

Destined for Pure Love

Bev van Rensburg



Preface

This booklet was produced as a result of a burden God gave me for the youth and children of today.

Many children and youth are in crisis as I wished to indicate in an MTh thesis completed in 2013, titled *Children in Crisis: Imperatives and Strategies for the Church in South Africa*.

The main crisis points were found to be abuse and neglect. The lack of a strong father figure in the home, and intentional teaching of the biblical values which are given in love, as well as the level of sexual immorality which is accepted and even condoned in society, are affecting children and youth to such an extent that their values for the future are warped and they lose the picture of the pure love God intended for them to experience.

This book is dedicated to God. May it bring honour to Him and save many from landing on the jagged rocks that wrong moral choices could cause.

Secondly, this book is a testimony to the blessing of living a life with a godly caring husband, Reuben, and children who love the Lord and serve Him (Ryan, Darren and Kerry, together with husband, Byron).

Dear Reader

God has made you in His image—you are beautifully and wonderfully made with abilities and capabilities for the future, as well as the capacity to love deeply. God loves you deeply and wants the best for you! You are special!

If you have already been damaged by people who have tried to take advantage of you, there is a loving, heavenly Father who can bring you healing and direction through a personal relationship with Jesus, who was sent to this world especially to reconcile you to the Father and to give you a hope and future.

Praying for God to bless you and direct you in His ways!

Bev

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1. God has made you special

1.1 Psalm 139

David was talking to God about his appreciation of being made in such an awesome way. He said to God 'You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank You for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvellous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in Your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. How precious are Your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered!' (Psalm 139:13–17).

Do you know how you were formed—how amazing you are?

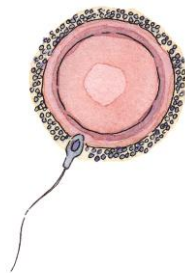
You are different from every other person on earth. Consider the amazing fact that no-one else can have the same fingerprint as you! That is why it is printed for your Identity Document.



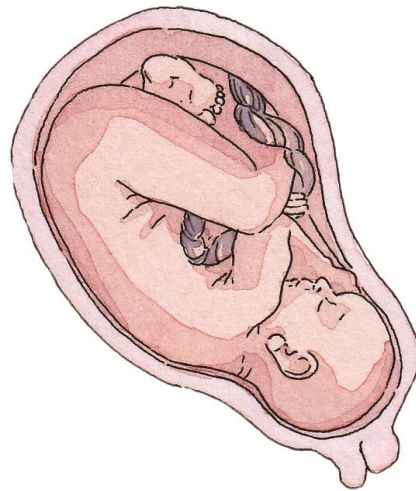
1.2 Genetic facts

How were you formed?

A sexual cell from your father, called a sperm (spermatozoid—full word) entered a sexual cell from your mother (ovum) in your mother's body during a sexual union (called coitus).

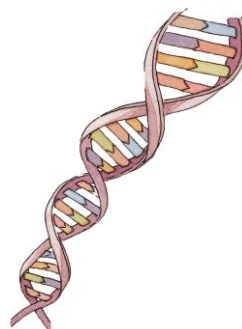


Immediately, the new fertilized cell (called a zygote) started to divide into more cells moving through the fallopian tubes to embed in the womb wall (in the second week). There you continued to develop as an embryo, and then, when you started to look human, you were called a foetus (after 2 months). You may have been able to survive after 6 months, though full-term is 40 weeks (38 in the womb).



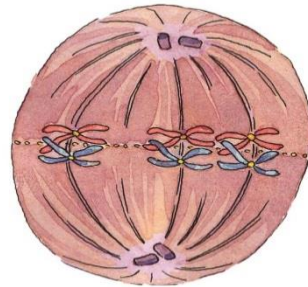
You are magnificently made—think of a new-born baby. God’s creation is at its best in the creation of a human life! Think of yourself as a baby. You could move, eat, sleep, eat, cry, see, hear, produce products such as digestive enzymes, and hormones, and even eliminate waste products.

How complex is each tiny little cell in your body—the DNA of who you are! DNA actually stands for Deoxyribose nucleic acid. You have this acid in the centre (nucleus) of each cell that makes you who you are—the patterns of the proteins strung together in ladder-shaped chromosomes are identical in each cell, and if you are injured, you are able to pick up the loose proteins that have been lost so that you can be repaired.

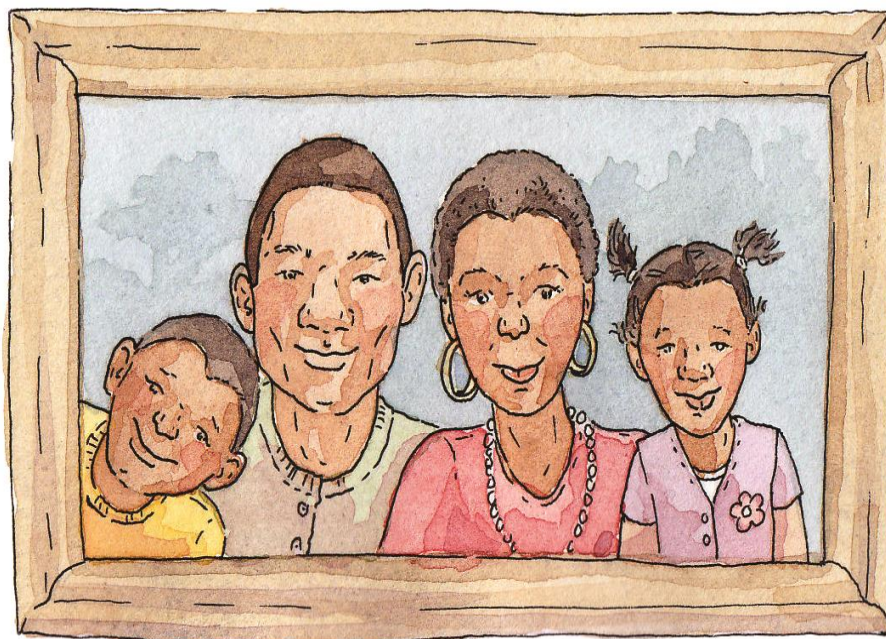


You have 23 pairs of chromosomes (46 in total) in each cell in your body, carrying all the characteristics of your mother and father—how you look and function outside and inside your body.

The sex organs contain cells that have only half the number of chromosomes—23 single chromosomes just carrying your genes (how you will look). So when the sperm and egg meet after sexual intercourse, 23 pairs line up with each other for the new child. Some proteins swop places, so the child may receive more characteristics from one parent.

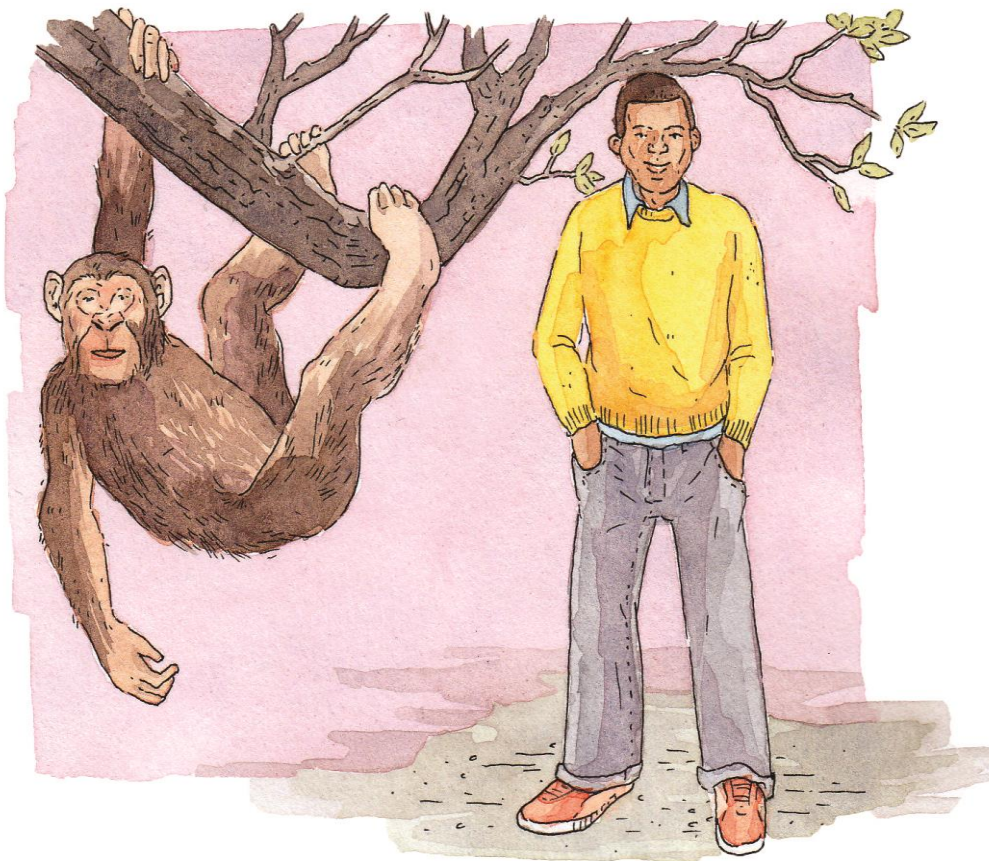


Brothers and sisters may pick up different characteristics—each person is totally unique.



If your normal body cells are damaged in any way, repair takes place by the missing parts of the chromosomes picking up what was lost (for example, protein pairs are always guanine-cytosine and adenine-thymine). This must show God's perfect creation. If any chromosome is missing in a test for a baby in the womb, this can indicate actual deformity. Other chromosomal change can indicate cancer. So God's way of perfect replication ensures identical copies...what amazing creation! An interesting fact is that the chromosome which determines that a person is a boy is shorter than that of a girl. The characteristics for blood and eyes are on the same chromosome. That is why generally only boys can be colour-blind or 'bleeders'.

Could you even imagine having developed from an ape or gorilla dad or mom? No, never—gorillas give birth to gorillas, and apes to apes, just as humans give birth to humans. Even these similar primate mammals have 24 pairs of chromosomes in each cell (48 in total)—not 23 pairs (46 in total) as is the case with humans. Consider the body posture of an ape and the way in which it moves—the neck to skull attachment is different to that of the human.



Much more important than that, is that apes do not learn to love Jesus or learn about wrong behaviour enough to be sorry and to ask God for forgiveness as humans can. As humans, we can worship God and He can be our special friend through accepting Jesus into our lives as Saviour and Lord.ⁱ

1.3 Made in God's image

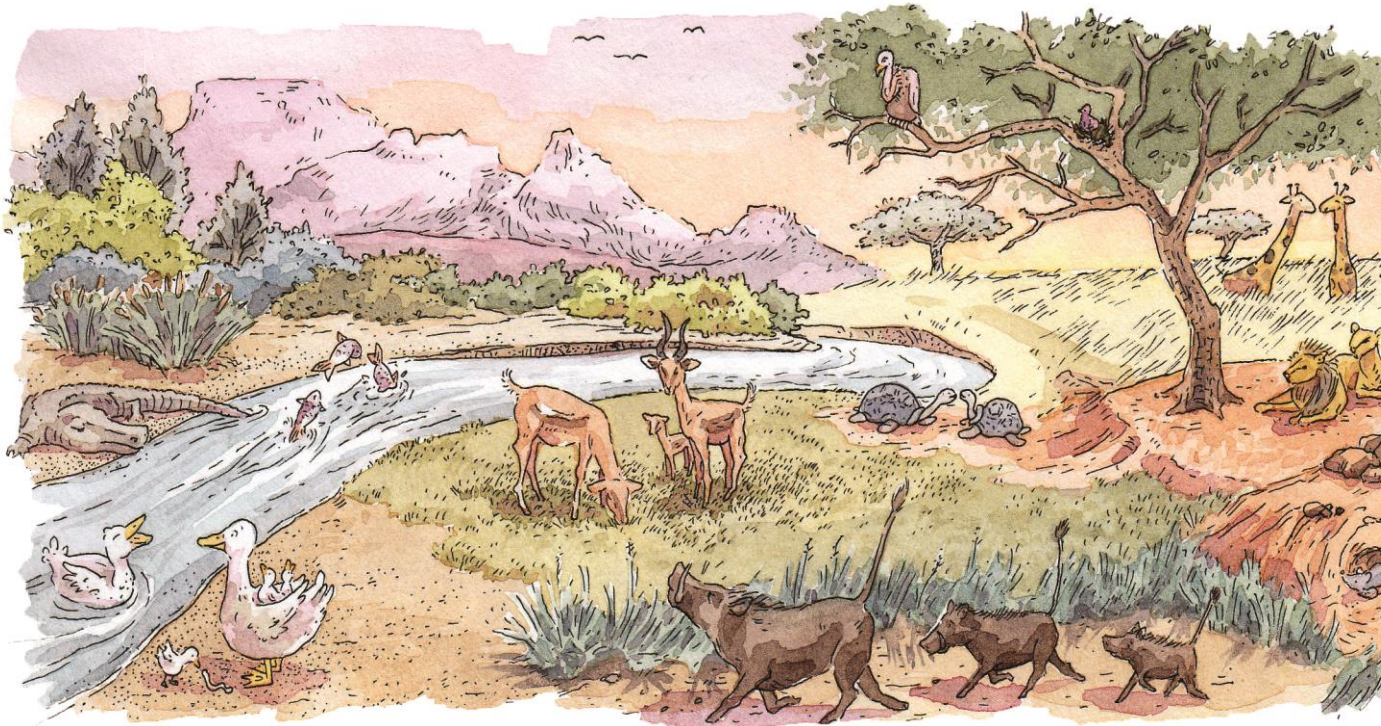
'Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us"' (Genesis 1:26). Note the word 'our'—God the Father, the Son (see John 1 and 1 John 1) and the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:2) were all involved in the creation of the world.

