

Christianfamily

A bilingual magazine for Christian families

Volume 8, number 2
April - June 2023

HANDLE WITH CARE

Protecting our families from the dangers of social media

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and more...



From the editors

The popularity of social media goes without saying. Social media can be a great tool to spread the Gospel, keep communication with loved ones who are far away, and interact with friends, but it can also be a great danger to our families. Our feature article explores some of the main dangers of social media and offers sound advice for parents to guard the souls of their children, as well as their own souls, from the pollution and dangers of the world. Other articles provide additional wisdom for all the members of the family.

If you are enjoying our magazine, we ask you to take the time to tell your extended family, friends, and church family about it. Pray for this ministry, send us your family-related questions, and let us know how the Lord is blessing you and your family through this magazine.

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Christianfamily

Helping families become stronger in the Lord

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My journey with God Jill Marie Galbraith

Early childhood memories of getting to know God started at five years of age. When it was time to go to bed, my mother would sing songs about how Jesus loved me and all the other children of the world. She would read adventurous Bible stories and describe a beautiful place way beyond the clouds called “heaven,” a place of love and no sadness. I couldn’t wait to visit that beautiful place called heaven.

When I was about 10, my mother found a church of Christ for us to attend together. She made it a priority to attend worship, and our church family quickly became a big part of our lives. We now had a family who prayed for and encouraged us in our faith. At about 13 years old, I was baptized so I could follow Jesus. I was excited to see where my faith would take me (John 3:3-5). I was also aware of Satan, how he would lie and deceive me along the way. I had an adversary prowling around like a roaring lion. Over the course of my faith journey with God, I would encounter many battles with his schemes. At times it seemed more like war!

The summer I graduated from high school, I moved out and started to pursue my own path in life. I attended cosmetology school and worked a part-time job. As I began experiencing life as a young adult, meeting new people,

and making my own decisions, I quickly realized life was fast and sometimes scary.

Being independent and enjoying the fruits of being on my own had me blinded to the fact that I was slowly drifting away from God. I had stopped attending church services and was finding it difficult to go to God in prayer. I hadn’t picked up my Bible in months, and my relationship with my heavenly Father seemed more like a faded memory. I was already settling for less than what God had planned for me.

Over the next thirty years, navigating through life on my own free will helped me realize one thing is for certain: spiritual appetite will never be satisfied with the world’s temporary pleasures. Life without God is unfulfilling and meaningless. In other words, life without God is just existing (Ecclesiastes 2:10-11).

Before I could begin to restore my relationship with God, I needed to understand that this relationship was broken, not because of what God did, but what I had done. As I redirected my life back to Christ, I repented and confessed my sins to God. I was baptized at age 55 years young because I felt my first baptism was not upon adequate faith. The truth is that God welcomes us home when we come back to Him with humble and repentant hearts.

Thank you, my dear mother, for teaching me about Jesus, being faithful in your walk with Him, leading by example, and for praying that I would return home one day (Proverbs 22:6). ■



RAISE THEM RIGHT *Paul Holland*

biblical wisdom for modern parenting
from Ecclesiastes 3:1-10

In this study, we begin in Ecclesiastes 3:1. We look at childhood and parenting through the metaphor of the “seasons.” “Seasons” is really another name for “transitions.”

Season of Training

This season begins at birth and lasts about two years. Because the child is practically helpless, the parents’ lives revolve around the child. In 1 Thessalonians 2:7, Paul pictures a nursing mother tenderly caring for her infant. Most of the “caring” falls on the mother’s shoulders, but a godly father will help in every way he can. Their goal in this season is to help their children to understand their world by loving them and taking care of them. Children’s biological needs must be provided, and they need to be kept safe.

Too many parents, however, do not bring this “season” to a close. When they do not, they risk raising a spoiled child. Children might grow up thinking that because mom and dad’s life revolves around them, then everyone’s life should revolve around them. Therefore, it is critical for mom and dad to train the child to leave the “Season of Training.”

How is that done? By training the child to do for himself or herself what he or she can do. Mom and Dad can step in and help when necessary, but largely, the child should be learning a degree of independence. She can dress herself; he can pick up his own toys. Mom (especially) needs to train the child, around the two-year point, that she is not going to pick him up every time he wants. She will not interrupt her conversation with another adult just because she thinks she needs her. It can take time to train the child to start doing things for himself or herself, but it is a necessary part of the maturity process.

Season of Following

The “terrible twos” are so-called because children love being served and do not want to have to be in-

dependent. A three-year old should, however, now be trained to see Mom differently than before. No longer is she the “caregiver,” but now she is the “authority figure.” She serves when she needs to, but she governs and directs and disciplines more often. In 1 Corinthians 13:11, Paul writes that when he was a child, he spoke like a child, thought like a child, and acted like a child, but when he became a man, he put away childish things. This is a transition to follow the leadership of the parents.

