

The Heartbeat of 

The Remnant

Volume 22, Issue 3
Fall 2018

A ministry of
The Berean Voice



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 From the Editor
- 4 Godly Stress Management
- 7 The Changing Technological Age
- 10 Developing a Biblical Value System *—For the Youth*
- 14 The Royal Telephone—Prayer
- 16 What Gospel Are We Living?
- 18 The Preacher *(Poem)*
- 19 Meeting the Emotional Needs of Our Family
- 22 The Day God Started a Tractor *—For the Children*
- 24 Vaccines—the Cost of Security
- 32 Genuine Relationships *—For the Sisters*
- 35 While Life Is In the Prime Of Youth *(Poem)*
-

“The Berean Voice” is an outreach ministry of Faith Christian Fellowship, a church located in Holmes County, Ohio. It is operated by a board of directors, which ultimately answers to the elders of the church.

As a non-profit ministry, we desire to work with the Lord, for without Him we can do nothing. We are trusting God to provide for the ongoing work of this magazine and our other outreach projects through the free-will offerings of His people. Would you join us in prayer for this work and ongoing need?

Reprint Policy

All printed material in this magazine may be copied or reprinted in its entirety, so long as no changes are made. Any article which is marked “used by permission”, must have special permission to reprint. Whenever reproducing any of our material please reference the magazine details: name, date, and issue number as found on the front of each issue.

~ *The Berean Voice Board*

It is our goal that the content of this magazine bring honor and glory to God. All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise notated. In the event of discovering any errors in content or detail, please count it to our oversight and kindly bring it to our attention.

Magazine Contact Info

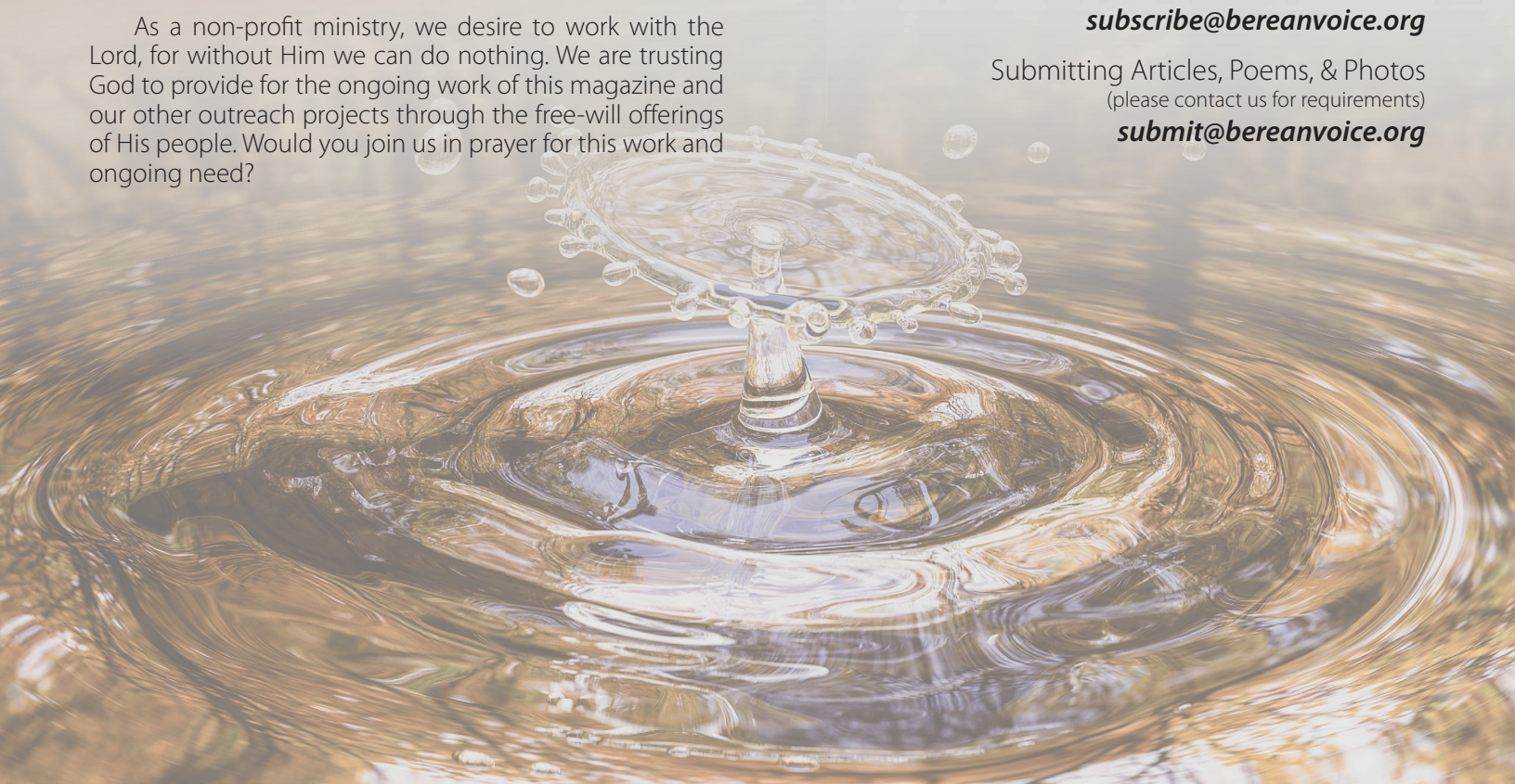
The Heartbeat of the Remnant
c/o: *The Berean Voice*
P.O. Box 279
Shreve, Ohio 44676
Ph. (330) 439-9547
website: www.bereanvoice.org

Email Contacts

Questions or Comments
[**editor@bereanvoice.org**](mailto:editor@bereanvoice.org)

Address Changes & Subscriptions
(Free subscriptions—Donation Funded)
[**subscribe@bereanvoice.org**](mailto:subscribe@bereanvoice.org)

Submitting Articles, Poems, & Photos
(please contact us for requirements)
[**submit@bereanvoice.org**](mailto:submit@bereanvoice.org)





Greetings to each of you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Where has this year gone? It seems not that long since we were approaching the end of 2017. Here in Ohio, the weather was quite interesting with an abundance of rain mixed with just the right amount of sunshine, affording the farmers' crops to produce quite well.

One interesting fact is that here where we live it is getting close to November and the lawns are still lush and green. In all my 47 years, I don't remember ever that the lawns didn't turn brown sometime during the hot, dry days of late summer. For me, this is another "beauty" of God's creation, almost as impressive as the colorful flowers of spring or the changing hues of the tree leaves in autumn.

Magazine Details

This is now the ninth issue of the magazine. Over the past number of issues, many of you have responded with notes of appreciation and encouragement. Some have written about specific articles that have been an inspiration; others have given suggestion how we could consider making a change in the magazine for the betterment of all. Numerous ones have told us they remember this ministry in prayer. And many of you have continued to support this work financially. Thank you, one and all. Without the various means of support from each one we would not be where we are today. We greatly appreciate the continued support of each one in the various ways God lays it on your heart.

As we think back over the past number of issues, we realize we have not done a very good job keeping you informed about what all is going on with the ministry and with our church. When we took over the magazine in 2016, it had been out of print close to three years. Thus, we were not sure how many of those on the original mailing list were still interested, or how many had moved, etc. It took the first two or three issues to get all this sorted out, but surprisingly it was less than 2% that needed to be removed from our list. Then interestingly enough, once that all leveled out, we had received enough new subscriptions that we never really dropped below our starting point and the number of readers has continued to increase with each issue.

Currently, we are sending out almost 5,000 copies each time we print a new issue. Most of this goes to addresses in the U.S. and Canada, but we also have readers in many foreign countries as well. This has gone well beyond all our

expectations and we thank God for His guidance, direction, and provision in helping us thus far.