In God's Word in Genesis Chapter 1 we are told about God's creation: light, darkness, land and sea, day and night, plants, animals and then man—the best! God made seed-bearing plants which produced new plants and trees of the same kind (1:12). That means that He made carrots to be carrots and not evolve into onions! He created every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind as well (1:24)...from a single-celled (unicellular) organism which reproduces by the nucleus just dividing, to the biggest whale in the ocean whose babies are born under water—they all reproduce their own kind. Furthermore the food chains exist. Some animals eat plants (herbivores), and others eat animals (carnivores) and some eat both (omnivores). Some are scavengers (such as hyenas, vultures, crows and crabs) which clean up by eating left-overs. God organized perfect balance in nature... think of the seasons!

We can see the patterns of nature—animals and plants making babies of their kind even today. Many patterns of breathing and moving, eating and other life processes are similar because they work so well. That does not mean that some animals evolve from other animals with similar life-functions. God has created the best possible functioning for each animal.

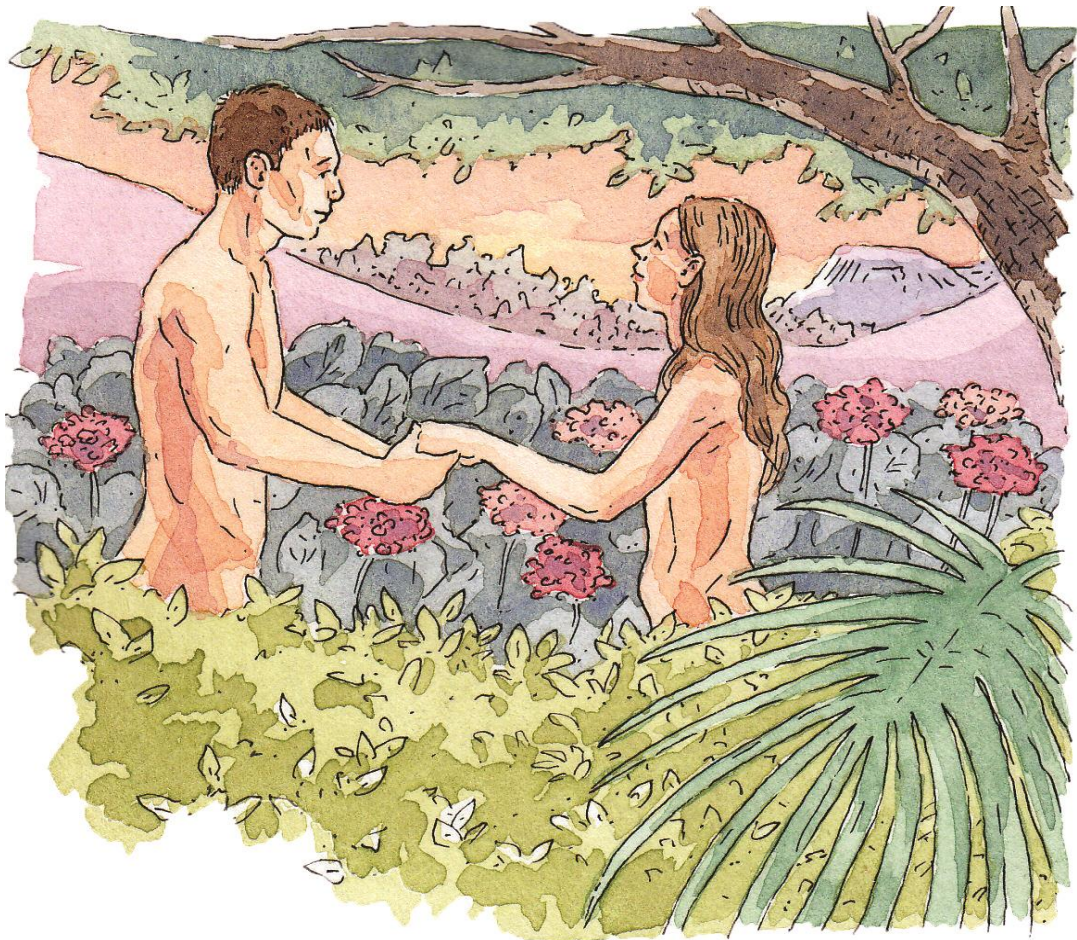
God delighted in creating the animals and even more in creating human beings. His purpose for creating man and woman is also clear—one man and one woman to create a family and receive His blessing as a result.

God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like Us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.” So God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God He created them; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground” (Genesis 1:25–28).



Adam was treated as God’s friend in the Garden of Eden. When Adam had finished naming the animals, as God had asked him to do, God could see that Adam needed a helper, so He created Eve. Even as she was created, God referred to one man marrying one woman, moving away from parents, and having a sexual union with his wife. This would result in them having a family. Adam was given responsibility by God:

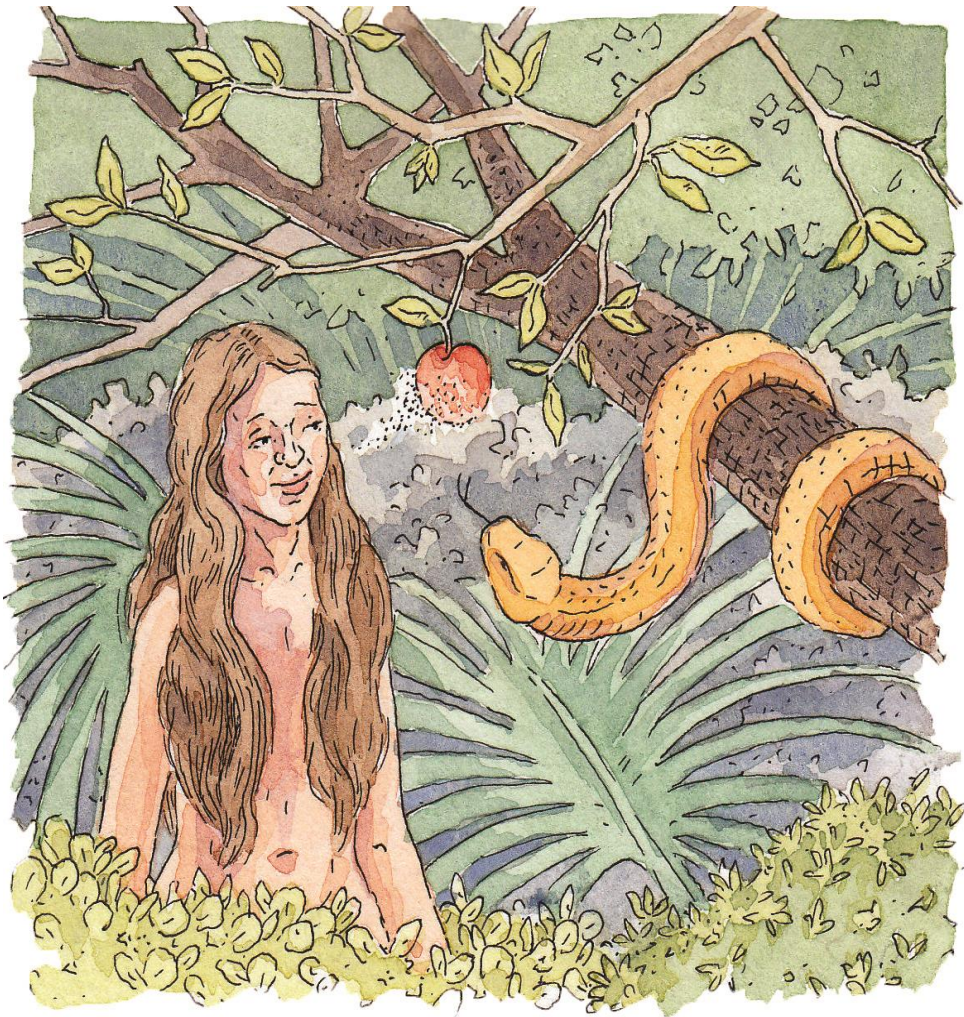
He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and He brought her to the man. "At last!" the man exclaimed. "This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken from 'man.'" This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame' (Genesis 2:20–25).



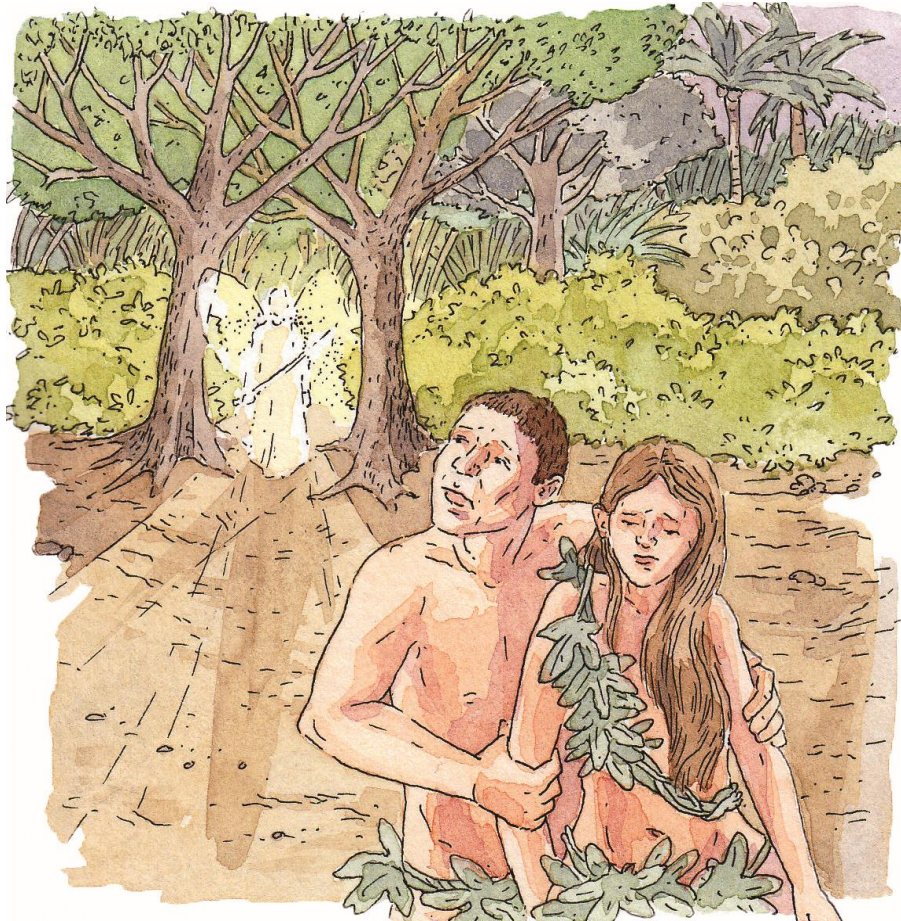
2. Our Sin

2.1 Adam and Eve spoilt God's ideal

Adam and Eve were wonderful companions, but Eve disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit from 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil' after having been tempted by the serpent, Satan, to eat it. God had said that the punishment for eating it was death. When told this by Eve, Satan replied that they would not die—it was just that God did not want them to be just like Himself, knowing everything, both good and evil.



The immediate result of committing the sin, both Eve and Adam having eaten the forbidden fruit, was to feel shame and to notice that they were naked. As a result they sewed fig leaves together to wear to cover their nakedness, and were banished from the garden—they had never worried about being different and naked before.



God's way is for a husband and wife to enjoy each other's bodies and the nakedness in this situation is beautiful. The sexual act is also specially created by God for pleasure. Resultant children born in the right circumstances, within a loving family—with a faithful caring father and mother, have a wonderful start in life!

There is no impurity or shame in a husband and wife's sexual union (note the Book in the Bible called the Song of Solomon which shows God's love for His bride, the church), as well as giving a vivid picture of how God made men and women to enjoy each other's bodies—in love. It is important to note that this is not lust, which drives people to indulge in promiscuous behaviour with no consideration of God's design for healthy attitudes to sexuality and appreciation of sex in marriage. A girl who has been sexually abused or willingly led into sexual acts before marriage, is damaged for life. This shame, mistrust of her partner, and memories and regrets about the past are so damaging for her well-being, and jeopardise a healthy sexual and God-honouring relationship for the future...so unnecessary!

God made us in His image, wanting a personal friendship with us. That friendship was broken because of Adam and Eve's sin and they were banished from the Garden of Eden and punished—tough work—toiling for food, fighting the weeds, pain in child-birth and being separated from God, which is the worst thing.

But God did not reject them utterly. He made a way to restore relationship with Him by accepting the sacrifice of an animal as the way to forgive their sin.

Today we are so blessed because Jesus' sacrifice of His life on the cross and shedding His blood has allowed us, who accept this as the only way to be saved, to be forgiven and restored as friends and family of God.

We are made right in God's sight when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or what we have done. For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet now God in his gracious kindness declares us not guilty. He has done this through Christ Jesus, who has freed us by taking away our sins.

For God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to satisfy God's anger against us. We are made right with God when we believe that Jesus shed his blood, sacrificing his life for us. God was being entirely fair and just when he did not punish those who sinned in former times. And he is entirely fair and just in this present time when he declares sinners to be right in his sight because they believe in Jesus (Romans 3:22–26).

2.2 Shame

We live in a world where people are really cruel towards each other: bullying, pushing their own way, and hurting others as a result. We are focusing on sexuality in this section and therefore we are specifically looking at sexual shame, God's Word addressing sexual issues, and then healthy sexual relations. If you have already fallen into sexual temptation or been abused, the fact that Jesus understands (was hurt and abused Himself)—should be a great comfort to you. You can come to Him,

knowing that He is there to save you from all the bondage of sexual damage in your life, and that He is the Healer and wants to give you a hope and future (Jeremiah 29:11).

Shame makes you feel like half a person, spoilt—no longer in the image of God. David, as a king, also fell into sexual temptation and even had the husband of Bathsheba, Uriah, placed at the front of the army lines so he could die in battle and so that he could take Bathsheba as his own wife. One can see here that often one sin leads to another. David married Bathsheba, but suffered great anguish when she gave birth to a crippled son who later died. See Psalm 51 to see how broken-hearted David was, and how sorry he was he had sinned against God...Yet God forgave him and restored him. He was called 'a man after God's own heart'.