It is especially important at this stage or season of life to help your child to accept responsibility for his or her own choices and learn that choices have consequences. The toddler needs to have tasks that are age-appropriate that he or she can do and is expected to do, and consequences must follow if he or she does not do them. Mom also needs to clearly communicate to the toddler that Dad is resuming his place at her side without toddler in-between.

The family should have rules that are intended to be respected and obeyed. The toddler, at this age, should be expected to regulate his or her own behavior and meet Mom and Dad’s expectations. Parents need to have discussions about what those expectations are (those expectations need to be age-appropriate). Paul warns dads not to “provoke” their children (Colossians 3:21), which happens if Dad’s expectations are not realistic. This season lasts into the early teen years.

Season of Guidance

The teen years are another major transition comparable to the “terrible twos.” The reason is because teens are now fully beginning to make their own choices and develop their own direction.

We do not know how old Timothy was when Paul brought him into his mission team in Acts 16. He might have been beyond the teen years, but the point is still the same: Paul was involving Timothy in leadership roles consistent with his ability and his age.

Timothy seems to have had some self-esteem issues because Paul told him such things as, “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7), and, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

In the stage of “guidance,” parents do not have to make more rules and, largely, do not have to enforce rules too much. Children know the rules and know there are consequences if they break the rules; they also know that Mom and Dad are going to enforce the rules if they are broken. But especially if you have led your child to obey Jesus Christ, now he or she has an even higher motivation—love for Jesus—to respect the rules. Rather, in this stage, Mom and Dad are helping teach practical skills, skills the teenager needs to know to survive in the “real world.” We want our children to move into adulthood with self-confidence. To do that, they need to have responsibilities to meet as they grow and mature: chores at home, part-time job, a budget, etc.

Season of Friendship

Finally, with time, patience, and the help of Christ, parents can move into a role of “equality.” They are “parents” only in the biological sense, and now they enter in a stage when they become peers. In 1 Cor-

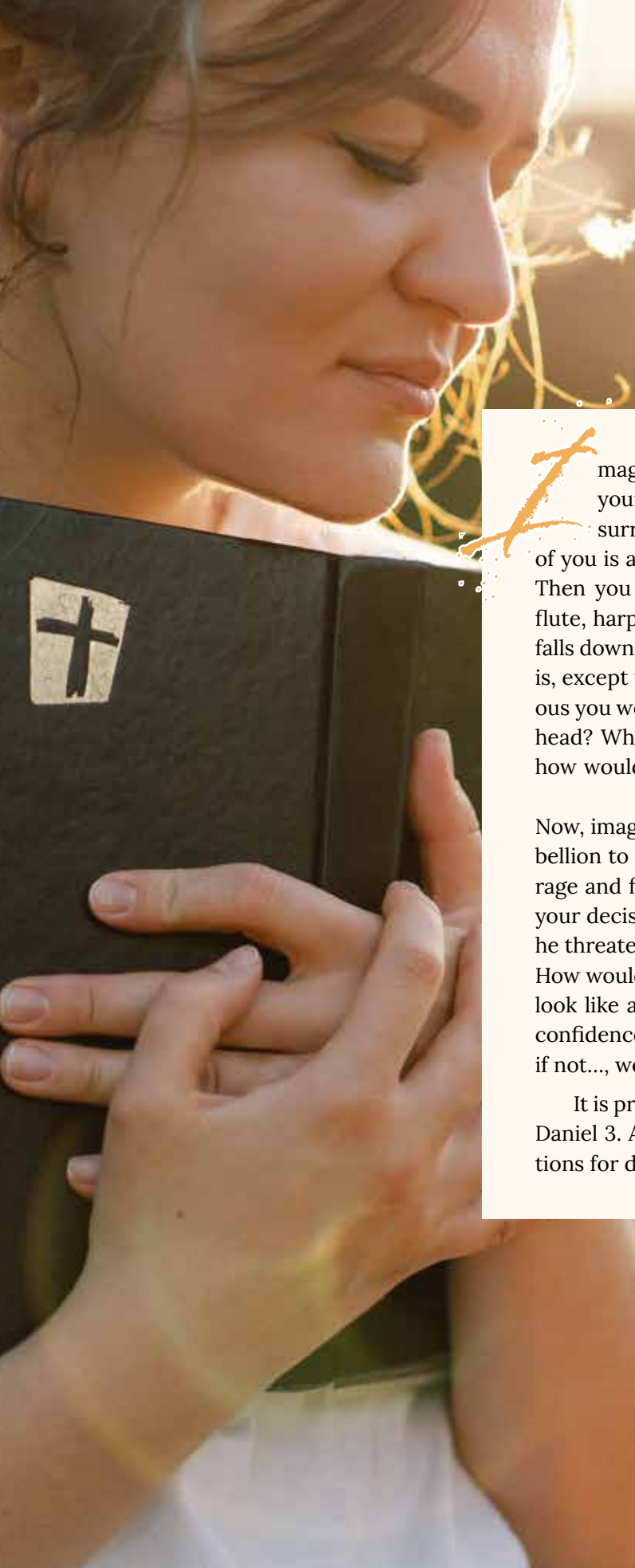
inthians 16:13-14, Paul told the Christians in Corinth: “Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave (literally, “act like men”), be strong. Let all *that* you do be done with love.” We are training our children to become responsible adults so that we can be friends.