Our Reader Diversity

As we continue to communicate with our readers that respond, it is interesting to get to know the specific situations unique to each one. Many are in various groups within the conservative Anabaptist "plain people" of North America. Others are in similar church groups in other parts of the world. Some have left their home, family, and local church to share the Gospel with the lost in various foreign lands. Numerous ones are worshipping alone, praying for a biblical church, yet not finding one in their local area. Still others are a part of a small group or a house church, trying to serve God faithfully in that capacity. Some of our readers are seekers, looking for something different than that which is everywhere—nominal Christianity. They long to find others who are sold out to being obedient to God's Word (literally) no matter the cost. It is our privilege to endeavor to continue encouraging each one of you.

Some of you have requested that we start a column on Anabaptist church history and that we start featuring more testimonies of people's lives that God has changed. Others have requested that we print articles on specific topics addressing needs specific to individual situations. We appreciate this type of feedback and recommendations and request that you continue to provide us with such. As we are able, we plan to move in some of these directions.

Ministry Growth

We are currently facing new decisions as a ministry. The mailing list for the magazine has continued to expand with more and more people hearing about it from their relatives or friends. The number of requests for resources and material has continued to increase as readers become aware of this part of our ministry. We have a number of CD sets on various subjects such as *The Christian Home*, *Foundation Stones of the Church*, *Precious Building Stones*, *A Christ-Centered Courtship*, *Re-Evaluating People-Helping Methods*, and *People-Helping in the Local Church*. We also have several booklets available which include: *Christian Counseling—Counterfeit?*, and *The High Cost of Holistic Healing*.

We are facing the need of more resources to meet the continued and growing requests that are coming. Would you

...continued on page 9

Godly Stress Management

Lee Rufener
Athens, WI

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina ripped through the Gulf Coast and on toward New Orleans. A man who refused to vacate, moved his wife up the ladder to their attic as the water rose to his waist. As he came to her side to comfort her in that devastating moment, she laid her head upon his shoulder and breathed her last. After a day and a half, they were rescued, and the autopsy revealed ...she had died from stress.

Most of us would be hard pressed to say that we know anyone who died from stress, but none of us are free from its menacing grip. Stress is no respecter of persons and may plague its victims with fatigue, headaches, backaches, allergies, nervousness, dizziness, ulcers, and high blood pressure. It ill-affects our ability to think and behave rationally. Upon its advent, this unwelcome guest sets up shop in our minds, sending its influence throughout our body's normal physiological pattern. Thirty million men in America today describe themselves as "stressed out".

The remedy offered for its management will vary greatly, depending upon the source. Friends will advise us to avoid stressful situations, take more vacations, and get some fun in our life. A psychologist will counsel us to express our anger, cry more, and join a therapy group. The natural health society exhorts us to a better diet and more exercise, while the medical field prescribes pills. There are now 18 million Americans on Prozac; but Christ prescribes something else.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.
-Matthew 11:28-30 Some may believe that Christ is offering us a new plush and padded yoke in trade for our harsh wooden one that has rubbed us raw, along with a burden-free load to pull. This thought promotes the belief that our life will dramatically improve upon entrance into Christianity. Christ does affirm that His yoke is easy, but this extends no guarantee that our load will be removed.

While repentance will alleviate the awful load of sin

with its condemnation from our breast, the new man will continue to face the events pertaining to this terrestrial world, and stress is the inevitable result. Stress is the response of our sympathetic nervous system to a perceived or actual threat. When we find our well-being threatened, our blood pressure skyrockets and muscle tension increases. Depending upon our mental fortitude, we are ready to fight or flee. Short-term stress is fairly normal, and our body's glands and organs can usually handle it without any problem. It is long-term stress that kills. When adrenaline flows too long, the body becomes susceptible to disease, cancer, and emotional problems. Here, Christ offers relief to the heavy-laden soul.

Some stress is inevitable and even needful for a healthy life. There are emotional strains that accompany marriage, parenting, work, education, and finances. The busy mother is no more exempt than the industrious business manager. Every living human must eventually enter the "University of Life", where stress and struggle are not elective courses but required curriculum. Christ does not necessarily remove any of these burdens from His followers. Instead, He offers us to trade in our single yoke for a plural one, a double yoke that will allow Him to walk beside us, thus, helping us learn to pull through the tough times, just like He did.



As we face the grind of each burdening trial, who would be a better teacher than the One Who was subject to every pressure imaginable to man? A good teacher will not extinguish the struggle for the student, for that is the avenue for the vital growth to occur. We do well to examine the Father's purpose of our struggles and *consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

-Hebrews 12:3 Stress is not the cause, but the effect. When we insist on maintaining control of our own autonomous lives and bask in our proud independence, we can expect stress to be the fruit of our journey.

As we learn to walk through these difficult times in a yoke with Christ, the eternal purpose becomes manifest. Our wise heavenly Father desires to turn...

...Stress into Strength

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren... For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. -Hebrews 2:17, 18 “No pain, no gain,” chant the athletes. While we all know that strain on the body produces strength, we still prefer a spiritual lounge for the soul. The ability of our Lord to be a faithful high priest was wrought not in the fact that He was the Son of God, but that He was tempted like as man. The splendors of heaven could never have fit Him for such a service.

As the burden mounted heavily upon His shoulders, He began to say, *Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. -John 12:27, 28* When the trials press hard, we must learn of Him. We ought not seek an alternative route but recognize that the Father has ordained it such and desires us to glorify His name through it.

The Apostle Paul bore more stress than most of us can even comprehend; *in labours ...in stripes ...in prisons ...in deaths ...in journeyings ...in perils ...in perils ...in perils ...in perils ...in perils ...in perils ...in perils ...in perils ...in weariness ...in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. -2 Corinthians 11:23-28* Is this the easy yoke that Christ prescribed for all who will come unto Him? Indeed, it is, for Christ's *strength is made perfect* in human weakness *that the power of Christ may rest upon us. -2 Corinthians 12:9* The promised easy yoke is not to be redeemed by the minimal amount of pressure we experience, but in our learned response to manage that pressure.

...Stress into Stability

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. -Hebrews 5:8 We can hardly fathom that our Lord had any deficiency in obedience at the side of God, but here again, the heavenly environment was an insufficient field to produce the harvest of golden obedience required to redeem mankind. Earth was not a punishment for His inadequate obedience, but His sojourn of suffering produced a maturity in His character that heaven could not yield. Pain and strain drive us to lean hard upon our God. If we try to handle the trials on our own, we can expect these tribulations to drive us into the ground until we admit our need.

Martha was no stranger to the throes of stress. How difficult the task looms when we have insufficient strength, or we need help to accomplish it. Perhaps the bread burned,

the water jug spilled, and the chicken still needed to be butchered. Add to that a touch of ill health and perhaps a pounding headache, and she boiled over onto those she served and loved most. What busy mother cannot relate to the strains of her predicament? But Christ has a different message for her. Here stress can become the avenue for dependence and prayer. Those who labor in their own strength will soon learn that the restraint of complaint has its limitations, and eventually the accusation toward others will escape the lips.

When our dutiful work bears us down, we do well to consider its source. God invented work for our betterment. He set Adam in the Garden of Eden as a caretaker. This was no punishment, but an avenue for creativity, productivity, positive challenges, and satisfaction of accomplishment. If we view labor merely as a frustrating drudgery that inevitably ends in the injustice of a melancholy existence, stress is the unavoidable result.

My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. -John 5:17 We do well to learn of Him. Through work we serve people, meet our own needs, and earn money to give to others. These ideals will never dissolve the stress that daily knocks on our door through working relationships, but ... *There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God. -Ecclesiastes 2:24*

...Stress into Faith

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. -Hebrews 4:1 There is no doubt, stress steals our rest. Whether it subtly steals our joyful song during our work day or the blessed rest upon our pillows at eventide, this persistent thief is constantly grappling for our well-being. To take Christ's yoke upon us is to lay down our own. Problems cause stress, but Christ never affords us a problem that we cannot handle. A Christ-given problem is something we can do something about. If we can't do anything about it, it ceases to be our problem, but rather it is a fact of life. These facts must not be deemed as handicaps but embraced in faith and accepted, even if we created them ourselves.

I asked a statue. "Why are you there?"

He replied, "My master has put me here."

"Why don't you move?"