For the choir director: A psalm of David, regarding the time Nathan the prophet came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of Your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. Against You, and You alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and Your judgment against me is just. For I was born a sinner—yes, from the moment my mother conceived me. But you desire honesty from the womb, teaching me wisdom even there. Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me—now let me rejoice. Don't keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you. Then I will teach your ways to rebels, and they will return to you (Psalm 51:1–13).



Shame involves 'covering up' thoughts and information that we do not want others to know. Adam and Eve covered their bodies. Some cover their personalities trying to look confident, when they are actually very insecure. The good news is that God knows us and our weaknesses and still loves us, wanting to restore us. He knows us intimately, so a direct honest confession to Him, and asking Him to renew our hearts and minds, accepting His salvation and being covered in Jesus' righteousness, is the beginning of hope and change. He has taken our sins upon himself through dying on the cross.

I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God! For He has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. I am like a bridegroom in his wedding suit or a bride with her jewels (Isaiah 61:10).

Consider Jesus' amazing compassion shown towards a woman brought to him for judgement once she had been caught in adultery.



As the penalty for adultery by Law was stoning a person to death, the Pharisees were ready to stone her. He drew on the ground and did not look at them. Jesus said that the one without sin could throw the first stone. Again He drew on the ground, not looking at them. The men left one by one—not throwing the stones. Did they realise that they were also sinners?

Jesus said to the woman 'Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?'

'No, Lord,' she said. And Jesus said, 'Neither do I. Go and sin no more' (John 8:10–11).

Jesus is willing to forgive, and He gently gives direction for a God-honouring future.

In warning us against being yoked with unbelievers, Paul warns us:

And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: "I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore, come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the LORD. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you. And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:16–18).

2.3 God's anger at sexual immorality

The Greek word *poneros*, means 'evil'. *Poneros* in Greek means one whose mind tends toward evil. It is used some 75 times in the New Testament—referring to the act itself as well as how it corrupts others. It also refers to a sly under-handed person, or even one with a 'dirty' mind. The word is related to the word *ponos*, which means pain. Both come from the ancient root *penomai* meaning 'to exert effort' in a way which hurts the perpetrator. *Penomai* is something I do to myself that wears me down, that harms me and makes me suffer. Biblically, this was identified as the 'devil'. Sadly, *poneros* acts like a contagious illness, affecting others.

When we think of pornography, we can see the way in which the dirty mind infects the person who feeds it with dirty thoughts, as well as infecting others. It also hurts the person, damages his thoughts, his relationships with other people and especially with God.

Strong's Concordance (4190 and 4192) refers to *poneros* as 'bringing toils, annoyances, a time full of peril to Christian faith and steadfastness; causing pain and trouble'.ⁱⁱ

A young pastor, after the birth of his first child, told the congregation of the joy of sexual union between his wife and himself being the culmination of a sexually pure abstinence lifestyle. Here there are no regrets...virginity kept for marriage. What a joy for the future!

To set the right example—to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world—we must ‘Stay away from every kind of evil’ (I Thessalonians 5:22). The KJV reads ‘Abstain from all appearance of evil.’ ‘Abstain’ (Greek *apéchesthe*) literally means ‘to hold oneself off’ or ‘to keep oneself from’ or ‘refrain from’. This means exercising restraint and self-control. We look at the situation with a sound mind, and decide to ‘do the right thing’.

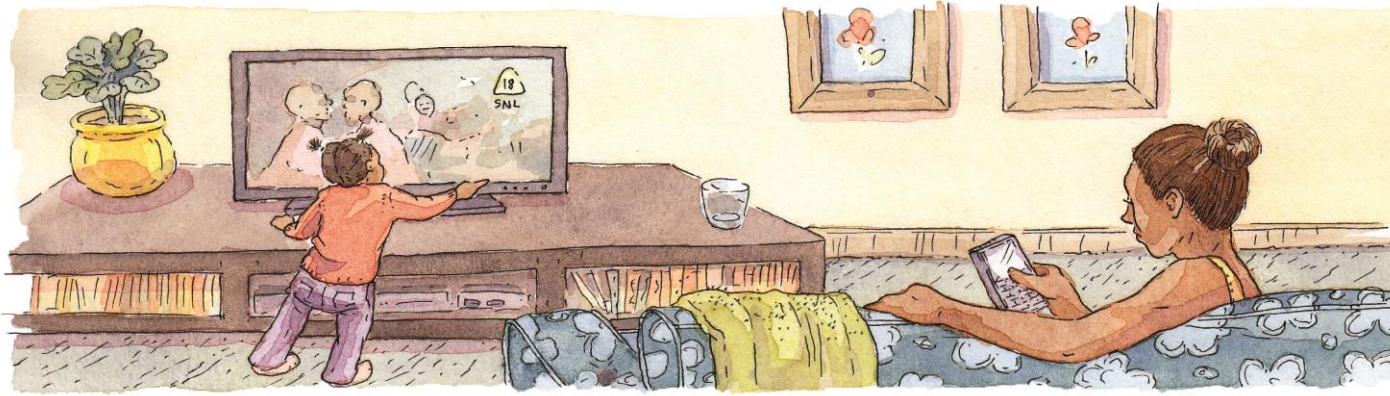
Adam Clarke says that we should not sin or allow anything that is questionable into our lives as others could be negatively influenced.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Expositor's Bible Commentary speaks about ‘holding fast’ to the good. In other words cling to living a life that pleases God.^{iv}

Barnes' says that we should not only ‘abstain’ from evil itself, but from that which ‘seems’ to be wrong. There are many things which are known to be wrong but there are also many things about which there may be some reasonable doubt. In such cases it is better not to do them.^v

Because we represent God, as Christians, any appearance of evil presents a wrong picture of who God is and what He is doing. How we conduct ourselves before the world and ‘brothers’ and ‘sisters’ in the church is vitally important.

The world, and especially the media, is promoting sexual awareness and even encouraging opposing views to God and His Word, for example, by promoting the use of condoms instead of promoting abstinence from sexual intercourse until after marriage. Even the scare of HIV does not seem to frighten people enough. Rape is a serious problem world-wide, but especially in South Africa—even little children are raped. Some are raped by men with HIV who believe the myth that they may be healed in the process.



‘No, my child—God hates this kind of programme, so we are not going to watch it!’

2.4 God’s Word and sexual immorality

God had very harsh punishments for people who were sexually immoral because it was such a serious offence, not just damaging the perpetrators of the sexually immoral acts, but it damaged and broke down whole family structures, including basic trust of the people who should be closest in life. Sadly the damage could last a life time!

Even divorce can cause serious consequences for the adults and the children such as mistrust in future relationships, children looking for love in the wrong places, later being divorced themselves without understanding the meaning of their vows before God. Then, single again, they can remarry or behave in ways that are much worse than before. God warns against adultery and ‘discarding the wife of one’s youth’ (Malachi 2).

Pharisees tried to trap Jesus on these issues. In Matthew 19:5 Jesus refers to the passage in Genesis 5:1–2, showing the importance of one husband and wife, created male and female to be blessed by Him (not male and male or female and female).

The Pharisees asked if a man should be allowed to divorce his wife for just any reason. Jesus said no:

And He said, 'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined

together." "Then why did Moses say in the law that a man could give his wife a written notice of divorce and send her away?" they asked. Jesus replied, "Moses permitted divorce only as a concession to your hard hearts, but it was not what God had originally intended (Matthew 19:5–8).

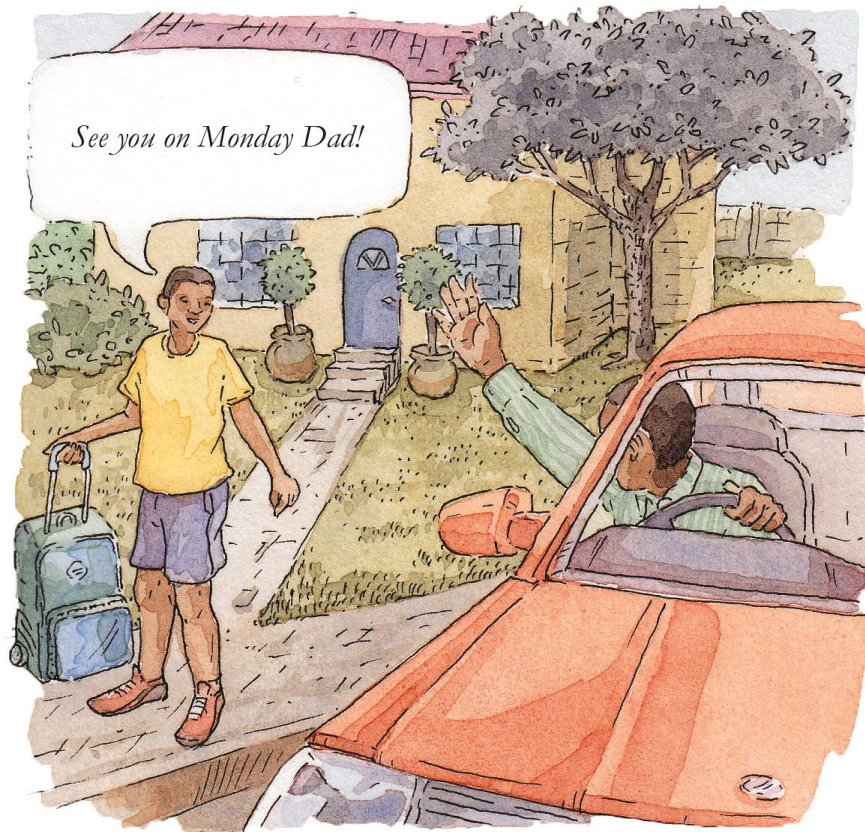
In Malachi 2 we see how God hates divorce.

Here is another thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, weeping and groaning because He pays no attention to your offerings and doesn't accept them with pleasure.

You cry out, "Why doesn't the LORD accept my worship?" I'll tell you why! Because the LORD witnessed the vows you and your wife made when you were young. But you have been unfaithful to her, though she remained your faithful partner, the wife of your marriage vows. Didn't the LORD make you one with your wife? In body and spirit you are His. And what does He want? Godly children from your union. So guard your heart; remain loyal to the wife of your youth. "For I hate divorce!" says the LORD, the God of Israel. "To divorce your wife is to overwhelm her with cruelty," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. "So guard your heart; do not be unfaithful to your wife" (Malachi 2:13–16).

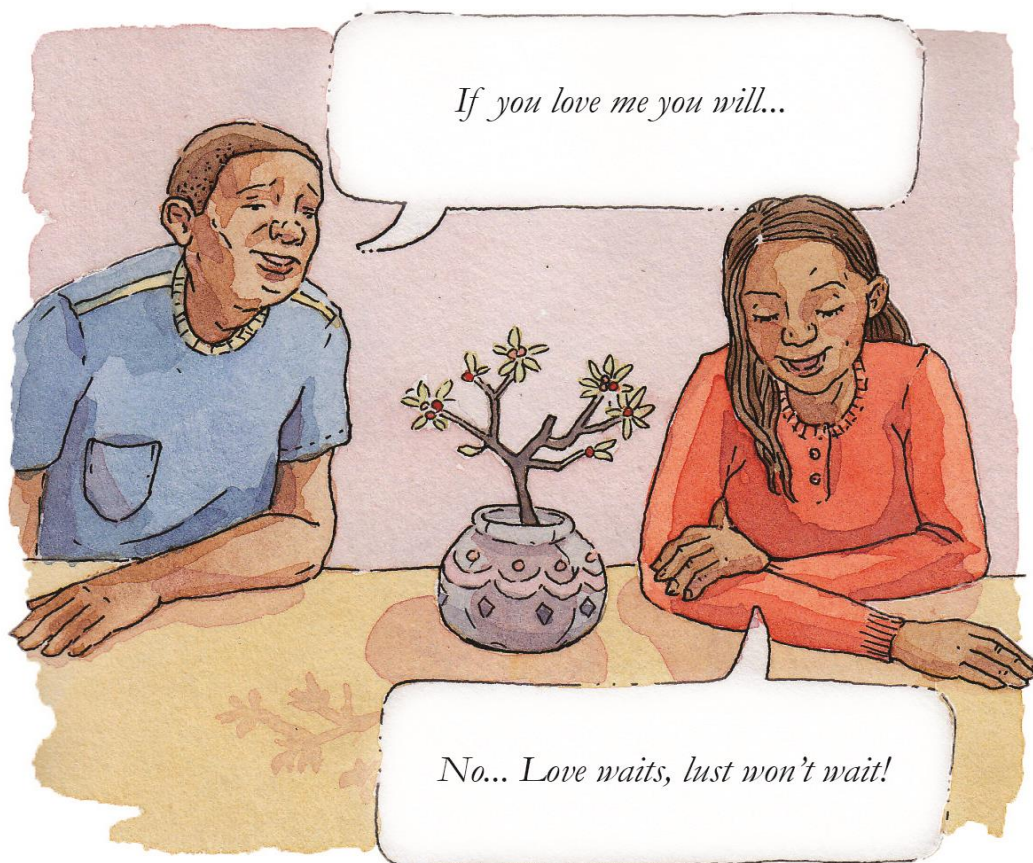
Jesus said 'I tell you, then, that any man who divorces his wife for any cause other than her unfaithfulness, commits adultery if he marries some other woman' (Matthew 19:9).

One of the saddest results of divorce, especially for the children in split homes and split loyalties, is a resultant lack of appreciation of Father God and His love and enduring faithfulness. They can also have a resultant unwillingness to trust a future potential spouse or really love a person with their whole heart.



God made sexual desires to be fulfilled in marriage. He created the attraction between man and woman. Read the book called the Song of Solomon in the Bible and you will see what I mean!

Lust instead of love, and the craving to take a girl or woman to satisfy the sexual appetite of sex-hungry men and boys, has caused thousands and thousands of females to be damaged for life through rape, sexual abuse, rough treatment, when each should be cherished as a wife and mother!