The so-called “helicopter” mom who micromanages the child’s day-to-day activities is setting himself or herself up for low self-esteem and a poor work ethic. Parents who think they have to do everything for their children, or they will fail, are implicitly training their children to expect failure from themselves.

Here is the essence of education: (1) “Let me do it for you” (this is the season of training). (2) “Let me show you how to do it and you watch” (this is the season of following). (3) “You do it and let me watch you” (this is the season of guidance). (4) The last season is the season of friendship and that is when your child does things himself or herself.

Train. Teach children how to follow. Guide. Then be their friend. These are the “seasons” of parenting. Make a determined effort to lead your child through each season. ■





Fiery faithfulness

Kerri Epling

Imagine this: You are one of God's chosen people, yet you find yourself in a foreign place, working for a prideful king, and surrounded by a huge crowd of the king's subjects. In front of you is a large image of gold, towering 90 feet above the crowd. Then you hear the sound of all sorts of instruments—the horn, flute, harp, and lyre. Everyone in the crowd around you suddenly falls down and begins to worship this golden image; everyone, that is, except for you and two of your friends. Imagine how conspicuous you would feel. What thoughts might be running through your head? What emotions would be at play in your mind? Physically, how would it feel to stand out so blatantly among the multitude?

Now, imagine that servants of the king see you and bring your rebellion to the king's attention. Immediately, his pride leads him to rage and fury, and you are brought before the king. He questions your decision to defy his order to bow before the golden idol, and he threatens your very life if you do not acquiesce to his demands. How would you answer him? What would your faithfulness to God look like at that point of trial? Would you (and would I) have the confidence to remind him that "our God...is able to deliver us... But if not..., we do not serve your gods" (Daniel 3:17-18)?

It is probably obvious at this point that our text for this study is Daniel 3. After reading that chapter, consider the following questions for deeper study.

Questions to consider

- What is the historical context of this account? Where does it take place, and who are the primary people involved in the situation described?
- Why were the three friends in Babylon?
- What decree had the king made? What was the consequence of disobedience?
- Why did the three men refuse to bow down to the statue?

- How did these men reply to the king when confronted?
- What punishment was assigned to them for their rebellion?
- How hot was the furnace?
- What did the king see when he looked in the furnace?
- Who protected Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego?
- What was the result of this account? See verses 28-30.
- How can our trials and responses to suffering bring glory to God? Look for other Scripture references that suggest that God receives glory when His people suffer for His sake.
- What kind of situations causes us to “stand out in the crowd” because our actions do not match those of the multitudes? What emotions often accompany such decisions? Find verses that show that we are to be different than the world around us.
- Study 1 Corinthians 10:13 and remember that God always provides a way of escape from temptation. He is still able to deliver us today. What are some ways He can deliver us today since He no longer responds miraculously like He did in times past? How can His Word help us find the way(s) of escape? Consider the temptation of Jesus in Matthew 4 in your thoughts.



Questions for children

- What did the king make out of gold?
- What were people supposed to do when they heard the music?
- Did everyone obey?
- What happened to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego when they didn't listen to the king?
- How were they rescued? ■

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact Kerri at editorial@ebglobal.org with email subject of “Christian Family Study.”

Suggestions for interaction with children

- Re-enact the story and stand when everyone else is bowing down. Practice saying, “Our God is able to deliver us!”
- Role play a situation in which children may be asked to do something that God does not like. Help them learn appropriate responses. Discuss how God always provides a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13) and that He is still able to deliver us!
- Pray for God to deliver you from difficult situations.
- Make a “fiery furnace” diorama from an empty oatmeal container and include a flickering battery-operated light, red and orange tissue paper, and paper figures. As the kids retell the story, add a fourth figure to rescue them.
- Place a fan face up on the ground and attach red, orange, and yellow streamers to the fan. Turn it on to have the streamers look like flames. Have children take turns being Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego and have a parent tell them to “come forth.” Point out that they were not singed and did not even smell of smoke!



HANDLE WITH CARE

Protecting our families from the dangers of social media

Todd Houston

Perhaps no technology has done more to shape our world in the past 50 years than the internet. Like most technologies, the internet introduces useful and detrimental elements into society. The widespread availability and usage of this technology makes it one of the most powerful and influential tools in human history. Among the many tools found on the internet, one of the most impactful is social media. In this discussion, we will look at several important factors in hopes of better grasping the power of social media and the dire need to set up proper guardrails to protect our families against its potential dangers. This is not a polemic against social media use, but it is a plea to consider the positives and negatives openly and honestly to avoid deceiving ourselves and falling into one of Satan's many snares.