"He wants me to remain immovable."

"What use are you there?"

"It is not revealed to me yet."

"What do you gain by doing so?"

“It is not for my profit that I am here; I will serve the will of my master.”

“But you do not see him?”

“No, but he sees me, and takes pleasure in seeing me where he has put me.”

“Would you not like to move nearer to him?”

“Certainly not. There is no nearer place than where he has placed me.”—source unknown

...Stress into Peace

For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. -Hebrews 4:10 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. -John 14:27 While we all desire to be prudent in this world, there is a point that we must lay it aside as our God did. Our weak minds cannot handle the constant barrage of commerce without moments of vacated release. We need times apart to refresh our bodies and minds and enter into rest. Rest is just as much a part of the creation ordinance as work is. We must relax and take time to breathe deeply of the day's best offerings. The fragrance of the lilac bush, the beauty of the magnificent sunset, and the song of the rose-breasted grosbeak must all be observed.

Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments are my delights. -Psalm 119:143 A time to meditate on the important things in life is an implicit requirement for our peace. Regular meal times should be a reserved haven for household members, to refresh their souls and spirits as well as their bodies. *Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. -Mark 6:31, 32* There is a time to trim out good things and good people from our lives. There also is a time to set aside the daily mental duress and give ourselves to bodily exercise. There is a time to delegate our load to others, as Jethro instructed Moses. Someone valiantly stated, “I would rather burn out than rust out!” While this may bear some merit, it seems to me that either way you are still out. But God has called us to peace. At times, we must lay down our perfectionist ambitions to secure peace. Apply the old adage, *Do your best and forget the rest.* Self-created standards are, at times, very stressful to attain.

There is a Divine rhythm created between work and rest, stress and release, sound and silence, tension and tranquility. The greatest musical compositions consist of a crescendo and decrescendo. So, our God ordains rest.

...Stress into Joy

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. -Hebrews 12:2, 3 We can endure a lot if that joy remains before our eyes. God places these things before us every day, but we often fail to notice them. We may need to take minute vacations to see them, but they must penetrate our thoughts.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. -Philippians 4:8 Take a moment to admire a flower, chat with a friend, pet the dog, and smile at a child. They will not be the only beneficiaries. The race is not to the strong nor to the swift, but to those who fly on joyful wings. This battle is not won through the alleviation of all stress, but to its proper management in our mind. We never intentionally renounce God's vision for our life, we simply lose sight of it through neglect. We are children of the King, not the paupers of the earth. When we become disobedient to this vision and live as though it cannot be obtained, stress soars and our spirits wilt. Christ offers us an alternative medicine. It is the effective stress-relieving pill that He Himself swallowed, and it is still being offered to us today.

*Any moment of hating,
Any moment of lying,
Any moment of resentment
Is a moment of dying.
Any moment of loving,
Any moment of giving,
Any moment of thankfulness
Is a moment of living.
All our moments add together
Like the digits in a sum.*

-Cecil



THE CHANGING TECHNOLOGICAL AGE

Kirby Witmer

Carlisle, PA

Originally printed in the *Pilgrim Witness*—July 2015

Adapted/Used with permission of the author



The average price for a gallon of gasoline was \$1.19. The President of the United States was Bill Clinton. The twin towers of the World Trade Center stood tall and stately above the New York City skyline. A new Internet search engine company, Google Inc., (founded by two college students) celebrated its first birthday by the moving of its headquarters from a garage to an actual office building. Cell phones were in their infancy, featuring black-and-white screens and having limited service areas. For the first-time, text messages could now be exchanged between the different cell phone networks in the United States.

The year was 1999. But while the United States economy was roaring, with unemployment at its lowest level in decades and consumer confidence at a record high, there was deep worry as the coming new millennium approached. A problem in the software code of computers was projected to create massive problems in computer networks of banks, utilities, government offices, and airlines at the turn of the century. This problem was dubbed the Y2K, or Year 2000, Bug. Many people were consumed with fear. The Los Angeles Times reported in December of that year that folks were stockpiling canned food and bottled water. The front cover of Time magazine boldly asked, “The END of the WORLD?!”

Less than twenty years have passed since the dawn of the new millennium. But oh, so much has changed. The Y2K Bug did not cause as many problems as initially feared. Gasoline prices have settled to an average of \$2.85 a gallon after skyrocketing higher for a number of years. The World Trade Center towers were collapsed by terrorism, bringing the USA into war with Iraq and Afghanistan. Google, the little company running out of a garage, is now part of an 800-billion-dollar company (Alphabet) and has over 85,000 employees. Technology has changed at a blistering pace. Cell phones have morphed into miniature computers with full-color, high-resolution displays and fast, anywhere Internet access. The World Wide Web has become almost ubiquitous, with many things

being connected to, or managed by, the Internet such as vehicles, home thermostats, tractors, refrigerators, and much, much more.

The sheer number of technological advancements coupled with the fast pace of change can be disconcerting. How should Christians relate to these changes and technology in general? How can fathers safely guide their children into adulthood, while they are being inundated with technology from all sides? There are no easy answers, and sometimes the more we dig into this subject the more questions we have. However, it is essential that we study diligently the path for our feet and attempt to make wise decisions that will help those who follow in our footsteps. What follows is a series of thoughts that hopefully will be of value as we consider this important subject.

I. We must protect our hearts.

Proverbs 4:23 says, *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.* Many verses in the Bible speak about guarding our hearts from the filth of the world. The Psalmist so succinctly stated, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* -Psalm 66:19 This must be the foundational principle in every decision we make in life and especially as we navigate the waters of modern technology. Satan would love to steal our hearts to fulfill his vile purposes, and he often will use ordinary tools of this life such as our occupation, our money, or our technology in his attempts. We must never let him gain an entrance into our hearts.

II. We must guide the hearts of our children.

The Proverb writer implored: *Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.* -Proverbs 23:19 As parents we are called to train up our children in the way they should go, and today that includes teaching and training about the proper uses of modern technology. This will involve taking an active role in safeguarding and understanding the capabilities of what we currently possess as well as new devices we may acquire in the future.

It is very important that fathers take their responsibility seriously to be proactive and set guidelines for acceptable use in our homes. If we don't teach our children the correct uses of modern technologies, they will often quickly learn incorrectly from others or by innate curiosity. Most parents have some kind of accountability with their children about where they are or have been, whether at church, at work, or with their friends. This accountability often extends to the type of friends our children associate with. What about technology? How are our children using their mobile devices? How much time are they spending with them? Who are they communicating with on a regular basis? What capabilities do their devices have? Do we know?

III. Technology and all its effects must not be a master in our life.

Some of us may enjoy many conveniences that modern technology has brought, but we must not allow them to become a master of our lives. Technology such as cell phones, computers, tablets, and such like can easily save us



hours and hours, making us much more efficient with our time. However, it can be so easy to quickly squander our time by casual texting, reading the news, browsing the internet, or playing a game. In January of 2011, American teenagers were sending and receiving an average of 3,705 text messages per month. With

all the additional communication methods of today like Voxer and Whatsapp, that average must be much higher. How are we using our time? A favorite quote of mine says: "Time = Life; therefore, waste your time and waste your life, or master your time and master your life." We must bring technology into subjection, or it will master us. *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. -1 Corinthians 9:25-27*

IV. A new generation is here, and modern technology is normal for them.

Author Douglas Adams said this: "I've come up with

a set of rules that describe our reactions to technologies:

Anything that is in the world when you're born is normal and ordinary and is just a natural part of the way the world works.

Anything that's invented between when you're fifteen and thirty-five is new and exciting and revolutionary and you can probably get a career in it.

Anything invented after you're thirty-five is against the natural order of things."

While his theory may be overstated, there is quite a bit of truth to it. Most teenagers today would not remember a bag phone in the car, or even a time when cell phones did not exist. While this may be hard to believe for older generations, cell phones (and soon the Internet) are as normal to most teenagers today as a car or electricity were to those born 35 years ago. It's important to remember this truth whenever we look at the topic of modern technology, as sometimes what we as older ones believe is against the natural order of things seems normal and ordinary for the younger ones.