What has the Bible to say about wrong sexual relations?

'My child, if sinners entice you, turn your back on them' (Proverbs 1:10)!

My son, pay attention to my wisdom; listen carefully to my wise counsel. Then you will show discernment, and your lips will express what you've learned. For the lips of an immoral woman are as sweet as honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil. But in the end she is as bitter as poison, as dangerous as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. For she cares nothing about the path to life. She staggers down a crooked trail and doesn't realize it. So now, my sons, listen to me. Never stray from what I am about to say: Stay away from her! Don't go near the door of her house! If you do, you will lose your honour and will lose to merciless people all you have achieved. Strangers will consume your

wealth, and someone else will enjoy the fruit of your labour. In the end you will groan in anguish when disease consumes your body. You will say, "How I hated discipline! If only I had not ignored all the warnings! Oh, why didn't I listen to my teachers? Why didn't I pay attention to my instructors? I have come to the brink of utter ruin, and now I must face public disgrace." Drink water from your own well—share your love only with your wife. Why spill the water of your springs in the streets, having sex with just anyone? You should reserve it for yourselves. Never share it with strangers. Let your wife be a fountain of blessing for you. Rejoice in the wife of your youth. She is a loving deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts satisfy you always. May you always be captivated by her love. Why be captivated, my son, by an immoral woman, or fondle the breasts of a promiscuous woman? For the LORD sees clearly what a man does, examining every path he takes. An evil man is held captive by his own sins; they are ropes that catch and hold him. He will die for lack of self-control; he will be lost because of his great foolishness (Proverbs 5:1–23).

These last few verses are a reminder also of the damage pornography does and sinning through one's thoughts—constantly giving in to sexual temptation.

Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. You say, "I am allowed to do anything"—but not everything is good for you. And even though "I am allowed to do anything," I must not become a slave to anything. You say, "Food was made for the stomach, and the stomach for food." (This is true,

though someday God will do away with both of them.) But you can't say that our bodies were made for sexual immorality. They were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies. And God will raise us from the dead by His power, just as He raised our Lord from the dead. Don't you realize that your bodies are actually parts of Christ? Should a man take his body, which is part of Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never! And don't you realize that if a man joins himself to a prostitute, he becomes one body with her? For the Scriptures say, "The two are united into one." But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honour God with your body (1 Corinthians 6:9–20).



Same man—two different women?

In 1 Corinthians 5 Paul comments on a man in the church living in sin with his stepmother. He challenges the church to discipline this man. He says:

When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin. But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people. It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you" (1 Corinthians 5:9–13).

Leviticus 18 lists forbidden sexual practices, including sex with close relatives, people of the same gender as you and with the animals, and it details God's punishments, such as banishment from the community.

Do not practise homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman. It is a detestable sin. A man must not defile himself by having sex with an animal. And a woman must not offer herself to a male animal to have intercourse with it. This is a perverse act. Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, for the people I am driving out before you have defiled themselves in all these ways. Because the entire land has become defiled, I am punishing the people who live there. I will cause the land to vomit them out. You must obey all my decrees and regulations. You must not commit any of these detestable sins (Leviticus 18:22–26).



Leviticus 20 lists punishments for sexual immorality, which include the death penalty, burning to death, being cut off from the people, being made infertile and dying by stoning.

God is concerned about our purity and holiness:

'So set yourselves apart to be holy, for I am the LORD your God. Keep all My decrees by putting them into practice, for I am the LORD who makes you holy' (Leviticus 20:7–8).

'But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy'. For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15–16).

Romans 1 clearly shows God's hatred of sexual sin. Paul speaks about people disregarding God's eternal power and divine nature, not worshipping Him or thanking Him and making their own gods and idols:

So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator Himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.

That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved. Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, He abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarrelling, deception, malicious behaviour, and gossip. They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too (Romans 1:24–32).

The sad comment is that they know they deserve to die but do not care anyway. Worse yet, is that they take others with them to destruction. (The people working in the pornography industry are doing the same). 'Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God' (Romans 14:12). 'Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before His eyes, and He is the One to whom we are accountable' (Hebrews 4:13).

All who believe in the Son of God know in their hearts that this testimony is true. Those who don't believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don't believe what God has testified about His Son. And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal

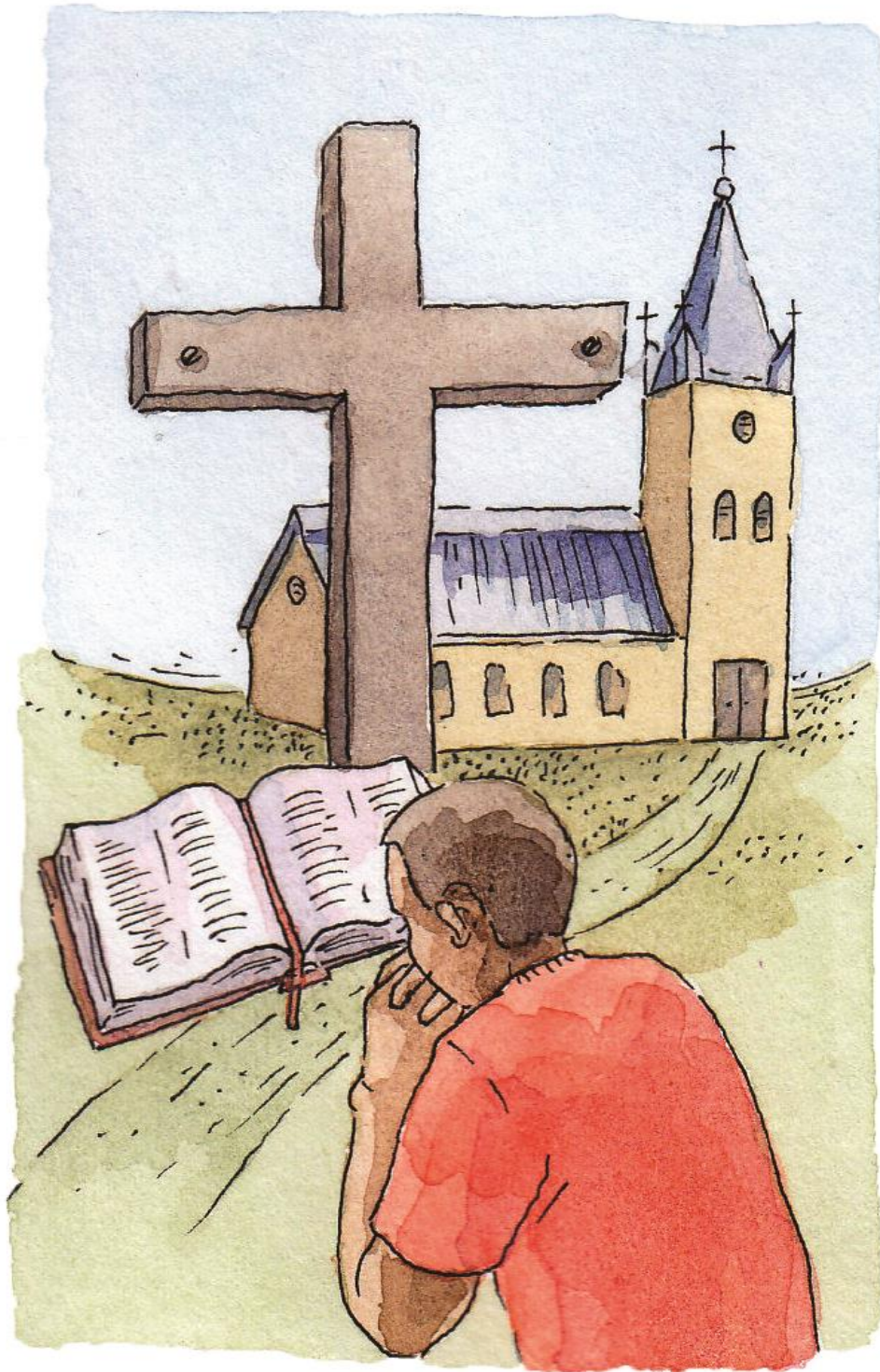
life, and this life is in His Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life. I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life. And we are confident that He hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases Him. And since we know He hears us when we make our requests, we also know that He will give us what we ask for. If you see a Christian brother or sister sinning in a way that does not lead to death, you should pray, and God will give that person life. But there is a sin that leads to death, and I am not saying you should pray for those who commit it. All wicked actions are sin, but not every sin leads to death. We know that God's children do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them. We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the control of the evil one. And we know that the Son of God has come, and He has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and He is eternal life. Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts (1 John 5:10–21).

God gives us special comfort as He calls us to repent and come to Him: 'But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness' (1 John 1:9).

Can you fight sexual temptation on your own? No! See Romans 8.

And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.

For God knew His people in advance, and He chose them to become like His Son, so that His Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, He called them to come to Him. And having called them, He gave them right standing with Himself. And having given them right standing, He gave them His glory. What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since He did not spare even His own Son but gave Him up for us all, won't He also give us everything else? Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for His own? No one—for God Himself has given us right standing with Himself. Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and He is sitting in the place of honour at God's right hand, pleading for us. Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean He no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:26–39).



3. Gender differences

3.1 Gender and age

Parents must make sure that children are taught the ways of the Lord, which includes to respect and honour God, their parents and each other, and to live lives that please Him—obeying His commandments.

Parents should teach children to be sexually pure (show them what the Bible has to say about it), and they should stop children from accessing sexually immoral media.

Girls should be discouraged from wearing clothing which reveals much of their bodies, as this causes unnecessary physical attraction in boys whose hormones are affected even before puberty and may lead them into temptation.

Even small children should be taught to respect each person; certain things belong to them and no one must interfere. Their body is theirs to look after—for the Lord's sake. They are special to Him, and when a person becomes a born-again believer, his body is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and must be kept special for Him.

3.2 Gender needs

Betty Huizenga has provided a simple list of the needs of husbands and wives which I have found to be invaluable and a special blessing in my own relationship with my husband and also in understanding my own needs and which are common to women in general.^{vi} It is good to know about these needs when you are still young as some emerge when you are still a child or teenager.

A woman's needs

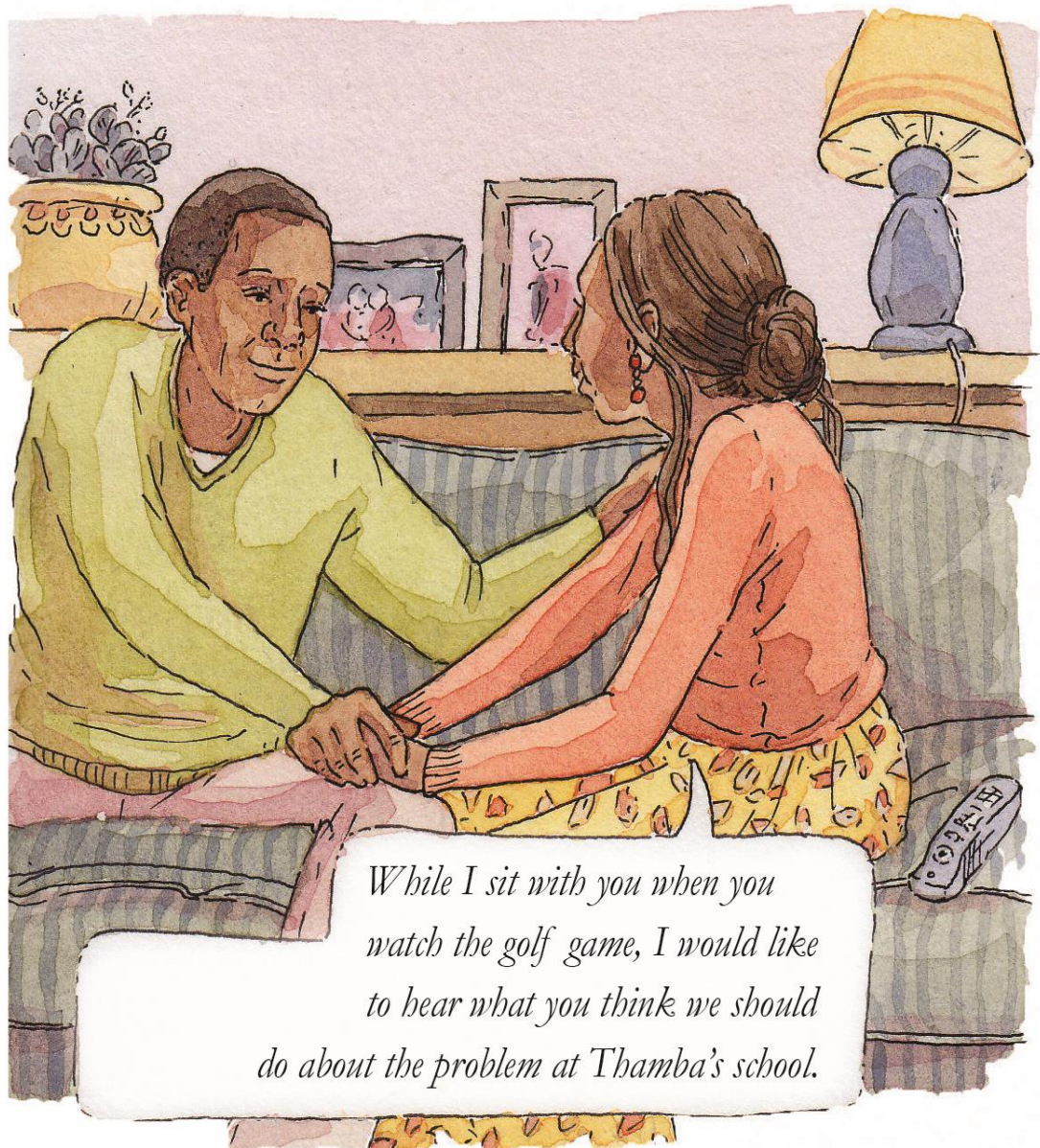
1. Affection
2. Needing to talk (with a willing caring listener)
3. Honesty, openness (needing to share things close to the heart)
4. Financial support (she needs to feel provided for....even in little things...food and clothes for her and the children. A friend can be a blessing here—little things mean so much—an sms, telephone call, little gift....)