A quick statistical check demonstrates the ubiquity of social media usage as well as its rapid expansion. The following synopsis is representative of the general trends in social media usage. The total num-

ber of worldwide social media users more than doubled from 2015 to 2021 from 2.07 billion to 4.48 billion. That is a growth rate of 12.5% per year in that span.¹ What makes this number even more remarkable is that, of the remaining 3.7 billion people on earth, a large percentage either have no access or are not yet of age to engage in social media. This means almost every person with access uses social media.

That social media is such a part of the fabric of our world ensures that the issue is coming to our house if it has not already. I imagine many reading this article use social media (as do I), which is perfectly fine **if we do so responsibly**. It is that last part that has proven more challenging than many like to admit. There are several factors leading to improper use of social media, all of which are avoidable if we are well informed and determined not to defile ourselves by them (cf. Daniel 1:5-8). Though this article cannot exhaust every potential danger of social media, the following relates to some of the most common ones we must avoid.

Redeeming the Time

The first issue to consider is the impact of social media on time management. According to the statistical data in the study cited above, the average time spent among worldwide social media users is 2 hours and 24 minutes per day. If a person signs up at age 16 and keeps to this average until age 70, he/she will have spent 5.7 years on social media. Factor in that many spend much more time than the average. So, the first matter of concern for the Christian family is stewardship of our time. Paul repeatedly told his readers to “redeem” the time (Ephesians 5:15-16; Colossians 4:5).

We all have exactly 24 hours available each day. Of these, roughly 8 are spent sleeping, and another 8 are spent at work or school. We are already down to just 8 available hours of time before eating, house-keeping, lawn care, home maintenance, auto maintenance, doctor visits, showering, brushing teeth, commuting, taking care of our dependents, worshipping, exercising, etc. Realistically speaking, we probably only have 2-3 available hours after the daily demands are met. If we engage in social media for the



average time, when will we do the Lord’s bidding? I understand we can and indeed must do much of this as we are going about our regular duties, but we still need dedicated Bible study time, time to serve oth-



ers, prayer time, evangelism time, etc. This section is as much for me as anyone as I, too, have looked up from following one interesting video or post to the next only to find an hour or more has vanished. I will never live that hour again, so I must do better at “redeeming” my available time. It does not have to be inappropriate content for it to become sinful. The reality is, we have more important matters to attend, so we must limit our time on social media.

Content Warning

In addition to time management, we must be on guard for improper content. Part of this we may be able to control, but other parts are more difficult to manage. The part we can control is who we follow or engage with on social media. If someone is known to share inappropriate content, we have the option to unfollow or unfriend the individual. The question is, are we willing to take such measures to guard our hearts? This can prove more difficult in practice than in principle, but we must be clear about where our allegiances lie (cf. Luke 14:26; Galatians 1:10; James 4:4). This is a difficult hurdle for parents, so how much harder will it be for our children? If we are going to allow social media in our families, we must determine in advance that we will not compromise our relationship with God, no matter what human relationship is imperiled (Matthew 10:34-37).

Moving to matters largely beyond our control, influencers of all kinds work tirelessly to promote their products, ideas, content, etc., using highly sophisticated methods. It is well known that these platforms use algorithms that compile user data to target audiences with advertisements and content suggestions based off common interests within demographics. This often leads to exposure to inappropriate content, even though we do not actively pursue such content. A young man in our youth group recently told me that he eliminated social media because they kept pushing sexually promiscuous materials because he is a young male. I can confirm the targeting of male audiences with such content from my own experiences.

I have blocked and reported several ads on Facebook for this very reason, though I never sought out such things in my activity. When I followed the prompts in the pop-up box to learn why I was seeing this content, it was disclosed that the material was curated on the platform based on my age and gender from my profile. Instagram is another example. I no longer go near my Instagram account because of the assumptions made about my likely interests. I made the mistake of checking the box for “health and fitness” when picking my areas of interest as I set up my account. There is nothing wrong with seeking to promote and maintain good bodily health, but the apparent assumption is that if you are going to promote health and fitness techniques, you must pres-



ent your results while wearing next to nothing. I did not want to see 95% of people’s bodies; I just wanted to improve my understanding of good diet and exercise habits. Sadly, on Instagram I was not allowed to have the latter without accepting the former.

The focus on such things permeates social media platforms and creates a host of issues for boys and girls alike. It is no secret that the human male is more visually stimulated sexually. This is why these platforms foist immodest content on us. They know we are more likely to take that bait.² This is not to say females are not visually stimulated, but the primary target is males. The bulk of the damage done to our girls is mental and emotional as they grapple with the “ideal image” of a woman presented in this content which often promotes a negative body image leading to anxiety, depression, promiscuous behavior, etc.³ All this feeds the beast of our hypersexualized culture, and boys and girls growing up in Christian homes are not immune.