V. Technology is still rapidly advancing and changing.

While it's difficult to predict what will happen in the future, it appears we are on the verge of huge transportation changes, from all-electric cars to self-driving vehicles to semi-affordable space travel. Several years ago, a new feature became available that would have seemed like science fiction not too many years earlier. You could buy a cell phone that when plugged into a docking station at your desk would automatically convert to a traditional computer interface, enabling one device to function both as your cell phone and as your computer. This is an example of many more inventions which we can't currently imagine that will continue to arrive. We must always be alert and watchful, making wise decisions while keeping the future of our children in mind.

VI. It's difficult for the church to legislate technology.

Most in the Anabaptist community are struggling to find the proper balance in technology. If the past fifty years are an indication, the next fifty will bring swift technological advances that will outpace the church's ability to legislate. As in many practical issues, there are many varied opinions on how, and to what degree, the church should be involved. And although that is a discussion outside the scope of this article, we believe that the church groups who will be effective in this modern era of changing technology and communication will be ones who have succeeded in training and teaching their members to be aware of this one truth:

“I will be personally responsible to God for how I use or misuse technology regardless of whether the church has spoken to it or not.” Just because the church has not created a rule about some new invention doesn’t mean I can quickly run out and purchase it. And just because the church has given its stamp of approval on something doesn’t necessarily indicate that it is right for me to use personally. We each need to take personal responsibility and make calculated decisions on how this will affect me or my family now and in the future.

VII. Accessing immoral content on any device or application is always wrong.

Purity is the quality or state of being pure. Pure means to be free from moral fault or guilt. Immorality and impurity have been a problem since the beginning of time. However, technology has enabled immoral content, such as pornography, to be accessed more easily and quickly than ever before. Anonymous access to such content anywhere at any time, coupled with instant communications any time of the day or night, has contributed to the moral decay of our nation. Addictions are formed, and relationships are fractured, some never to be repaired. It is so important that we drill this point into our minds and those of our children.

It doesn’t matter if I’m using someone else’s device, or if the Internet filter left it through, or if I’m alone in my car, there’s no discussion to be had here. It’s a sin in God’s eyes and always will be. *Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s. -1 Corinthians 6:18-20*

In the last decades, technology has brought many changes to our culture. *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. -Ephesians 5:15-16*

Endnotes:

ⁱ gasprices.aaa.com

ⁱⁱ techcrunch.com/2018/07/23/google-joins-the-race-to-1-trillion/

ⁱⁱⁱ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google



From the Editor ...continued from page 3



please join us in prayer about this need—that we would have wisdom to discern and follow God’s will, that He would provide the necessary finances to enable the needed growth, and that His Kingdom would be furthered through these efforts.

The Counseling Issue

One aspect of our ministry that has seemed to strike a chord with a number of our readers is the resources we have put together to help churches better understand how to help their own people “in-house” instead of “out-sourcing” them to other facilities for counseling. We have found that when churches use a “Discipleship Model” instead of a “Counseling Model”, there tends to be a peace and unity that comes into a local body of believers that would not happen quite so readily otherwise. This seems to be a default outcome of such an approach to problems.

This topic seems to be a large and growing issue among many within the conservative element of the Anabaptist

groups. Every year there are numerous seminars held in different communities in an effort to help people with their problems or to teach how to help others find healing from life’s many and various hurts. There are books, CDs, DVDs, videos, and online media all focused on providing the “plain people” with answers to all their woundedness. There are many conferences scheduled each year in various parts of this country where people can go to gain a better understanding about emotional damage, the pool of pain, locked hearts, and all manner of other perceived evils each purportedly caused by some type of abuse. This abuse ranges from verbal, mental, and emotional abuse, to physical and sexual abuse. There is even that which is referred to as spiritual abuse. The interesting thing is that the Bible does not define these situations as abuse, rather God simply calls it sin. Actually, come to think about it, sin doesn’t seem to have near the same intrigue as abuse does.

But wait, this isn’t just a problem with the conservative Anabaptists. This is something that has been a global issue

...continued on page 13



Developing a Biblical Value System

Used by permission—see end of article

Just a few miles from our home is a large junkyard. It's out close to the road, and as I drive into town I cannot help but ponder the sight. Junkyards tend to be eyesores. People don't like to look at them, so usually the local government requires a privacy fence to help the appearance of the neighborhood. Something about the chaos and disorder, piles of smashed cars, and weeds growing up through old vehicles repels us. But I wonder sometimes if we wouldn't be further ahead in our Christian life if we spent more time in junkyards.

Perhaps you have never considered having your morning devotions in a junkyard, but I'd like for you to try it. Junkyards have some tremendous lessons to teach us. Driving by our local junkyard, I can see a Pontiac Grand Am resting on top of another vehicle, too damaged to recognize. A white Dodge Neon with a smashed hood sticks up in the air, its rear doors missing, its rear tires astride the remains of a luxury vehicle. Chevy and Ford trucks, probably owned by young men who argued over which was the best, now lie side by side, rusting together. Volkswagens and limousines, taxis and old airport shuttles—everything shares a certain sameness.

Junkyard Meditations

Recently I pulled off the side of the road and spent some time thinking about the lessons in the junkyard. I looked at the remains of a black Nissan Maxima. It had come with every option available—aluminum wheels, a sunroof, leather seats... I tried to imagine the day, not too many years ago, when someone had driven it off the lot. I pictured him driving home, excited and impatient to show his friends. I imagined the effort he might have put into protecting it

from scratches and dents. I visualized the Saturdays spent polishing those aluminum wheels, waxing that beautiful shiny paint, cleaning the leather interior, and buffing those chrome accent strips. Now the windows are open, and rain comes in through the open sunroof. This car, which just a few years ago probably wouldn't have been left outside overnight, is now completely unprotected from the elements and is deteriorating rapidly. I wondered if its original owner ever thinks about it. Here is a possession that at one time was very valuable to him. He was willing to make great sacrifices to obtain it, but now it has almost no value. It is junk.

Lessons from the Junkyard

What can we learn from the junkyard? Many good meditations can come from these piles of rusting metal, but I would like to focus on two simple lessons:

1. Every earthly possession ends up being junk. Take a little time to look around you. Think about the great value men and women place on things. Regardless of how things are regarded by society, everything you can see is ultimately going to deteriorate. Nothing is exempt. Bodies end up in graveyards, and things wind up in junkyards or landfills. Remember this as you consider what to buy and where to invest your money.

True value is determined only by usefulness. In a junkyard it is easy to conclude that things have no value and just don't matter. But those airport shuttles were valuable at one time to those who needed to get to the airport. Our problem with possessions is that we assign more value to items than their usefulness calls for. Too often we assign value to items simply because we perceive that others think

they are valuable. But in the end the junkyard gets it right. Scrap metal from a limousine sells for the same price per pound as scrap metal from an old clunker.

Analyze your values. Don't put your affection on things bound for the junkyard. Take a quick inventory of your life. What are you willing to invest your time, money, and effort into? Are any of these items junkyard bound? Are you loving and pursuing anything that will one day rust? What is the final destination of the things you value? At times you need items that will ultimately end up in the junkyard. You can't help that. But make every effort not to set your heart on things that will deteriorate.

What Did Jesus Say?

It is imperative that you start with the Bible to develop a Biblical value system. Too often we live as though the Bible is silent on the topic of finances, but let's look at some of its teachings on this topic. Jesus gave so many warnings against wealth that we could easily conclude that we should stay away from money—that we should regard money as evil and avoid it as much as possible.

Men have tried this. Throughout history there have been men who walked away from society and tried to avoid people and commerce, isolating themselves so they would not have to bother with the everyday struggles that plague humanity. We call them hermits. But is this really what God has in mind? Does He intend that we totally avoid commerce and money?

No. It is evident from Paul's teaching that God intends for us to both earn money and invest it. Notice Paul's words to the church at Ephesus: *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.* -Ephesians 4:28

Four distinct teachings in this little verse provide an important window into the heart of God regarding labor, money, and His ultimate purpose for our endeavors in the world of commerce.

