken glasses, broken bones, broken toys.

Broken rule, broken promise, broken friendship.

Broken churches, broken marriages, broken hearts.

Who wants broken things? When things are broken, we are disappointed. Broken things are lost and wasted. It takes time and expense to fix or replace broken things. So, who wants something that is broken?

God does! God takes broken hearts and makes them whole. Jesus says, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised"* (Luke 4:18).

Sometimes, broken things are the most useful. Broken flowers give more perfume. A broken watermelon allows access to juicy refreshment. A broken potato is much easier to eat.



It takes broken soil to produce a crop.

It takes broken clouds to grow the grain.

It takes broken grain to make the bread.

It takes broken bread to give strength.

God wants us to be broken so we can be useful in His perfect plan for us.

But who wants to be broken? Being broken is hard. But it is the only path to restoration and peace. God wants us to be broken, so he can remake us. Brokenness allows him to restore. Brokenness allows the light of God's life to enter and heal our spirit and soul.

How can we be broken before God? Listen to a parable spoken by Jesus.

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (Luke 18:10-14)

To be broken is to bow before God, confess my sin, and plead for His mercy. *"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit"* (Psalm 34:18). It is then that we can be saved, justified, restored, and used of God.

If we are broken and contrite, God can make us beautiful.