Indeed, every godless fad that sweeps our nation uses social media as a conduit. There is a reason it is called “going viral” because, like a virus in the body, every cultural idea which infiltrates society spreads throughout the whole in rapid succession. This can make monitoring the moral and ethical threats to children very difficult as often they will have already been exposed before we even know the threat exists. TikTok has become the most popular platform among young people today, and it is the cultural breeding ground for every new idea that arises, whether good or bad. If you spend thirty seconds scrolling down a TikTok feed, you will likely encounter content ranging from cats doing funny cat stuff and kids doing funny kid stuff to sexual deviants doing sexually deviant stuff, all manner of foul language, and LGBTQ+ propaganda. The issue is that you need not ask for any of it for it to be thrust into your view. We must not let these platforms infect our families with immoral content. We must “come out from among them and be separate” (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Threats to Relationships

A closer look at the impact of social media on human relationships shows that, in many cases, social media diminishes personal relationships. Again, social media is a double-edged sword as it can also be

beneficial for relationships, especially with people who live at a distance or with whom we cannot interact more directly for other reasons. Nonetheless, a growing body of research is showing that excessive or improper use of social media negatively impacts relationships.

First, we cannot fully engage in personal interactions while staring at a device. All too often, a quick look at our timeline or feed turns into much more time than intended. This is time taken away from the people with whom we should be present. Second, excessive virtual interaction diminishes our skills in face-to-face interactions. Without experiencing truly dynamic communication with voice inflection, body language, facial expression, etc., in person relational skills diminish. Third, people are more likely to take an abrasive or even abusive posture in virtual communications than in person. This is hurting young people tremendously as the opinions of their peers typically mean more to them than those of us who are older. Fourth, social media is a major catalyst for marital infidelity. None of us wants to imagine we could get caught up in such, but when was the last time we heard of infidelity in a Christian home?⁴ Since the bulk of New Testament commandments pertain to our various human relationships, all of the above is a direct threat to our souls (Matthew 25:31-46; John 13:34-35; Romans 12:9-13, 16-18; Ephesians 4:25-32; et al.).

Online Predators

Parents, we absolutely must monitor our children if we allow them access to social media. It is well documented that human traffickers use social media platforms to groom victims, especially children, to lure them into their clutches. In a study by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, 25% of the 40,000 school-age children surveyed indicated they had livestreamed with a stranger on a social media platform.⁵ These are just the ones who would openly admit it, so it is safe to assume the number is even higher. Other sources worth consulting on these matters include *The Polaris Project* and *The National Human Trafficking Hotline*. We must take this threat seriously and guard our children against it.

CONCLUSION

Much more could be said on this issue, but this should be sufficient to heighten our sense of responsibility. As I said earlier, this is not a polemic against social media use; it is a reminder of our responsibility to protect our families against all threats, whether physical, mental, emotional, and above all, spiritual. Like everything else in life, we must use social media to God's glory and humanity's good (Matthew 22:34-40; 1 Corinthians 10:31). Social media is one of the most powerful technologies for good or for evil. As we have heard before, with great power comes great responsibility. Our souls and the souls of our children are on the line. May we carefully handle social media in our families. ■



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DIGGING IN

How to **deepen** your faith PART 1

Jared McLeod

You're a Christian. The foundation has been laid; a new life has begun. What's next? How can you grow stronger in your walk with God, regardless of your age? How can you deepen your faith? I'm going to suggest five ways that you can further develop your growing faith.

1. Dig into personal relationships

It may seem almost cliché at this point to say, "Surround yourself with positive influences." Yet, when it comes to building up our faith, that's exactly what we need: We need to strengthen our relationships with fellow members of the body of Christ.

We see that, when the church was established in Acts 2, new Christians were eating together, pray-

ing together, studying and worshipping together, and serving each other (Acts 2:42-47). Because of this unity, they were growing, and the Church was growing. Take the time to get to know fellow believers of all ages. Allow God to fill you with love and wisdom by surrounding you with His people. And with those relationships...

2. Look for opportunities for deep conversation

These can be with your peers or with Christian adults. Our lives are often filled with shallow conversation. We talk endlessly about our favorite sports teams, what we watched on TV last night, what movies we just watched or can't wait to go see, none of which have a large bearing on our lives. Instead, what if we looked for opportunities, even in these seemingly shallow moments, to have meaningful conversations? After watching a movie or television show, ask yourself or your parents, "As a Christian, how would I/you have handled this situation?"

Likewise, utilize the time you have with your peers and Christian adults to have meaningful, spiritually nourishing conversation. Talk about the sermon you just heard. Talk about the problems of today through a biblical perspective. Seek advice from those who may have been there before. And in these conversations...

3. Don't be afraid to ask the tough questions

With faith, questions come inevitably, and even doubt. Instead of allowing doubt to silence you, let it motivate you to dig deeper in study, in prayer (your conversations with God), and in your discussions with others. Allow it to open the door to asking the difficult questions. By turning to God's Word and to others who have a deeper understanding of His Word, we are seeking answers from the source of truth. The gospels are full of examples of people coming to Jesus with difficult questions, and Jesus, regardless of motive, gave them the answers they needed. Likewise, we



need to understand that it is not only acceptable to have questions but also encouraged! We must seek the truth that can only be found in God's Word. Let us be like those in Berea who heard what Paul was teaching, yet searched the Scriptures to make sure they were words of truth (Acts 17:11). Likewise, let's make sure we are asking the right questions. That means we must...