1. First, we are to seek money ethically. Paul says we are not to steal or seek gain unjustly.
2. Second, we are to earn by laboring diligently with our hands. Many other Scriptures address this truth as well. Paul reiterated this to the church at Thessalonica when he said, *that if any would not work, neither should he eat.* -2 Thessalonians 3:10 God desires for us to be diligent and industrious. He intends that we have an occupation. A slothful, lazy attitude has no place among God's children.
3. But not just any occupation will do. Notice Paul's next point. He says that we should be engaged in a "thing which is good." Many occupations bring

in a large income. But are they a blessing to our communities? Is it a "thing which is good"? We need to be engaged in commerce that blesses our neighbors and is a good witness to our community.

4. Finally, Paul says the purpose of this is to give to him that needeth. This means that God desires that we accomplish more than just providing for our own households. He intends that we bless others, specifically the poor. Jesus described this kind of alms giving as a good investment. Notice His words as you consider sharing with the poor: *Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.* -Luke 12:33

Jesus also told us where to invest. In fact, He was so excited about this investment opportunity that He said it is even worth selling things you own to invest more! He encouraged us to invest our treasures, our resources of time and money, someplace where they will not rust, rot, or be stolen. Jesus said the safest place for our treasure is in heaven. The truth of Jesus' teaching is evident. Where else can you deposit your treasure that will ensure eternal benefits? Every other investment will either mold, rust, or be left behind when you die. God intends that we earn, that we invest in the future, and that we deposit our investments with Him for safekeeping.

Hearts and Treasures

Let's look at another truth Jesus shared. He went on to say, *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* -Matthew 6:21 Pay close attention to His words here. These familiar words have the potential to change your life. Jesus was saying that your heart will follow your treasure. In fact, He said your treasure and your heart will be in the same place.

I clearly remember buying my first car. It took all the money I had in the bank and some additional money I (foolishly) borrowed. I effectively deposited all of my monetary treasure in this vehicle. Suddenly THE CAR consumed my thoughts. THE CAR was polished and pampered. Although I would have probably denied it at the time, my heart was wrapped around THE CAR. I had invested treasure there, and my heart had followed it.

This truth Jesus taught regarding our hearts and our treasure may seem negative. But there are a couple of blessings we should consider. Because our hearts automatically follow our treasure, we can quite easily determine where our hearts are. Just locate your treasure. Find out where your money, time, and energy tend to go. If your discretionary (extra) money seems to end up in the local sporting goods store, you can be sure sporting goods have a part of your heart.

Our Hearts Move

But another truth should be an encouragement to the young man or woman who is serious about following the Lord. Since we know that our hearts follow our treasure, we have the ability to control where our heart goes. We spend a lot of time asking for revival and requesting God to change our hearts. We pray prayers such as, “Lord, give me a heart that loves you more.” Or, “Lord, help me to love the things you love.” Charles Wesley said it like this in a song we love to sing:

*O for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free;
A heart that's sprinkled with the blood
So freely shed for me:*

These prayers and songs are good requests. We want hearts that will more fully love our Lord, and I believe our Father honors these prayers.

But God has already given us the ability to move our hearts toward Him. Think of Jesus' teaching as a tremendous opportunity. Every time you invest in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ with pure motives, your heart moves a little closer to God. Each time you give to the poor, help someone who is struggling, or even give a cup of cold water in the name of Jesus, your heart moves closer to Him.

Remember this as you make decisions regarding your time and money. With each decision, regardless of how small, your heart is moving either closer to or farther from the Kingdom of God. Take some time to grasp the magnitude of this truth. When you choose to spend “your” money on an earthly treasure, your heart moves a little farther from God. But when you invest in the Kingdom of God by helping the poor or promoting the Kingdom, your heart moves closer to God.

Most of us can identify with this. If you help sponsor a child in Africa, a part of your heart moves there. You notice current events in the newspaper regarding Africa and pray for the people there. Or if you have been quietly helping a widow in your congregation, you find your thoughts turning toward her. Suddenly you are more interested in her welfare and how her life is going. You find yourself hurting when she hurts and desiring to help her more.

What you are experiencing is simply the reality of this truth Jesus taught, *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* -Matthew 6:21 This is why it is so important to closely examine where your treasure is going. It is also why every purchase can be a spiritual decision. God has given us an amazing opportunity! Simply by choosing to invest in the Kingdom, we can draw closer to Him!

Conclusion

We all make many decisions every day, and as we have seen in Jesus' teachings, these little choices have a profound effect on our spiritual lives. If you establish your value system from the world around you, it is easy to believe that your use of money doesn't matter. You will find yourself thinking thoughts like, “Why does it really matter what I do with my money? It's really not that big of a deal.”

But if you are using Jesus' teachings to develop a Biblical value system, you will find yourself wanting to invest as much as possible in the Kingdom. His teachings remind us that life is short and that we have a wonderful opportunity each day. Every day my heart can draw closer to God as I use resources correctly. So, ask yourself: Are the things I am investing my time, money, and energy into, a good investment? Or are they heading for the junkyard?

For Further Reflection

- Make a list of things we pursue that will end up in the junkyard.
- Make another list of ways we can invest in wealth that will last.
- Make a list of items that have little or no use, yet are perceived to be valuable because of public opinion.
- Share some examples of times your heart has followed your treasure—maybe a time you invested time or money in something and then found your thoughts beginning to go there.
- What are some steps we can take to move our hearts toward the Kingdom of God?


Taken from CHARTING A COURSE IN YOUR YOUTH by Gary Miller

© 2011 TGS International, PO Box 355, Berlin, Ohio 44610

Used by permission

To order this book or other books by the same author contact TGS International



 ever since Psychology set out to unseat God from His Throne about the understanding of the nature of man, his behavior, and what goes on in his soul. Consider this: in Greek (Psyche) = “Soul” and (ology) = “the Study of”. Thus, we have Psychology presenting itself as the authority on the soul of man and human behavior, because by its very name it is claiming to be “a study of the soul of man”. More recently, with some of the mass shootings here in the U.S., there seems to be a shift by the mental health community towards more of a “screen and prevent” instead of the past “diagnose and treat”. Herein we would be wise to ask ourselves how far down this slippery path we as churches are willing to go, before we wake up and realize that much of it is taking us away from God and His Word.

Here is another interesting point to consider. What did all the believers down through the ages do before there was counseling, Psychology, and Psychiatry? *The soul of man* has always been *the soul of man* and human behavior has always been a problem ever since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden as recorded in Genesis. The New Testament church, the early church, and the Anabaptists of 16th century Europe, all would have had all the normal struggles that go with human beings living in a fallen world. They didn’t have specialized centers with professionally trained individuals waiting to be their solace in their time of need. Rather they learned to come to a God whose *yoke is easy, and ...burden is light.* -*Matthew 11:30* A God who declared to His children that *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* -*Hebrews 13:5* A God who promised each of us that if we come to Him on His terms and learn of Him that then we would *find rest unto [our] your souls.* -*Matthew 11:29*

What most people do not realize is that Psychology is derived from the thinking of experts who did not want to retain God in their knowledge (see Romans chapter 1 about this error). Without God, these men would have been influenced to one degree or another by **humanism** and **evolution**. Thus, the reality is this, “We have been gifted with a package of goods that is in direct opposition to the God of the Bible.” Here we wish to make a disclaimer, “We make a clear difference between (p)psychology as a general, common sense observation of human behavior and (P)psychology as a discipline, as a religion, or as a science.”

We have received numerous requests for printed material on numerous topics regarding this whole matter. With the Lord’s help we plan to move forward on this in the

near future as we are able. It is our goal to provide clear Biblical answers (as an alternative that works) to the world’s philosophy and secular wisdom on these matters. Most Christians today don’t have a ready answer from God’s Word regarding the understanding and “help” for many of the situations the world has given us terminology on. Here are some topics that generally are seen as so serious that they need to be sent away to specialized locations for help. We encourage each of you to consider each of them through the lens of Scripture—a marriage that is on the rocks, severe depression to the point of suicidal thoughts and contemplation, long-term addictions (such as drunkenness, pornography, gambling, etc., etc., etc.), rebellious youth whose hearts have turned away from church and family for years, mental disorders (such as ADD, ADHD, OCD, IED, ODD, Bipolar Disorder, and even Schizophrenia), plus all the other anti-social behaviors and disorders. Then there are the adoption and fostering issues which brings up such perceived complications such as RAD and childhood attachment disorders. Where did this all begin and where will it all end? It all seems so complicated when we stop and listen to the world’s wisdom on these matters.