5. Family commitment; she needs to feel that her husband or listener cares about her and the family, and she needs her husband to spend quality time with her and the children. She also needs words of affirmation—kindness and praise. Be positive—build each other up. We complain so easily, which can spoil what would have been a great time!



A man's needs

1. Most of all Respect. (Shaunti Feldhahn's "For women only" says this is a priority.^{vii})
2. Sexual relationship (*eros*—a word warped by the world, but God's plan is beautiful).
3. Companionship—doing favourite things with his wife (he finds that romantic).
4. Looking good for him (this makes him feel appreciated because of the care taken).
5. Domestic support. Learn to provide nutritious food (especially healthy food like fruit and vegetables) and clean the home well.
6. Admiration (be kind—affirmation gives him confidence—he often actually feels insecure).



In looking carefully at the needs of a man, especially his reaction to how a girl looks and his sexual drive, there are very important things for a woman or young girl to consider for her own protection and well-being:

If a man is so affected by how a woman dresses—especially short skirts and low necks for blouses and dresses...and if he responds by having a sexual drive reaction, then girls and women should be very careful about how they dress. They should look good, but not attract in a sensual way.

The Bible talks about the way women should dress and aim for in character—this is for their own good and healthy family future (remembering that they should not be unequally yoked with an unbeliever—2 Corinthians 6:14). The man should love her for who she is and not what she can give him, and she should not try to attract men to her physical looks.

In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over by observing your pure and reverent lives. Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewellery, or beautiful clothes. You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They trusted God and accepted the authority of their husbands. For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do. In the same way, you husbands must give honour to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered. Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tender-hearted, and keep a humble attitude. Don't repay

evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and He will bless you for it' (1 Peter 3:3–9).

Looking good is great—God made you special—make the most of it, not ostentatious though—be yourself! Think of Christ indwelling Christians. If you look at a believer and realise that Christ is living in them then your attitude will change—you will be more careful about how you approach them—with respect and honour!

Females should also be counselled by females otherwise the counsellor and client can become unhealthily involved with each other. God gave a natural attraction between men and women.

Girls, there is safety and much joy in numbers—when you go out, go out as a group! How about wanting a long-term love relationship—not one of lust, but of true love as shown in 1 Corinthians 13? Here love is described as being patient and kind.

How does this information impact little children or teenagers?

Because many of these needs start appearing early in the life of a child or teenager, children could be made aware of these things early to great advantage. How wonderful to be godly children, teenagers and adults and how this could influence generations to come!

What does a godly adult look like? Here are role-model descriptions from Titus 2:

As for you, Titus, promote the kind of living that reflects wholesome teaching. Teach the older men to exercise self-control, to be worthy of respect, and to live wisely. They must have sound faith and be filled with love and patience. In the same way, encourage the young men to live wisely. And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching. Teach the truth so that your teaching can't be criticized. Then those who oppose us will be ashamed and have nothing bad to say about us (Titus 2:1–2; and :6–8).

Are the godly men mentoring the younger men and being role-models to them? Are they urging the younger men to be self-controlled? Are fathers doing this?

Young man, would you be a godly mentor one day? A godly young man can start now—shepherding a younger boy. The generation above you (and not too much older), is a very effective mentoring group for younger people. Most children and teenagers who become Christians say they were influenced to do so by their peer group.^{viii}



Similarly, teach the older women to live in a way that honours God. They must not slander others or be heavy drinkers. Instead, they

should teach others what is good. These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands and their children, to live wisely and be pure, to work in their homes, to do good, and to be submissive to their husbands. Then they will not bring shame on the word of God (Titus 2:3–5).

Young woman, and older woman who would mentor in godly friendship and support of a woman who needs your godly input in her life, are you reverent in behaviour, careful not to gossip, Self-controlled? For example, there is a warning concerning alcohol; what a stumbling block alcohol is to young people—Matthew 18).



God Himself has promised everything you need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3–4).

Ask the Lord for wisdom and see how He wants to empower you, through the Holy Spirit! 'So just as He has taught you, remain in fellowship with Christ' (1 John 2:27).

Sexual purity

4.1 A biblical picture of a healthy family

What do the Scriptures say?

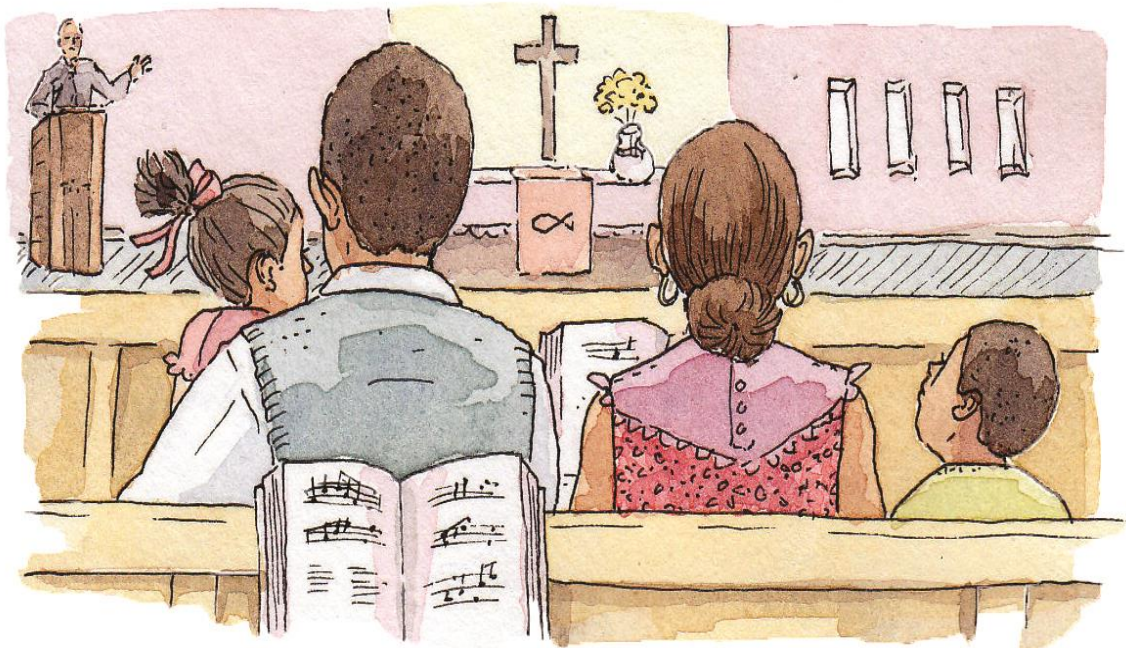
Love the Lord and others and teach God's ways to the family from the Word of God and in a daily life style (Deuteronomy 6: 5–9).

God wants all the lost, including children, to be saved, 'He does not want any of these little ones to be lost' (Matthew 11:14).

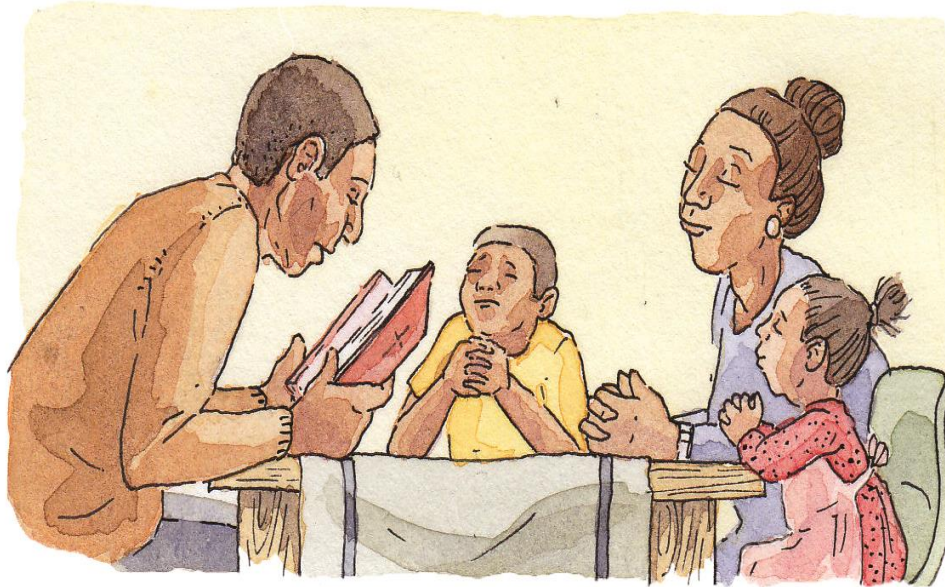
Go into the child's world—teach in a way he understands. Children's Bible-based material can help. Each child would be blessed to have their own Bible and devotional (for example, Scripture Union or www.truthforkids.com and www.kidsofintegrity.com/).

Children need to see how godly people live...if they can experience life situations with them seeing how they obey God and enjoy who He is...if they can hear Bible stories related to their lives, and see parental role models showing that God is real in their lives, they will learn much. Parents should make an effort to let their children attend Sunday School and Christian camps and Holiday Clubs.

Get involved with and learn from church programmes and ministries.



Share the gospel with your children, making it understandable without watering it down. Conversion is a process for children and if your child wishes to make a commitment, guide them in prayer and be supportive afterwards. Never try to coerce them into a decision.



Children can be saved! They can respond to God's love, be convicted about their sin, feel the need to change. They can understand forgiveness and make a personal decision to follow Christ. They can be filled with the Holy Spirit. They can share their faith with others.

Together with adults and youth who love the Lord, children can reach out to those in need in their community. This will also encourage them to serve others.

4.2 Healthy sexual relationships

Rob Jackson,^{ix} in an article written for Focus on the Family called 'Teaching children Healthy Sexuality', mentions some vital points for a family to consider: He talks about the hyper-sexualized culture which reaches children and youth through technology like never before. Whether our children are in cities or in the country, rich or poor, they need parents who model healthy behaviour intentionally. He says that healthy sexual behaviour is usually based on healthy sexual attitudes and honouring God's plan for sex after marriage. Poor character is often linked to sexual sin. As parents, we can appreciate that it's easier to shape character sooner than later in the lives of our children.

Young males can be mentored into responsible men who know how to safeguard sexuality, and young females to cherish fidelity (sexual purity). Jackson says that he counsels many people who struggle with sex addiction, or are married to ones who do, and who were not mentored properly at home. Without any intent to blame or shame, it seems to him that many parents throughout the years have simply "raised children" rather than intentionally going about the task of raising adults. How can we expect our children to flourish as adults if we do not regard our children's vulnerabilities as a sacred trust, and strategically and prayerfully shelter them from harm?

He warns against inappropriate tickling of the children and anything that could give wrong impressions and cause the awakening of sensuality. Scripture never allows for immodesty—it is never healthy or appropriate!

Parents can make mistakes that affect children seriously...an unintended divorce or a young, single parent who, having made a mistake—being promiscuous and having a child before marriage, can give wrong messages.

Research shows how children can become "sexualized" as they witness their parents in sexually provocative situations or simply situations for mature adults. This is actually unintended sexual abuse and can alter or misdirect sexual development in the lives of our children. Jackson mentions that if we allow immodest (sexually provocative) clothing for our daughters when they're young, they will dress immodestly when they are older.

Commitment, character development, respect, modesty, and other Christian precepts and principles should be foundations before smaller things like sports, arts, music, and even studies are concerned.

Jackson talks about the bond between parents and children being key in parenting children intentionally toward health, including sexual integrity, saying that he knows of no substitute for entering a child's world than by spending large quantities of time with him. I quote:

In addition to our personal investments of time and attention, we want to emphasize that sexual health is part of an overall approach to wellness. We teach our children the importance of hygiene and how to take baths that clean the body. We must also teach them how to take emotional and spiritual showers for the mind and spirit. In all these efforts, that which we model speaks louder than our words. Perhaps most important of all, the time we spend and the wellness we encourage in the lives of our children is a grateful response to God who has blessed us to be dads and moms. How we treat our children reveals our understanding of how God values them. They belong to God and are simply on loan to us.

A ‘talk’ about sex is not our goal—facts about the body, how it functions, and the mechanics of sexual behaviour, which is the usual way in which sex education is given. When teaching children we should start with spiritual truths reflecting the wonderful nature of God, to help them know both what to think and how to think about sexuality in lifestyle. This should lead them naturally into making good choices that produce good consequences. More important than good behaviour, would be for our children to want to return God's love with a lifestyle that pleases Him.

We are told not to commit adultery (a precept) so that we and others are protected from the pain of broken trust. We are not told something as direct to our age as ‘don't get into Internet pornography’—but the principles are in Scripture, teaching us not to lust, because it injures our character. With God's help, we need to apply principles in teachable moments throughout our and our children's lives.

The love of Jesus for children and how He loves them to come to Him and worship Him shows how special they are to Him in every way—their minds, their emotions, their bodies and their spirits...not dependent on their looks or of other people's approval, especially that of their friends.

If a parent does not understand the dangers and temptations facing children at all ages, one of the best gifts you can give your child is a sincere attempt to learn as much as you can about youth culture and the lies it perpetrates.

Keys to intentional parenting ^x

Our primary goal as Christian parents is to intentionally prepare our children to 'glorify God and to enjoy Him forever'. Core objectives include:

- We intentionally equip our children with intimate homes.
- We both model and teach life skills that integrate the body, mind, and spirit.
- We teach our children not only what to think (precepts), but to how to think (principles).
- We consistently affirm our passionate understanding of their immutable worth based on God's unfailing love for them.
- We demonstrate respect and relevance for the Golden Rule as we care for God's children who live in our homes.

The Bible shows that the Lord is head of the husband, who is head of the wife and family, and the wife next over the children (Ephesians 5:23). Honour one another!