4. Focus on the WHY, not just the WHAT

You may have been there before. It's the night before the test, and you do your best to memorize the answer key. That might be enough to get you a passing grade on the test, but you won't hold on to that information for long. Why? Because you were only seeking the **what** and not the **why**. Yes, the Bible is filled with different commands and patterns, but there is a reason for all of them. If we want to dig deeper in our faith, we must go beyond the "thou shalt" and the "thou shalt not." "Obey God and move on" just doesn't work. We need to seek the God-given purposes for these commandments.

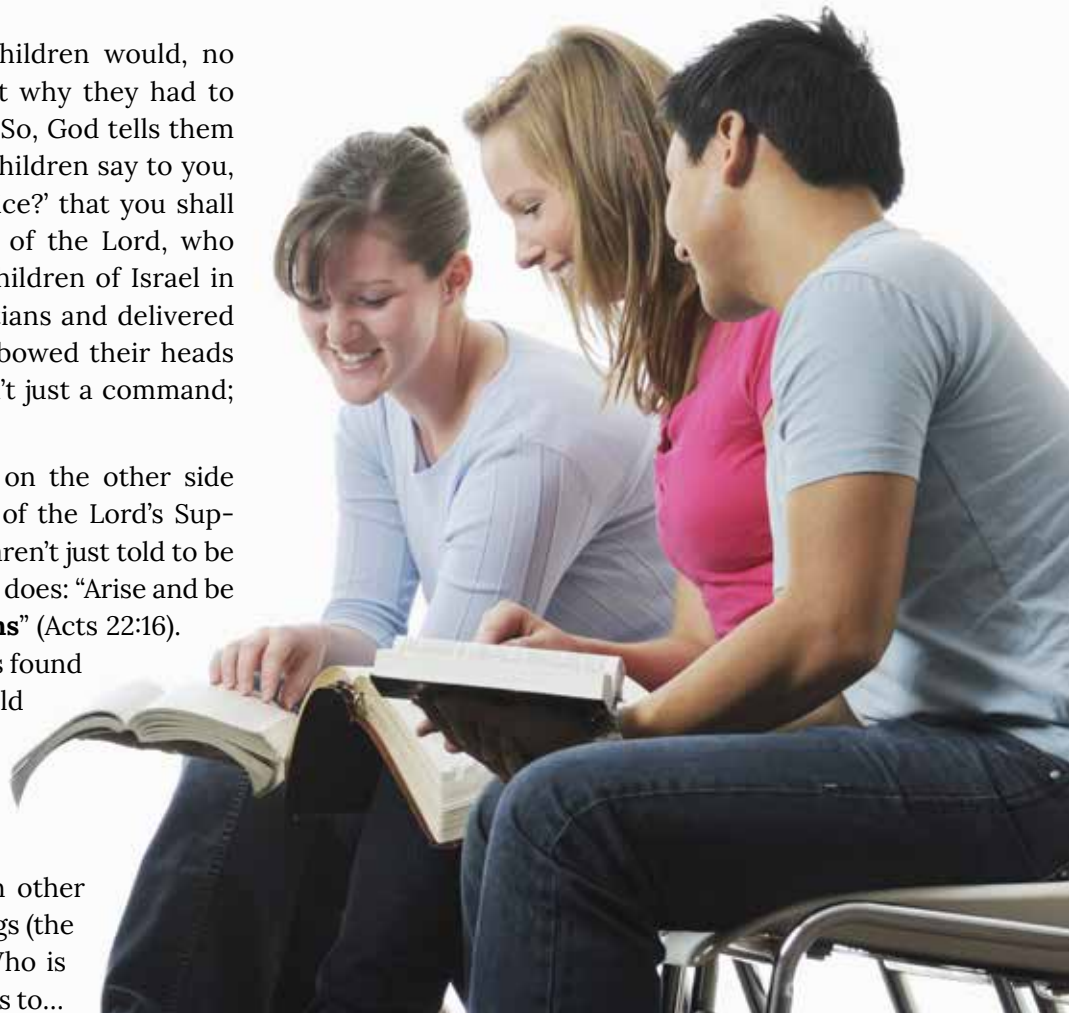
For example, the Israelite children would, no doubt, have had questions about why they had to sacrifice animals year after year. So, God tells them in Exodus 12:26-27, "when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' that you shall say, 'It is the Passover sacrifice of the Lord, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.'" So the people bowed their heads and worshiped." Sacrifices weren't just a command; they were a reminder.

We have a similar reminder on the other side of the cross with the institution of the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19-20). Similarly, we aren't just told to be baptized, but are shown what that does: "Arise and be baptized, and **wash away your sins**" (Acts 22:16). And one more practical example is found in Hebrews 13:5. There we are told to keep our lives free from the love of money, but that is followed up with the **why**: "For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'" In other words, don't trust in material things (the **what**) because God is the One Who is always faithful (the **why**). This leads to...