We see a clear difference between the brain as a physical organ and the mind/soul as a non-physical part of us. This is the bottom-line for us regarding any issue that is truly of the soul/mind—“The ONLY reason there is a problem is because somewhere, someone or something is NOT functioning the way that God designed it to function.” This is a view that is Biblical, it is a perspective that actually works to bring lasting change to situations, and it is a mentality that helps to bring clarity to all the confusion and chaos. For you see we still believe that God’s Word is true when it tells us that He *hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:* -2 *Peter 1:3* Thus, we stand on the premise that God has given us ALL we need to understand the issues of life, through the simplicity and sufficiency of His Word.



The Royal Telephone—Prayer

By Luke B. Bucher
Used by permission of: Bible Helps,
PO Box 391, Hanover PA 17331



Central's never "busy," always on the line;
You may hear from Heaven almost any time.
'Tis a royal service, free for one and all—
When you get in trouble give this royal line a call.

Telephone to glory, oh what joy divine!
I can feel the current moving on the line;
Built by God the Father, for His loved and own—
We may talk to Jesus through this royal telephone.
- F. M. Lehman

In this poem by F. M. Lehman, prayer is described as a royal telephone which is provided by God for the Christian. Prayer is communion with God our Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ the Son, who is our intercessor and mediator. We don't go to a doctor, tell him our ailments, and then leave. We wait for his answer, listen to his instructions, and accept his medicine. Just so, prayer is not a one-sided conversation. We speak to God, and He speaks to us. For the born-again child of God, prayer is as vital to his spiritual life as breathing is to his physical life.

In the paragraphs which follow, note the three basic instructions for developing our prayer life:

1. We are to be in the spirit of prayer.

In Romans 1:9 Paul says, *For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.* How can one be in the spirit of prayer while living in a world of strife and turmoil? Notice that Paul says he is serving the Gospel of Jesus Christ with his spirit. In other words, it is his primary aim in life to serve God and Jesus Christ. Paul was gloriously saved from his past life of sin, and now the impelling force of his life is to serve Jesus Christ with his spirit, soul, and mind. The things that were happening round about him were insignificant now that he was a servant of Christ.

Again, Paul writes in Romans 8:5, *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.* The Christian must answer the question, "Who am I serving?" If our minds are filled with the material things of life—how to make more money and how to make a better impression on people—then we are minding

the things of the flesh, and it will be almost impossible to be in the spirit of prayer. Any Christian who does not have time to get alone each day in prayer to God is busier than God ever intended him to be. Being in the spirit of prayer calls for feeling the need for prayer. Prayer is the Christian's vital breath. Because of failure in their prayer life, many professing Christians are dying spiritually, and the devil keeps them from realizing it. The devil tries to keep us so busy that we hardly think of prayer during the day. Praying for a weak Christian or a backsliding church member can easily be neglected if we are not in the spirit of prayer. Then Satan sees to it that we are so tired at night that even if we do take a few minutes to talk with God, our prayers prove to be routine and almost meaningless.

But why do we need to pray when the Bible says in Matthew 6:8, *For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him?* It is true that God knows what we need. He is a loving Father and intends that we should have what is good for us. But while we as parents should know what our children want and what is best for them, we appreciate when they come to us and ask for things. We love to converse with them about their desires and to hear them say, "Thank you."

Another reason God expects us to pray is that people need to see a connecting link between a specific event and God. When the Lord sent the ten plagues upon Egypt, He could have sent the judgments without Moses' making a move, but in each case except the last (the death of the firstborn), God had Moses stretch out his hand or his rod so that Pharaoh would connect the plagues with the Children of Israel. When Jesus stood before the grave of Lazarus, He prayed, *Father, I thank thee that thou has heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me -John 11:41-42.* Prayer is the connecting link between the event and God. The Lord could convert sinners, heal the sick, and provide food—all without our praying—but when we pray and see the answer, our relationship with Him is strengthened.

To be in the right spirit of prayer we need to be humble and to be conscious of our defects and shortcomings. When praying, we do not give God instructions; we just report for duty. Churches and individuals grow only in proportion to the time they spend on their knees in their secret closets. And God is not interested in nice-sounding phrases. He wants fervency

rather than fluency. He wants us to talk to Him in words that come naturally to us, just as a child will talk to a parent. Once, in a church service, the minister prayed in a very loud voice. A child in the audience whispered to his mother, "If he would get a little closer to God he wouldn't have to pray so loud, would he?" Our prayers should be addressed to God, not to the congregation.

2. We are to be steadfast in our praying.

To be "steadfast" means to be settled, established, constant, not changing. Romans 12:12 reads, *Continuing instant in prayer*. To be steadfast in prayer means that praying will be an established routine in our daily lives, the same as our daily meals. Yet prayer should not become a mere habit; we will pray in order to take advantage of the privilege of talking with our dearest friend, our heavenly Father.

Born-again Christians will begin and end every day with prayer. There will also be prayer with the whole family around the family altar. Many times during the day, the Christian will find occasion to talk with his Lord. A noted Bible teacher gives five reasons for praying aloud in private prayers:

1. It guards your thoughts from wandering.
2. It keeps you from getting drowsy.
3. It helps to make you aware that you are talking to someone.
4. It aids in forming an orderly and meaningful prayer.
5. It helps to avoid repetition.

The important thing is that we contact God and talk with Him when we pray.

When we have faith and are obedient to God and pray according to His will, we can confidently expect answers to our prayers. "Why then," you ask, "are some prayers seemingly not answered?" Perhaps because we do not persevere in prayer. Luke 18:1 says, *And (Jesus) spoke a parable unto them . . . that men ought always to pray and not to faint*. No temptation with respect to prayer is more common than failure to persevere. We resolve to pray for a certain thing; we present our petitions for a day, a week, a month, or a year; and then, receiving as yet no definite answer, we become discouraged and cease praying for that particular matter. But we should form the habit of finishing what we begin. A certain man prayed for 31 years for the conversion of an unsaved person. Two years after the death of the one who had diligently prayed, the man accepted Christ and testified that it was the prayers of this concerned Christian that made him hear the call. How persevering are we in praying for lost souls? We should make a prayer list and use it as a reminder to pray regularly for these people.

In Daniel 6 we find a great example of faithfulness in prayer. Even when he knew it might cost him his life, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day as he had done before, and his boldness gave him the opportunity to witness for the Lord.

Do we have the courage to bow our heads in a public place and pray, as our conscience tells us to?

3. We are to be earnest in our prayers.

The word "earnest" means sincere and deeply concerned. Colossians 4:12 says, *Epaphras, . . . a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God*. Do we have concern such as this for our fellow Christians? In order to be effectual and earnest in prayer, we must walk in holiness before God, living lives that will commend our prayers to Him. People who live unclean and ungodly lives have no promise that God will hear their prayers. Psalm 66:18 says, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*. The only prayer from a sinner that Jesus promised to answer is the prayer of repentance and the plea for forgiveness. We can pray with confidence only when our prayers are supported by a godly, obedient, penitent life.

To be earnest in our prayers we must pray without hatred or malice. God will not honor a prayer from a revengeful spirit. We are to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Human and divine forgiveness go hand in hand. Jesus stressed this repeatedly, and the Lord's Prayer includes this two-way forgiveness.

To pray in earnest, we must believe that God will answer. Doubts would only cause our prayers to fall wingless to the ground. Jesus said, *What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them -Mark 11:24* If we ask in faith for things according to His will—and we can know His will through His Holy Word—He has promised to give them to us. But we must pray earnestly, persistently. A mother once lamented to an evangelist that her son was not saved. The evangelist replied, "Mother, have you ever tried spending a whole night in prayer?" The mother prayed earnestly all that night, and the next evening during the invitation her son was gloriously saved. When King Hezekiah wept and prayed, the Lord healed him and added fifteen years to his life.