A note on submission of a wife to her husband; women are often too quick to speak, and can be pushy and manipulative. This may make the husband want to withdraw from taking the leading role he is supposed to take in the home.

Advice to the wife: It can take tremendous meekness (directed strength) to ask your husband's opinion...gently give yours and let him make the final decision—it is not worth the sad rift in your relationship to push and push, especially for material things. He wants to provide, but wants to be respected to make the right decision. 'A continual dripping on a rainy day and a quarrelsome wife are alike' ...'to restrain her is to restrain the wind or to grasp oil in one's right hand' (Proverbs 27:15–16).

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves (James 1:19–22).

Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are His dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered Himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God. Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey Him. Don't participate in the things these people do. For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light." So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the head of His wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Saviour of His body, the church (Ephesians 5:1–23).

'Don't be concerned for your own good but for the good of others'
(1 Corinthians 10:24).

Some heart-to-heart advice from Paul from 1 Corinthians 7

Now regarding the questions you asked in your letter. Yes, it is good to abstain from sexual relations. But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. The husband should fulfil his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfil her husband's needs.

The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife. Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control. I say this as a concession, not as a command. But I wish everyone were single, just as I am. Yet each person has a special gift from God, of one kind or another. So I say to those who aren't married and to widows—it's better to stay unmarried, just as I am.

But if they can't control themselves, they should go ahead and marry. It's better to marry than to burn with lust. But for those who are married, I have a command that comes not from me, but from the Lord. A wife must not leave her husband. But if she does leave him, let her remain single or else be reconciled to him. And the husband must not leave his wife. Now, I will speak to the rest of you, though I do not have a direct command from the Lord. If a Christian man has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to continue living with him, he must not leave her. And if a Christian woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to continue living with her, she must not leave him. For the Christian wife brings holiness to her marriage, and the Christian husband brings holiness to his marriage. Otherwise, your children would not be holy, but now they are holy. (But if the husband or wife who isn't a believer insists on leaving, let them go. In such cases the Christian husband or wife

is no longer bound to the other, for God has called you to live in peace.) Don't you wives realize that your husbands might be saved because of you? And don't you husbands realize that your wives might be saved because of you? Each of you should continue to live in whatever situation the Lord has placed you, and remain as you were when God first called you. This is my rule for all the churches (1 Corinthians 7:1–17).

4.3 Teaching a child the way he/she should go

When Clarke discusses Proverbs 22:6, 'Train up a child in the way he should go', he mentions that the Hebrew of this clause is curious: *chanoch lannaar al pi darco*, "Initiate the child at the opening (the mouth) of his path." He shows the process of the opening of the training of a child until he can make responsible choices.

With the first choice he has to make

stop at this entrance, and begin a series of instructions, how he is to conduct himself in every step he takes. Show him the duties, the dangers, and the blessings of the path; give him directions how to perform the duties, how to escape the dangers, and how to secure the blessings, which all lie before him.'

Clarke goes on to say that these things should be reinforced until they become habit.^{xi}

4.4 Nurture of children interview – Anthony van Tonder

with Reuben and Bev van Rensburg 9th April 2008 (Radio Pulpit).

1. How should children be nurtured spiritually?

Relationship with God is the most important consideration in life—for adults, and for children.

'Obey faithfully everything that I have commanded you: Love the LORD your God, do everything he commands, and be faithful to him' (Deuteronomy 11:22).

'Remember these commands and cherish them. Tie them on your arms and wear them on your foreheads as a reminder. Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working. Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates' (Deuteronomy 11:18–21).

The Scripture then goes on to show that there will be blessing for you and your children if you follow God's ways.

In practice?

1. When our children were babies, we sang choruses to them, told Bible stories, took them to Sunday School from when they were tiny.
2. Stay in church for the full service. We did not send them to be looked after in a different room and our church's Sunday School was at a different time. So it became part of them. The same was true when it came to regular church-going. We have found it good to have a children's talk in a service.
3. Mothers, be at home where possible. The financial sacrifices are worth it! That way you are the one who moulds the child.
4. Gifts: it is important, over and above the toys, to also give Bible story books, T-shirts with Scripture on them, age-appropriate Christian music and story books, devotionals, and a good Bible, which is critical.
5. We involved our children in children's and youth groups as early as possible—it was part of their life, and a REGULAR part of life, e.g. Sunday School, Scripture Union, children's camps. This encouraged them in their faith. They met godly leaders. It required sacrifice to take them to these functions, but it was amply worth it!
6. Mentors: these were their Sunday School teachers, godly friends. These days you can have accountability groups—young adults being disciplined.
7. Our children were given the opportunity to develop their talent and to serve the Lord through music...so they could play in the worship team one day; they could learn to help set out sound equipment, work the overhead screen, etcetera.

8. As parents, we needed to be role models, walking with God, involved in ministry, in service. We had daily devotions together as husband and wife, as well as with the children. It is wonderful still to have times of prayer together when they visit, even though they are now adults.
9. Times of regret—when inappropriate conversation occurred in front of the children...advice: 'fight clean'-admit weaknesses, admit faults—appropriate God's forgiveness—always be thankful to God, together. We enjoyed the special privilege of all three children being Christians—unity in the home—in the Lord.
10. When we went on holiday we still attended church services—we did not take a break from God.

2. How should children be nurtured emotionally and physically?

1. There should be a loving attitude in the home.
2. Praise them to build them up.
3. Welcome visits from their friends—but the kind of friends is important.
4. Give special treats from time to time, like eating at a restaurant, and but it should be rare and not a habit. They should not get all their 'wants'. It is often the loving thing to say 'no'.
5. Time outside—encourage exercise, family holidays, walks, games together.

3. How do you try to help a child to 'stay a child'?

1. They must not get involved in activities beyond their years even though the whole of society seems to be against you in that principle. They want them to grow up too soon.
2. Censor their TV—set age restriction on the decoder if you have one—censor the movies they watch. Buy special children's DVDs.
3. Encourage children's activities, for example, party games, treasure hunts, chocolate fondues.
4. When they receive invitations to other parties, carefully consider their suitability.

4. Do you intervene in the socializing of your children?

Yes, if there is any doubt about the activity, for example, if it is displeasing to the Lord, rather withdraw. They need to know that God has a better way for them. Rather invite children home. Through the years we have seen many children, also into their teens and as young adults enjoy coming to our home; the Lord is with us and there is peace here—reinforcing the importance of His joy here, an encouragement for them in the future. Having a home Bible Study group for us, and now one run by the young adults, is wonderful!

5. How do you follow a biblical example for discipline?

‘Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it’ (Proverbs 22:6).

‘Even children are known by the way they act, whether their conduct is pure, and whether it is right’ (Proverbs 20:11).

‘A youngster’s heart is filled with foolishness, but physical discipline will drive it far away’ (Proverbs 22:15).

Discipline is also a positive part of their development. They actually appreciate consistent discipline and boundaries. Even a child can be shown the truth in love, for his own good. Parents, do not exasperate your children, or discipline them in anger. If you over-discipline, they can be oppressed—their spirits can be broken. Parental example is vital. Practise what you preach! Don’t use cruel words—they are not forgotten.

6. How do you give roots and wings?

All the aspects we have dealt with so far are really foundations/roots. As children grow up, at each developmental stage they can be given more freedom and more responsibility. This prepares them for their own adult and parental roles...these are the wings.

7. How do you respond to the individual personalities of your children?

They are unique. Treat them as individuals. This helps bring their best qualities to emerge.

Do not compare them with their siblings or peers.

8. How do you meet the needs of your children?

Spend time with them. Join in home-made games, crafts, time in their company.

9. How do you meet the needs of one another?

Man's needs: sexual; companionship; affirmation; domestic care; trying to look good.

Woman's needs: to be listened to; quality time given to her and family; their care; provision; affirmation.

10. How do you keep peace in the home?

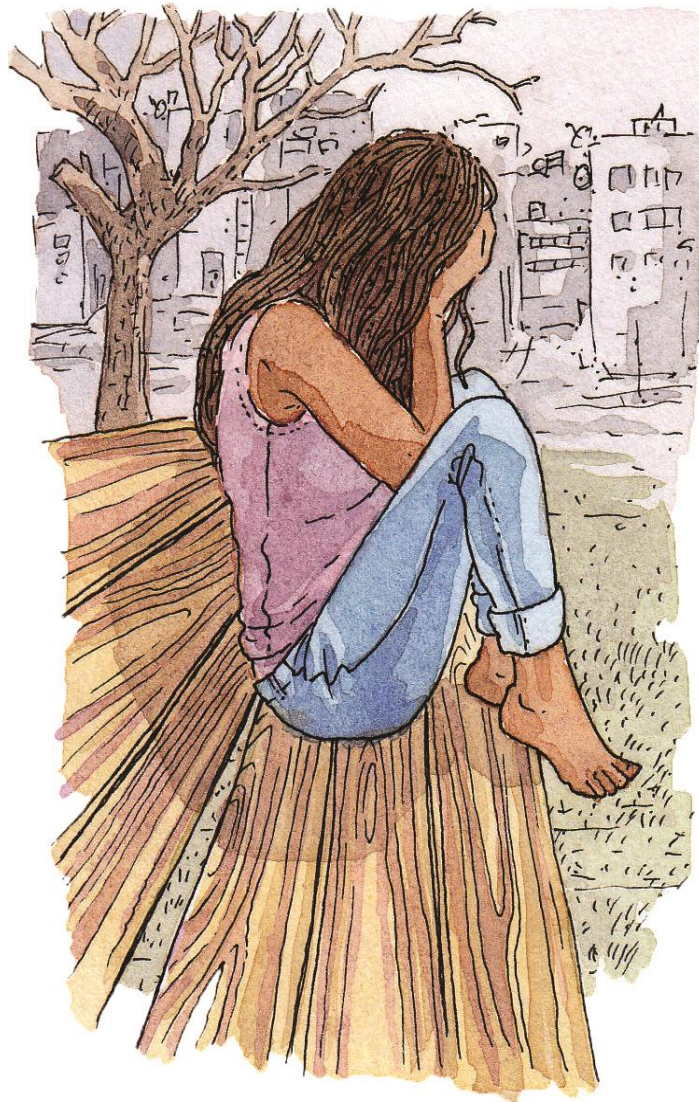
Honour one another; love languages, be careful not to hurt anyone—be kind. See to their welfare—minister God's love to them. Be slow to speak—listen well.

'It's better to live alone in the desert than with a quarrelsome, complaining wife'
(Proverbs 21:19).

..... End of radio interview.....

5. If you have been wounded

Have you been injured and damaged by atrocities (evil done to you) or calamities (natural disasters) that have clouded your life?



Is your self-image low? Do you live in a dysfunctional family...no ideal loving dad or mom or with decent siblings? Has life been unfair?

Have you wilfully engaged in sexual sin—homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, masturbation, pornography addiction?

Do you have regrets? Do you wish these things had never happened? Are you bitterly sorry and want to make right with God? God cares so much for you, and wants to forgive you. Jesus is willing to carry the guilt and clothe you with robes of righteousness—He died on the cross for that reason so that you could be reconciled to Father God and considered blameless because He took your punishment.

Jesus understands—He was cruelly persecuted and taunted and mocked throughout His ministry, yet was full of love and compassion for the people—to the extent of laying down His life after being physically tortured up to and including His death on the cross. He understands unfair treatment. (Read Psalms 22 and 53, which contain predictions of His death and the sacrifice of His life to save us who believe in Him and who receive the salvation He offers).

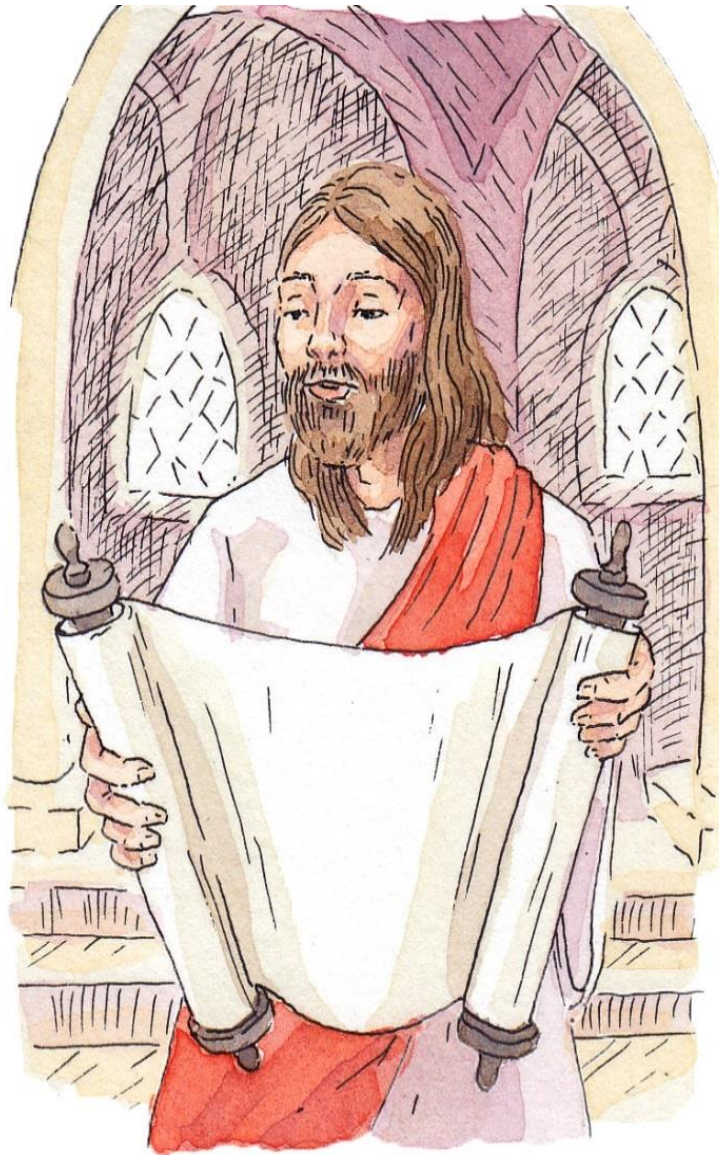
This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for He faced all of the same testing we do, yet He did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive His mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most (Hebrews 4:15–16).