5. Trust Him

For our faith to get stronger, we must continue to surrender to God's control over our lives. When we have difficult questions and receive answers that are equally difficult, we need to trust in the Lord with all our heart and not lean on our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5). We live in a world that makes it hard to trust others. People fail to keep their promises. Even the ones whom we love and who love us the most can sometimes break trust. But God is faithful; He is consistent (Hebrews 13:8). He is worthy of our trust and worthy of our praise. Put your faith in Him, in the times of triumph and the times of defeat. And when you lack belief in your ability to dig deeper, trust in the faith-growing process that God is working in you. Recall the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:6: "I planted, Apollos watered, but **God gave the increase.**"

God will help you grow in faith if you trust in Him and are open to His work in you. ■



the parable of the Rebeca Mears

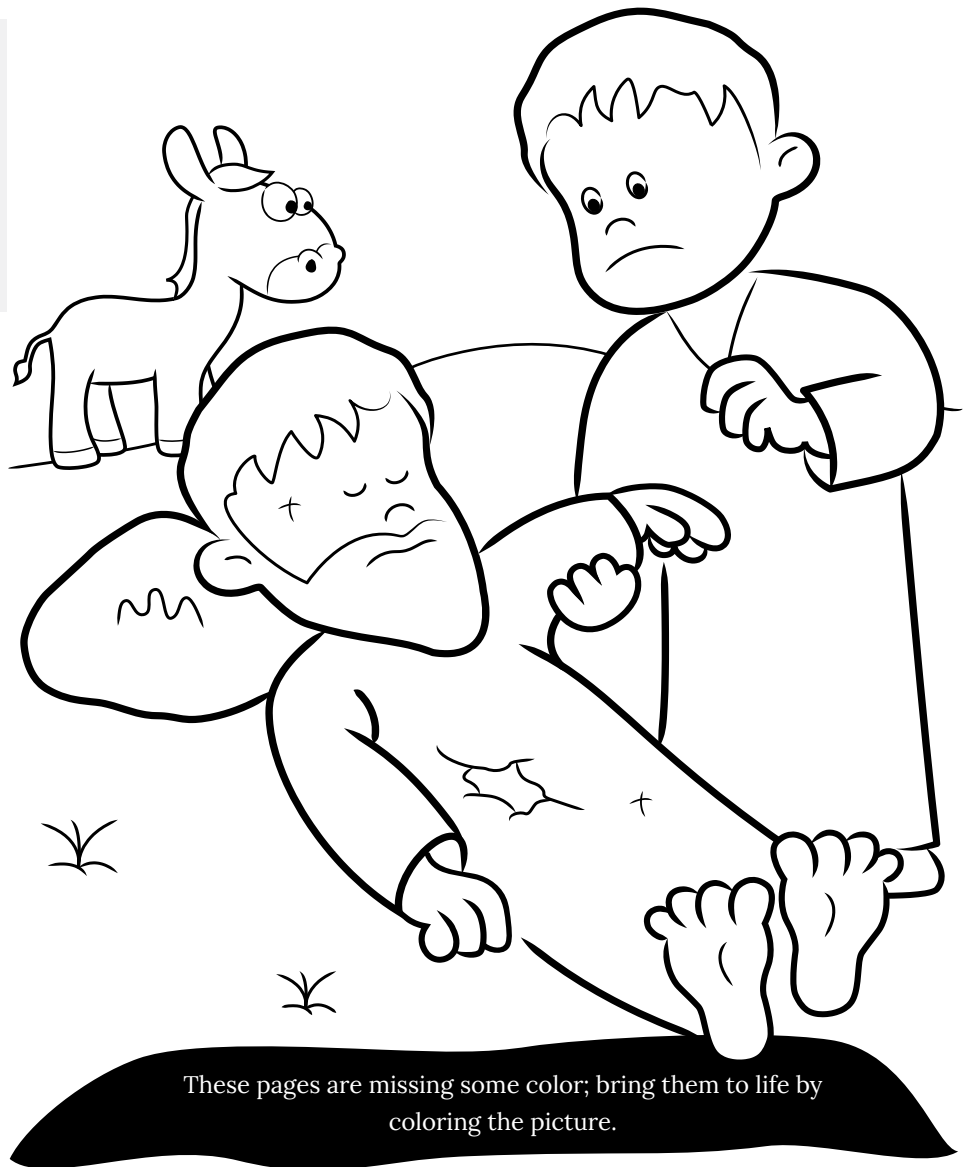
GOOD SAMARITAN

As you learn this lesson, try to memorize Luke 10:27: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

While Jesus was on earth, He taught many parables to great multitudes so they could better understand His teachings. On one occasion, a Jewish expert in the Law and well-respected by the people, asked Jesus to test Him, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25). Jesus answered by pointing to the Law the man knew very well. The man knew the Law said to love "your neighbor as yourself," but wanting to justify himself, he additionally asked, "And who is my neighbor?" (vs. 29).