How is it in your prayer life? Is your prayer life powerless because of some besetting sin? Is your prayer life being hindered by neglect of Bible study? Is your prayer life fruitful? Do you have definite answers to prayer? Is your prayer life restricted to short seasons, or do you pray frequently (without ceasing)? Do you love to pray, or is prayer a duty rather than a delight? Has your prayer life been growing? Do you know more of the power of prayer as the years go by? Has your prayer life cost you something in terms of time, strength, and love?

Has Satan crossed the wires of your telephone? God is always ready to help you remove the obstructions. I believe that prayer is the world's greatest untapped source of power! Don't fail to talk to Jesus on the Royal Telephone.



What Gospel Are We Living?

Barry Grant | Arcahaie, Haiti | July 28, 2018

Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart. -2 Corinthians 3:2-3

I was enjoying a Sunday afternoon meal at a mission when I was asked, “Barry, what do you do here in Haiti?”

I replied, “Well, the first two years I went from church to church preaching and teaching. We travelled all over Haiti and preached in more than 100 churches. Now, for the past year, we have started a church that I am pastoring. Also, we have picked out some other churches that we are assisting. We are preaching for them, holding Bible studies, or anything else the local pastor needs help with.”

Then came the famous question, “You’re not trying to make Mennonites out of them, are you?”

I hear this statement from many Anabaptist missions here in Haiti. The first time I heard it, I was confused. Why would Mennonites be on the mission field, but say they’re not trying to make Mennonites out of their disciples? So, I asked, “What do you mean by that?”

The response disappointed me. “You don’t think people need to live like we do to get to heaven, do you?” I replied, “Well, I am not a Mennonite. However, we do the things we do because we believe the Bible tells us to, not just because we are Mennonites or any other group. So, in answer to your question, yes, I do believe people need to live the same way that we do to get to heaven.”

This response started quite a discussion. I asked this person what things they did that they didn’t believe others needed to do. “Well, I don’t believe all people need to cover their heads with a veil; a hat would be fine, but Mennonite women are not permitted to wear hats,” was one example they used.

I told them that I look at things from the perspective of a church leader, and that we need to look past the now and look to the future. I said there’s a reason for everything we do. For instance, on the covering issue, we believe a woman should cover her head ALL the time because the Bible says three times we should **pray always**. However, if someone wears a hat it’s difficult to wear it all day long and most women who wear hats as coverings do not wear them all the time. Finally, if you look at church history, women often switch to wearing hats as a last step before they completely stop covering their heads.

Another example they used was the modest cape dress. They said a skirt and blouse is fine. Well, I agree that one can be modest with a skirt and blouse, but remember, we can’t just look at the ‘now’. Looking at church history, and the backslidden church you can see what that leads to. For example, in times past, Haitian women wore long, modest dresses, but after American influence they began to wear skirts and blouses. Today if you visit Haiti you will notice most women don’t wear pants, but they wear skirts, miniskirts in fact. They also wear very tight blouses, so tight that others can see the form and shape of their body. Did you know that today most Haitian Christians won’t wear shorts or tee shirts? America is now starting to change that, too.

Although I agree that women today are also altering the cape dress to be form fitting, is it wrong to put in some practical applications to try to slow down this moving towards the world? I know people say the problem is the heart, and I agree, but we need to protect our young people and be an example on the mission field. Can we not see that the moving away from the Biblical ordinances and church structure of our forefathers is leading to apostasy? Are we too spiritual for practical applications?

So why don’t we want people to live like us? If we feel we are doing what we are doing because the Bible tells us to, then doesn’t everyone need to do it? The Bible says that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation?

I have noticed that the churches here in Haiti which are connected to an Anabaptist mission have two types of people in them—1) the Americans and 2) the local Haitians. They do most things differently. They dress differently, they worship differently, and they talk differently. Then unfortunately, it’s usually the Americans who start changing, not the Haitians.

I was talking with a young Haitian man who was a member of a Mennonite church. He was living with his girlfriend and their two children. He had fashionable clothes, a gold watch and big sunglasses. I hadn’t talked with him for long before he confronted me with the question. “You’re not trying to get me to be like you American Mennonites, are you?” “No,” I said, “I’m trying to get you to be like Jesus!”

I know there's a lot more to Christianity than the way we look, but many churches are saying it's **only** about the heart. Well, they are partly right, but a perfect heart will be observed as right from the outside also. Jesus says we will know a tree by its fruit. We do not need to cut down a tree and look inside to see what kind of fruit it produces. The fruit will be on the outside clearly evident for all to see. This is true for both trees and people.

People are acting like modesty isn't important and they are only doing the bare minimum they think they need to in order to still be okay with God. I feel that too many Anabaptists today are only doing what they are doing because they are required to. This leads to tight dresses, small head coverings, and rebellious attitudes. They say, "Surely not everyone needs to do it this way." If we don't do what we do because we **believe** in it, then obviously we're not going to tell someone else to do it.

I have read the Martyr's Mirror, as well as many other early Anabaptist writings. Those men and women gladly died for things we don't seem to care about anymore. How can we so casually and so callously, let go of Biblical doctrines and practical applications that so many people before us have died to keep!?

The natives in our church here in Haiti want to do things the way we do. The women are constantly asking my wife to sew dresses for them, just like hers. They tell me that they want to live like us because we obey the Bible, and that's what they want to do also. They respect us.

I believe there's a reason why so many Anabaptist missions have failed, and why today most Anabaptist missions don't have a church for the natives to go to. I believe it's because we don't believe in that which we are doing. We are ashamed of the way we look and of the way we worship. And that is why we are changing ... more like the Protestant church ... more like the world. God help us when we send missionaries into the field that are secular-minded, saying "There are many ways to heaven; I'll do it my way, you do it your way."

The Bible says the world is waxing worse and worse each day, yet the church of Jesus Christ is on the rock which cannot move. So, in theory, the separation, or difference, between the church and the world should continue to get bigger and bigger as they move farther and farther apart. However, what I see happening is the church is also interested in fashion and keeping up with modern-day living, so it stays right behind the world. The women want to be pretty and the men want to be stylish. Thus, both the church and the world seem to be moving in the same direction.

This is a big problem in America, but it's a bigger problem on the mission field. Many countries like Haiti were not worried about the things of the world. They were mostly focused on survival, while some were focused on

the Bible. Then came the missionaries promoting a whole new look, while also promoting Jesus. When I go to the airport it burdens me to see what is coming into Haiti from America—tattoos, nose rings, dyed hair, and you name it.

I remember one day I went to the airport to pick up a brother who I had never met before. As I waited for him I began to wonder how I was going to tell which one he was. Then I thought of a little test I could use. There were many "American missionaries" coming out of the airport. The man I was to pick up was an Anabaptist. Would I be able to tell which one he was by the way he looked? Would he look different than the others? Should I be able to tell? I remember many Americans walking by, but I ruled them all out. As the crowd thinned I began to wonder if I had missed him, but no, there came a man that was definitely him. No fashion could be seen; no jewelry, stylish sunglasses or gold watch. A humble looking man... a poor looking man with a beard. I praised the Lord! I believe that with the way the mainstream American church and the world dresses, true followers of Jesus Christ should clearly stand out.

For the past two years I have been working very closely with an older Haitian man. When he's not with me, he is working for a Protestant mission. At first it didn't go well, since he did everything like them. After hearing me preach for several months, he began asking questions. "Why do you do this, this way? Why do you do that, that way?" I never thought of saying, "It's how our church does it." Rather I took him to the Bible and showed him that this is how God wants us to do it. It didn't take long for this man to begin to live like me. He changed the way he dressed ... the way he thought ... in fact, he changed almost everything.