5.1 Jesus the Redeemer

When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left Him until the next opportunity came. Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Reports about Him spread quickly through the whole region. He taught regularly in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When He came to the village of Nazareth, His boyhood home, He went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to Him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for He has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.

He has sent me to comfort the broken-hearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the LORD's favour has come, and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies. To all who mourn in Israel, He will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair. In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks that the LORD has planted for His own glory (Isaiah 61:1-3).

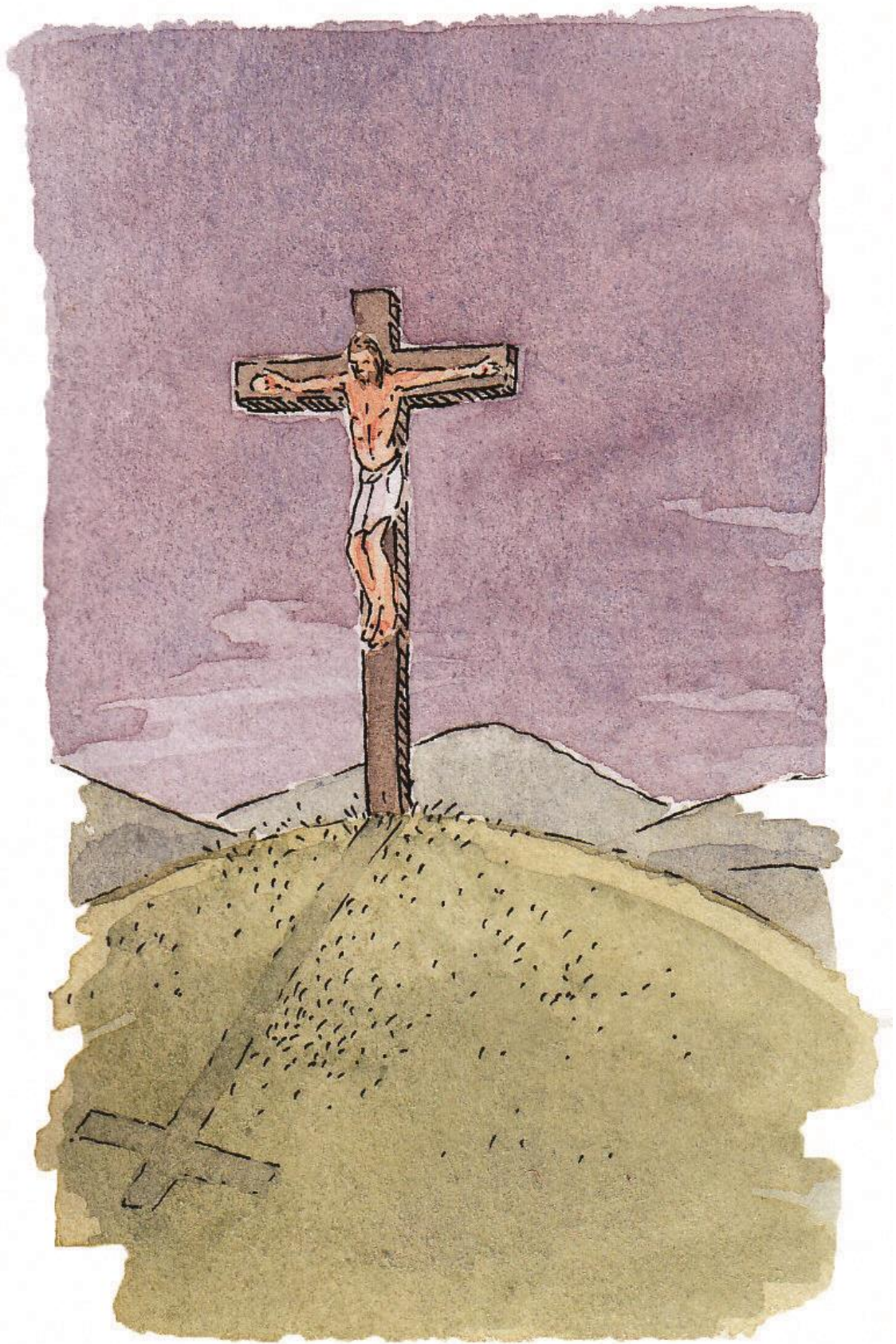
"He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at Him intently. Then He began to speak to them. "The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!" (Luke 4:18–21).

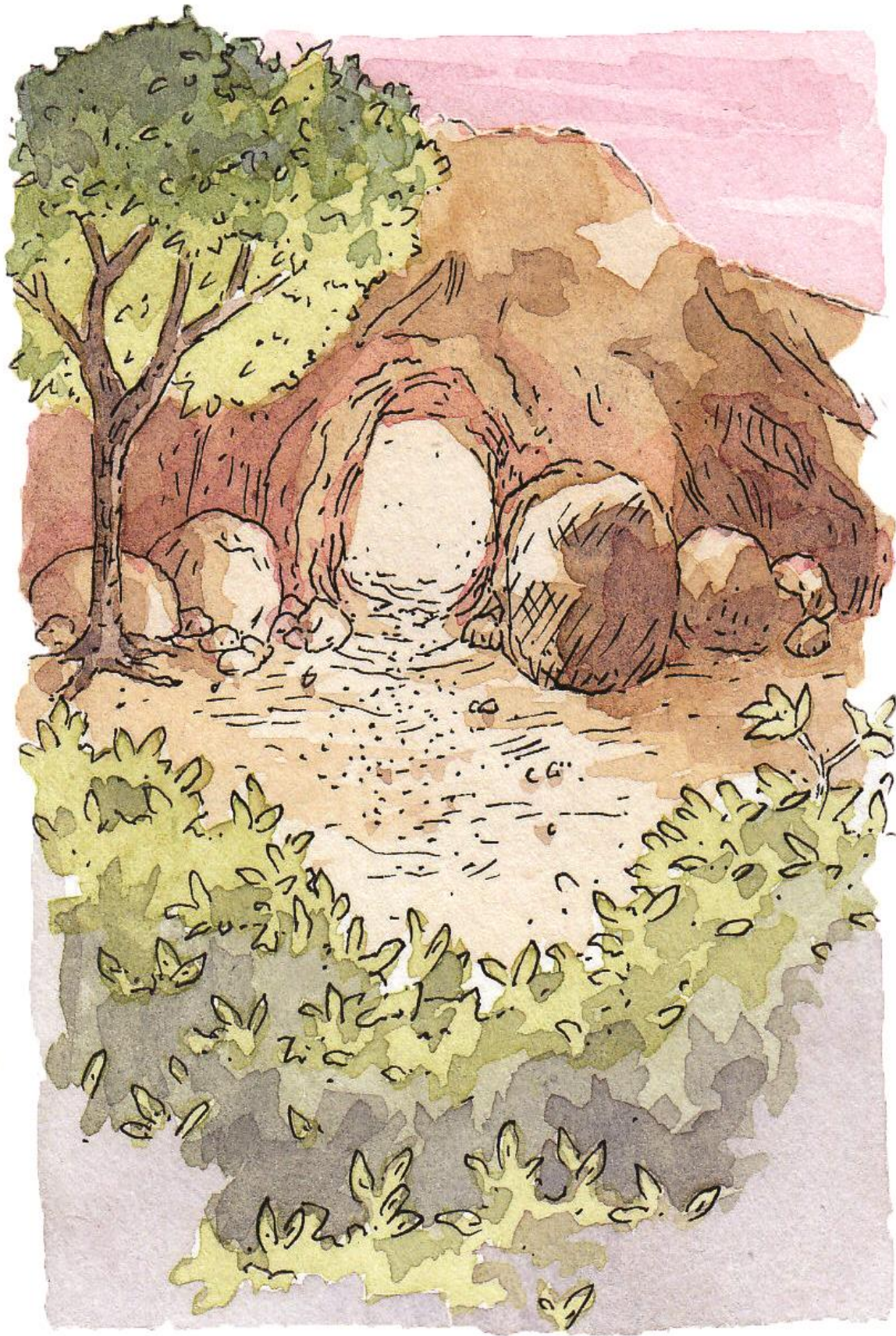


Jesus is telling his listeners that He is the Messiah. These scriptures show the compassion and healing which is typical of Jesus. For those who have committed their lives to Jesus as personal Saviour and Lord, here is a wonderful encouragement for you. Jesus is interceding for you before the Father. 'Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for His own? No one—for God Himself has given us right standing with Himself. Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and He is sitting in the place of honour at God's right hand, pleading for us (Romans 8:33–34).

When we think about the scroll and it conveying God's Word, perhaps the greatest thought is that Jesus was the only one who was worthy to open the scroll in heaven. John writes:

Then I saw a scroll in the right hand of the One who was sitting on the throne. There was writing on the inside and the outside of the scroll, and it was sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel, who shouted with a loud voice: "Who is worthy to break the seals on this scroll and open it?" But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll and read it. Then I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll and read it. But one of the twenty-four elders said to me, "Stop weeping! Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the heir to David's throne, has won the victory. He is worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals." Then I saw a Lamb that looked as if it had been slaughtered, but it was now standing between the throne and the four living beings and among the twenty-four elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which represent the sevenfold Spirit of God that is sent out into every part of the earth. He stepped forward and took the scroll from the right hand of the One sitting on the throne. And when He took the scroll, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they held gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God's people. And they sang a new song with these words: "You are worthy to take the scroll and break its seals and open it. For You were slaughtered, and Your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. And You have caused them to become a Kingdom of priests for our God. And they will reign on the earth"(Revelation 5:1–10).







After Jesus had been resurrected and had ascended to heaven, and the apostles were given power from the Holy Spirit to preach and heal in Jesus' name, Peter was arrested by the leaders because of this.

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of our people, are we being questioned today because we've done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says, 'The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.' There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved." The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing right there among them, there was nothing the council could say (Acts 4:8–14).

5.2 The Good News of Salvation through Jesus Christ

Gold: God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.

The Bible says: 'For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life' (John 3:16).

God's Son, Jesus Christ, who left Heaven, said: "I have come that you may have life, abundantly" (John 10:10).

Black: All of us are sinful and separated from God. This is why they cannot know and enjoy God's Love and plan for their lives. 'For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard' (Romans 3:23).

WHAT IS SIN? Sin is not knowing God: not caring about God—wanting to have our way, not God's way.

Have you ever been unkind; told a lie; been angry; dishonoured your parents, stolen anything; hated anybody; cheated? People do these things because

they are separated from God. God is Light, but we are going our way in the darkness of sin. Sin separated us from God and God's way.

'For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord' (Romans 6:23). This is not Good News, is it?

'But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, He will certainly save us from God's condemnation' (Romans 5: 8–9). That means that He was punished for our sins. He took our place.

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus. God became man (John 1:14). And she will have a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

At Easter we remember that He died on a cross, was buried, and came alive again. Jesus Christ lives forever (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). This is why Jesus Christ can say: 'I am the WAY; the TRUTH the LIFE; no man (woman, boy or girl) can come to God, the heavenly Father, but by me' (John 14:6). This is GOOD NEWS! But, it is not enough just to know these three things.

White: To have a new, clean life, you need to receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour. This is a gift from God.

Do you like to receive gifts? You can receive God's greatest gift, Jesus Christ, right now. The Bible says: 'God saved you (from the punishment for sin) by His grace (His undeserved loving kindness) when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God (Ephesians2:8–9).

If I had a gift for you right now, would you say, 'Oh, no thank you. I don't want it.' You would take it, wouldn't you? A gift is ours as soon as we receive it. Jesus Christ is God's free gift of love to you.

This is how you can receive Jesus Christ into your life as your Saviour. You can pray (talk) to God in your own words, something like this:

'Heavenly Father, I agree that I have sinned, and I want to have a new clean life. I receive Jesus Christ, your gift of love, into my heart and life, as my Saviour. Thank you, Father, that Jesus has come into my life.' If you really mean it, you can pray like this and Jesus will come into your life right now. You would like to, wouldn't you? Pray with me now.

Did you receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour? Where is He right now?

If you received Jesus into your life, He is in your life. God promises that: 'All people (men, women, boys, or girls) who believe in Jesus Christ and RECEIVE Him, have the right to become children of God' (John 1:12). Would God tell you a lie? Of course not!

*God loves me

*I have sinned

*Jesus died and came alive for me.

*When I receive Him, I am forgiven and have life forever.

If you are unkind again, tell a lie, be angry, disobey, steal something, hate someone, cheat. What do you do then? The Bible says: 'But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness' (1 John 1:9). Confess means to agree with God that what you did or thought was wrong. Admit your sin. Thank God that He has forgiven this sin.

God always LOVES you and keeps His PROMISES. He has promised: 'I will never leave you' (Hebrews 13:5).

GREEN makes us think of GROWING things. As you grow physically, so you need to grow SPIRITUALLY now that you are in God's family. How?

Green: '...grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Peter 3:18), as you PRAY (talk to God), as you learn His WORD, as you OBEY what His Word says, and as you TELL this Good News to others.^{xii}

5.3 Healing

Healing from trauma and bad memories, from lack of love and stability have long-term effects on our lives. God has raised up His church—godly believers as a healing community. There are happy marriages. There are stable homes. There are churches and cell or Bible Study groups which disciple believers and show extra love and care those who fellowship there as well as pray for them more particularly. There can be a hope and a future when we come back to God.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:11–13).

5.4 Ten Life Choices—Recovering the life you were always meant to live is by Bob Perdue, who was sexually abused as a child. Bob Ragan, of Exodus International had the following to say about it:

Ten Life Choices contains what I consider the foundational truths all Christians need to comprehend. These truths, when realized, enable us to experience the abundant life as the Lord intended for us, here and now. I strongly encourage this book for any who struggle with addictions or any life-dominating sin.