Jesus answered to him by telling what we know now as the "Parable of the Good Samaritan." Jesus told in this story:

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Sa-



These pages are missing some color; bring them to life by coloring the picture.

maritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeep-

er, and said to him, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you" (Luke 10:30-35).

Then Jesus asked the Law expert who he thought was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves. When he answered, "He who showed mercy on him," Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise" (vs. 37).

The way from Jerusalem to Jericho was very dangerous, and thieves used to hide and steal from those passing through, so it is not a surprise that the man in the parable was attacked by thieves and left almost dead. The two men who passed by were Jewish leaders who knew what the Law said about loving their neighbors (just as the Law expert who talked to Jesus), but, even when they saw the man was wounded, they ignored him and continued their journey. Why? Maybe they thought if they stopped they could be attacked by the same thieves; maybe they thought that the man would soon die and that all help was in vain; or maybe they did not want to defile themselves in the case the man was to die, for the Law had regulations concerning touching a dead body (Leviticus 21:1-4). Only a Samaritan had compassion on the man who most likely was a Jew (and Jews and Samaritans did not get along), treated his wounds, and offered him all the help the man needed.

We can learn many great lessons from this parable, but the first one is that we are to be ready to show our love and compassion toward all people—without regard to color, language, or social status.

God is the example of such love since He loved all of us the same (John 3:16). As the good Samaritan, God shows His love by protecting us, healing us, and comforting us. Although we are to be cautious, we should not make excuses when we have the opportunity to help others.

You may be young and thus may need to ask your parents what are some ways you can help in a particular situation, but some ideas may include making cookies or other simple foods for people, visiting others with your parents or older siblings, drawing something for an elderly person, writing an encouraging note for a widow, helping your younger siblings or a friend at school, praying for someone sick, etc. As the good Samaritan, there is always something we can do for someone in need and glorify the Lord with our actions. ■

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Do **LIKEWISE!**

The Parable of the Good Samaritan is not only a good story, but it is also a story Jesus told with the intention of encouraging the listeners to action. He told the expert in the Law, “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37). This week start doing good as the Samaritan. As you complete the list below, mark a check on each box. This may help you start a new good habit in your life.

- Pray for someone who is sick or hurting.
- Help a younger sibling or friend with a task.
- Draw a picture on a card and write a note to someone who needs some encouragement.
- Talk to an elderly person at church services.
- Tell your teacher or preacher that you appreciate their work.
- Do a house chore without being asked by your parents.

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Q. *How can we keep harmony in the home?*
—LA ROMANA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

By living Christ's teachings in your own life, as much as possible, and by teaching your children to live Christ's teachings in their life as much as possible. Live and teach your family the "fruit of the Spirit" from Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. In Colossians 3:12-13, we have a few more: tender mercies, humility, meekness, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another (see also Ephesians 4:31-32). Yet, another list is found in 2 Peter 1:5-7: faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Parents, set the example, and if you fall short, apologize. That is "humility." —PH

Q. *How can I continue to be strong in a marriage where my husband does not desire to be the spiritual leader?* —ALAJUELA, COSTA RICA

You must still live Christ's teachings in your life in every way you can. Your marriage is still sanctified in the eyes of God (1 Corinthians 7:14). In that text, Paul mentions that it might be possible that you can save your husband (vs. 16). One way to save your husband is to live Christ's teachings in your life. Peter writes that wives need to be submissive to their husbands (1 Peter 3:1) if perhaps husbands will see their wife's "chaste conduct" (vs. 2) and be led to obey the Gospel. If you have children, they still need to be led to Christ by a godly mother, even if Dad is not accepting that responsibility (you may need to lead the prayers for the meals). Pray for him, and for yourself to be the spouse God wants you to be. —PH

Q. *I have a grandson who likes to draw, but his drawings always depict something sad. I am concerned and don't know if I should do something about it.* —NICARAGUA

Begin by asking him to explain the drawings to you; children are usually open to talking about their artistic work. Don't assume the worst but listen to his thinking process; the drawings may be produced from a whole different perspective than perceived. For example, he may be setting his mind on being a doctor, and sad situations may represent people he will help in the future. Whatever the case, you may be able to guide his talent from a positive point of view instead of a negative one; do not scold your grandson. If, after listening to your grandson you think there is a deep problem, talk to his parents; they may need to find someone with more experience who can help the child. —MP

Q. *Until what point should we allow freedom to our children when they become adults?*
—CALIFORNIA, U.S.

When our children become adults and make their own lives, we can no longer exercise parenting as we did when they were younger and at home. For all practical purposes, the training should have been realized and hopefully the children will have all that they need to be spiritually equipped. If parents try to control their adult children, this will cause conflict with them (although if they still live at home, they need to follow the home rules). Instead, try to further develop your relationship with them, reason gently with them, and offer sound advice to them. Pray for them. However, the fact that parents cannot control the lives of their adult children does not mean they will agree with everything their children do. Set the example; they are still watching. —MP ■