Bob Perdue and his wife Terri have been married over 35 years (2013) and have five children. Their journey has included dealing with childhood sexual abuse, gender confusion, infertility, miscarriage, adoption, depression, suicide attempt, addiction and a battle with lupus. This journey has made Bob passionate about life, relationship with God and recovery ministry. At the time of the publishing of the book, (2008) Bob was serving as the Senior Pastor of a growing congregation in Bristow, VA. Bob was also the President of Life Now Ministries.

Themes in Ten Life choices:

Themes: Honesty, Grace, Forgiveness, Truth, Surrender, Empowerment, Community, Worship, Intimacy and Availability.

Bob approaches healing from the perspective of making positive rather than negative choices which would hinder healing from past hurts. He describes what each choice entails:

1. Honesty

Perdue says that we need to admit and confess when we try to live in our own strength, apart from Jesus. When we do this, we can be released from the lies that keep us in bondage. Also, we can have a new and teachable spirit.

Confession is telling my story, with all its detours, sins, wounds, masks, addictions, leaving out nothing—telling the whole truth.

Pour out your heart to Jesus in prayer, knowing that He loves you and wants to help you.

But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness (1 John 1:7–9).

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results (James 5:16).

The story of David and Bathsheba and his adultery is recorded in 2 Samuel 11–12. David expresses his gratitude for God's forgiveness once he had genuinely repented of his sin and wanted to live a life pleasing to God again.

Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me.

My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the LORD." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone (Psalm 32:1–5).

Think about when you have tried to pretend that you are someone you are not or when you have lied to save face. Perhaps you have tried to bribe somebody or stolen something.

2. Grace

If we receive God's grace (God's riches at Christ's expense), we are freed from trying to win God's favour by our own effort. This helps me to choose Christ who gives true Life.

As God's partners, we beg you not to accept this marvellous gift of God's kindness and then ignore it. For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:1–2).

So the LORD must wait for you to come to Him so He can show you His love and compassion. For the LORD is a faithful God. Blessed are those who wait for His help (Isaiah 30:18).

God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace He has poured out on us who belong to His dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that He purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins. He has showered His kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding (Ephesians 1:5–8).

Then Jesus said, "Come to Me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Think about what it is like to accept grace from God. Don't strive to earn grace. It is a gift from Him. We don't need a religious system—we need a personal Saviour! He can be that to you!

3. Forgiveness

Choose forgiveness. Receive God's complete forgiveness. Freely forgive others. Then you will be free from the bondage of sin and wounds.

Leave and let go

You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for He forgave all our sins. He cancelled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross (Colossians 2:13–14).

Instead, be kind to each other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you (Ephesians 4:32).

Think about what it means to leave and let go. Do you feel that you owe or that someone owes you? You cannot move on when you have bitter thoughts against someone. Let God deal with them; release them to Him. Blaming yourself and having other negative emotions, lies you may believe, keep you in chains. How wonderful to be able to say, "I released it at the cross where Christ paid the price".

4. Truth

God's truth 'renews my mind'. I am freed from saying bad things about myself. I have confidence in my new identity in Christ—I am His precious child!

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

Jesus said to the people who believed in Him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31–32).

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honourable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise (Philippians 4:8).

...throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes (Ephesians 4:22–23).

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all He has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind He will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship Him. Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect (Romans 12:1–2).

Therefore, put on every piece of God's armour so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm (Ephesians 6:13).

Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth (John 17:17).

We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Think about trying hard to cover up your problems—trying to show confidence when you actually feel very insecure and guilty. Perhaps you just try to hide and avoid company. In other words, are you living a lie? Is your unwillingness to forgive adding to your feelings of guilt or shame? This all leads to a 'false self'.

Challenge the lies and choose truth. The following things can all damage your self-image: your own thoughts, impressions, opinions and views of others, voices from the past, your interpretation of circumstances, and Satan's lies.

Jesus has more for your life! Those who ask Him to be their personal Saviour, confessing their sins and truly wanting to change and honour Him, are considered to be precious sons or daughters of the Father.

5. Surrender

Laying down my shame, my coping mechanisms and my masks, gives freedom. I can find abundant Life in the Father.

"Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine" (Luke 22:42).

Then, calling the crowd to join His disciples, He said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me (Mark 8:34).

I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ (Philippians 3:7–8).

His wife said to him, "Are you still trying to maintain your integrity? Curse God and die." But Job replied, "You talk like a foolish woman. Should we accept only good things from the hand of God and never anything bad?" So in all this, Job said nothing wrong (Job 2: 9–10).

Think about Jesus' life of Surrender, His Self-denial, His humble, gentle servant-heart, His total trust in His Father, His complete dependence on Him. He was selfless, with a deep compassion for others.

Your life in total surrender to Christ will be a joy. He accepts you as you are and wants to work in and through you as you surrender to Him.

6. Empowerment

If you are led by the indwelling Holy Spirit, you will be empowered to stand up against temptation.

Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin (Romans 7: 24–25).

My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me (Galatians 2:20).

I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength (Philippians 4:12–13).

The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, He will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you. Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God (Romans 8:11–14).

But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for He called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light. "Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy" (1 Peter 2:9–10).

Think about Adam and Eve, given empowerment by God which they lost due to sin. They abused the privilege of serving God in looking after His creation by serving self. Serve God, please Him. Some people push their power and are controlling. This can never please God. Neither is the attitude of being a doormat—being trodden underfoot by someone. Serve God in confidence knowing that you are valuable and special to Him and that in your weakness He is your strength. Be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

7. Community

Developing healthy relationships frees me from unhealthy attachments and the sense of being a victim.

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him" (Genesis 2:18).

As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend
(Proverbs 27:17).

Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken (Ecclesiastes 4:9–12).

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart (1 Peter 1:22).

Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep His promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near (Hebrews 10:23–25).

Think about brokenness versus intimacy with God. Adam and Eve were isolated from God because of their sin and shame. God banned them from the garden but wanted to reconcile them to Himself. Adam and Eve realised that they needed God. Their relationship was restored with Him.

Restored relationship with God and regularly being in the company of caring godly people in community, such as believers in discipleship groups, brings about wonderful healing.

8. Worship

When we choose to worship God daily in our lifestyles, our hearts are freed to receive God's love and direction.

"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put My Spirit in you so that you will follow My decrees and be careful to obey My regulations (Ezekiel 36:25–27).

All around Him was a glowing halo, like a rainbow shining in the clouds on a rainy day. This is what the glory of the LORD looked like to me. When I saw it, I fell face down on the ground, and I heard someone's voice speaking to me (Ezekiel 1:28).

But be sure to fear the LORD and faithfully serve Him. Think of all the wonderful things He has done for you (1 Samuel 12:24).

They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that! (2 Timothy 3:4–5).

But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:14–15).

Think about wasted worship. God knows our hearts and when our worship is genuine and when we are trying to justify sin or cover it up.

‘The LORD Almighty says, “I wish one of you would close the Temple doors so as to prevent you from lighting useless fires on my altar. I am not pleased with you; I will not accept the offerings you bring me” (Malachi 1:10).

Bob Perdue’s testimony about being rescued from sexual molestation as a child, and healed and whole as an adult and being able to worship God truly is an encouragement to those who have been hurt and damaged by sexual molestation. True worship involves us responding to God Himself.

9. Intimacy

I want to know God intimately. I want to be disciplined in Him. I am freed from empty religion and isolation.

Psalm 42

As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for You, O God. I thirst for God, the living God. When can I go and stand before Him? Day and night I have only tears for food, while my enemies continually taunt me, saying, "Where is this God of yours?" My heart is breaking as I remember how it used to be: I walked among the

crowds of worshipers, leading a great procession to the house of God, singing for joy and giving thanks amid the sound of a great celebration! Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise Him again—my Saviour and my God! Now I am deeply discouraged, but I will remember You—even from distant Mount Hermon, the source of the Jordan, from the land of Mount Mizar. I hear the tumult of the raging seas as Your waves and surging tides sweep over me (Psalm 42:1–7).

Lamentations 3

The thought of my suffering and homelessness is bitter beyond words. I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss. Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is His faithfulness; His mercies begin afresh each morning. I say to myself, "The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in Him!" The LORD is good to those who depend on Him, to those who search for Him (Lamentations 3:19–25)

For the choir director: A psalm of David, the servant of the LORD. He sang this song to the LORD on the day the LORD rescued him from all his enemies and from Saul. He sang:

I love You, LORD; You are my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my saviour; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety. I called on the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and He saved me from my enemies (Psalm 18:1–3).

Think about losing any shame you have carried, surrendering your mask, being totally transparent with Him, being forgiven and cleansed (through Jesus' work on the cross). Then you can experience intimacy with God and healing. Desire a clean heart. Ask God to help you to receive His love. Allow God to renew you!

10. Availability

Are you willing to be available to serve God under His daily direction? He wants to use you to impact others for the Kingdom. Your experience of God's grace in your own life, a knowledge of His Word and the leading and empowering of the Holy Spirit in your life will be a wonderful result of God's intervention. Take the focus off yourself and onto God.

For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better.
But if I live, I can do more fruitful work for Christ
(Philippians 1: 21–22).

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us
(2 Corinthians 1:3–4).

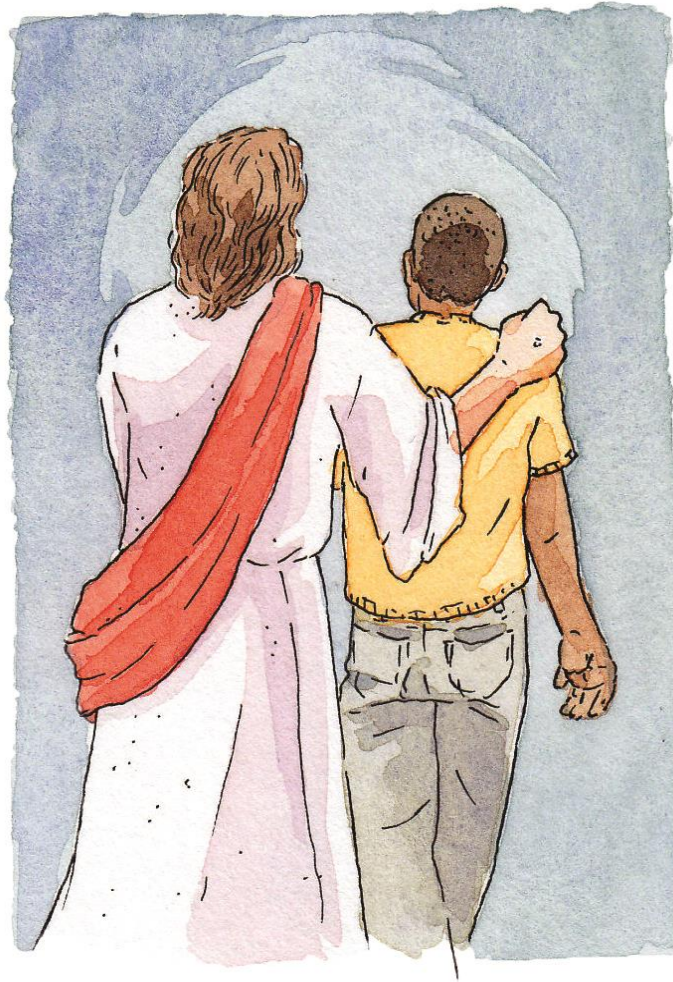
Each time He said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Would you be willing to help hurting friends? People who influenced Bob's life made themselves available to listen to him, gave sacrificial time to him, were not judgmental but showed the way God would want for him, building him up, pointing him to the Lord.

Bob spends much time in prayer, reflecting on his life and on the greatness of God, praying prayers of gratitude for people who were willing to come alongside in love. Yet he has moved on and serves others in the healing process.

Would you be willing to come alongside needy people, to mentor them over a long period of time as was the case in Bob's life?^{xiii}

... be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus' (2 Timothy 2:1).



Precious Lord

I pray that this precious young person, young adult, older adult...may realize how much you love them! May they experience your healing, your complete forgiveness and victory in you as their Saviour and Lord of their life. May they know that serving you and taking the Good News to others is more worthwhile than any material gain on earth.

In your Almighty Name

Amen

End Notes

ⁱ Will Brooks' article on Apes and Man. Genetics: shows the importance of the creation of man (23pairs of chromosomes per cell) versus the ape (24 pairs per cell).

ⁱⁱ Strong's Concordance discussion of *poneros*: contagious evil.

ⁱⁱⁱ Adam Clarke's commentary (e-Sword) on *poneros*.

^{iv} Expositor's Bible Commentary on *poneros*.

^v Expositor's Bible Commentary on *poneros*.

^{vi} Betty Huizenga 2000:44. *Apples of Gold*: Betty is the founder of the Apples of Gold Ministry: Titus 2 discipleship classes for women and girls (USA).

^{vii} Shaunti Feldhahn 2004:15. *For Women Only*: Shaunti has done extensive research on men's ways of thinking versus that of women on specific issues. Understanding one another's gender difference helps a spouse to be more needs-sensitive.

^{viii} Statistics highlighted at the Seoul 2013 4–14 Mission's Conference.

^{ix} Rob Jackson is a Christian Counsellor used extensively for counsel by Focus on the Family for readers of their publications and listeners of radio programmes.

^x These principles are provided by Focus on the Family.

^{xi} Ibid. Clarke's commentary on Proverbs 22:6 gives a very clear chronological view of all the processes required in building spiritual depth—training in the way a child should go so that he/she will not depart from it when old.

^{xii} Tract adapted from Campus Crusades' *Gospel Colours Good News Glove Tract*.

^{xiii} Bob Perdue, damaged by sexual abuse as a child was wonderfully saved and healed by the Lord. He wrote the book *10 Life Choices* as a pastor and happily married father of five children.

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In this very useful book, particularly for youth, Bev van Rensburg seeks to address the issue of sexual purity—covering the deepest issues such as value, hurt, healing and fulfilled lives—from a biblical perspective.



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