Recently he shared the whole story with me. He said he used to think and live like I did, years ago, but then the Americans came and began to say he didn't need to do things that way. He could be "free in Christ". They told him that Jesus loves him just the way he is, so why would you need to change? They convinced him to wear worldly clothing, buy a television, and have a rebellious attitude. "But," he said, "then I met you, Pastor Barry. At first, I thought you were in the same bondage I used to be in. But I soon realized who was in bondage—it was me. I saw how you really believe everything the Bible says. I saw the confidence you have in Jesus. Your godly example changed my life."

Brothers and sisters, dear friends, don't be ashamed of where you come from. The world is waxing worse and worse each day. We need men and women who are confident in what they have, people who know they have the answer to all the world's problems and struggles—Jesus Christ. People who can boldly say, "We do it this way because the Bible says so." People who can say as the apostle Paul said, *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. -1 Corinthians 11:1*



THE PREACHER

Barry Grant

Alone in his house, a sinner found grace.
Not knowing exactly just what he might face.
What he had found, he could not deny,
He had to tell someone, at least he would try.

The world seemed so dark, now that he'd found God,
People walked by, without even a nod.
"I have good news," he continued to say,
Their response was a "no," or "not today."
"These people don't care, I don't understand!
I thought they'd be happy, and then shake my hand."
"He changed my life! I was lost but now found!"
But the people walked by, with not even a sound.
He then felt a tear, roll down his cheek,
"If they only knew, then they too would seek.
They're too busy with life, too bound by their sin.
They don't even realize there's a victory to win!"

"It's heaven or hell, you're not ready to die!"
"Repent from your sins, the end is nigh!"
As they walked by, they had nothing to tell,
"O please wake up, you're headed for hell!"
He continued to preach, hoping one soul he would find,
But they just laughed, saying he'd lost his mind.
He did not give up, because his joy was too great.
He continued to preach and continued to wait.
Day after day, he went out to the street.
Day after day, persecution he'd meet.

Then one day, his voice was not heard.
The people walked by, whom Satan had lured.
Everyone knew it, although nothing was said,
The man with the burden, the preacher, was dead.

Meeting the Emotional Needs of Our Family

Howard Horst

Myerstown, PA June 2012

Previously posted online at: www.pilgrimministry.org

Adapted/Used with permission of the author

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

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. -Hebrews 4:15

Sally stuffs her hands deeper into her sweater pockets as she kicks a stone ahead of her on the way to the mail box... “Why?” she says to herself, “Why can’t Dad show an interest in my life—I need someone to talk to! My life seems like such a nightmare... He does so much stuff with the boys, but me... When I want to talk it seems like his lights don’t come on.”

Emotion is a by-product of life. Things happen that invite anger, that make us glad, and that make us sad. We sing with emotion, so we choose songs to match our emotion of the moment. Sometimes we wipe tears and sometimes we tap our toes to the rhythm. We are by nature emotional people that need an outlet for what is happening inside of us.

As parents, we are busy people; we tend to focus on certain aspects of family life. As fathers, we may tend to believe that Mother can be there for Sally. We take Johnny along with us to the hardware store, believing we are doing our job. Mothers can be inclined to let the exasperation of relating to their son to Dad who seems to understand him better than she does.

As parents, we are missing a very basic building block in the foundation of our children’s lives if we do not encourage cross-gender emotional interchange. Girls need a dad who is there for them, and boys need a mother who can weave dialogue into their life in spite of all their seeming preference to be upside down on a jungle gym as opposed to talking real life stuff.

In early parenting we start out with little people’s problems, but eventually they turn into big people’s problems. We are setting the stage for emotional bonding when we have time to commiserate with our two-year old over a doll that fell into a mud puddle and out of her good graces. Someday it may be a young man who was tightly wrapped around her heart and the next moment slipped out of her grasp. A home where it is safe to share the hurts,

fears and insecurities, joys, dreams, and goals of life is not something that just happens without effort. There are steps we can take to **invite** sharing and there are things we can do that will **prevent** sharing.

While our family’s feet are under our table, we are on a mission to give them tools they need to process life and to rightly utilize the resources around them to aid in that processing. Our ultimate goal as parents is to shepherd and train up our children to become responsible adults who are able to tackle the ups and downs of life. Eventually our goal is that they could function independently of our guidance, yet totally depend on God’s grace and the resources around them.

There are so many things parents like to do when it comes to aiding our children emotionally. We like to focus on finding the right church where the ministry is kind. We seek to find the right school, the right social environments where they will be accepted. We do not like the job of drawing them out from under the porch after a wound from a friend and helping them sort it all out, but that is an integral part of parenting.

We need to use their experiences in life to teach them how to process relational hiccups, how to sort through what they could have done differently to prevent certain actions or reactions, and how to calm a turbulent turn of events. From the moment of great insult from a “snap” from Fido (because his tail was pulled too hard) to their prize car being demolished by one careless action, our families are looking to us to help them sort through emotion.

Dysfunctional emotional patterns focus on the following: do not trust, do not tell, and do not feel. Healthy emotional patterns merge into the true feelings about the happenings of life until it can be possible to trust again and to talk about it with others comfortably and discreetly.

We will hardly ever get to the point where we will need to sit on our hands to keep from clapping because we wrecked our car, but hopefully we can get to the point that as we reflect on difficult experiences, we find things to be thankful

for. *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. -1 Thessalonians 5:18* It does not say here **for** all things...but **in** all things.

Some of us are naturally prone to see the glass half **full** and some of us see it half **empty**, even though the water level is the same either way. Our temperament plays a huge role in our perspectives of the developments of life. As parents, we need to work with each child's natural coping skills to attempt to bring balance to the way they process life.

There are methods we use to process life that will lead to wrong belief systems if not guided right. The dog who is shot by a gun believes all guns will hurt him and will hide out in the wood shed when a gun is in hand. What he "perceives" as actual is what controls him, but it is a faulty "belief system". The truth is that one gun hurt him but not all guns will; it was just a one-time accident.

We cannot explain to Fido the emotional bondage he is in because of his "beliefs" about **all** guns, but God has gifted families with the privilege of dialogue and the ability to bring balance to the perceptions that are a result of the hurts of life. Wrong belief systems hold us captive and tie us up in knots emotionally. We must balance our family's belief systems with truth.

The child who believes they are "dumb" needs a parent who helps them process such thoughts factually—a mediocre success or even a failure in one area does not spell total failure. Or the child who believes it will not help to talk to Sammy about how he offended Sammy with what he said yesterday is setting himself up for emotional bondage. One failed attempt to communicate our feelings to someone does not mean the next one might not go better. Past happenings do not guarantee future repeats. This concept keeps families from trying again to restore relationships. It keeps husbands and wives from trying again to communicate on a difficult subject.

What are some foundational principles for healthy emotional well-being?

1. It is not only acceptable but also necessary to express emotion in sanctified ways.

Spirituality is not the absence of feelings or denying feelings. Teaching our families that they are tough if they don't cry or talk about difficult things is not in harmony with the way God works with us. The book of Psalms and the book of Job are prized books for hurting people to turn to. It is by divine providence that God allowed us to get a glimpse about how He welcomes His children to pour out their emotions while facing hard things. David told God his bones are roaring; his bed is wet with tears. We do our families a favor when we give them time to feel and "own" their difficult experiences in life. Tears

are a language that God understands, and we can help our family express them in sanctified ways.

2. There is a time to stop crying and face life.

Joshua was in dismay at the defeat of Ai. God understood and heard his anguish but directed him to move on from that experience so he could experience victory. *And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? -Joshua 7:10*

We can err in not allowing enough expression of emotion, but we can also err in not bringing emotional expression into boundaries. Different children will need different levels of guidance. Some will tend to brush off and avoid facing reality and miss out on the "healing" of honesty. Others will dwell indefinitely in the honesty of the moment and miss out on getting on with life.

3. Saying how we feel is a window into our heart, not a sin.

We are all on a quest to be understood as we face experiences of life. Our children are no exception. When they taste a food that is pleasant, they show their glee, and when they taste a food that is unpleasant, they wrinkle up their nose. When we see dress material we like, we stroke it and smile fondly; when we see some that almost makes our eyes go cross-eyed, we either laugh at it or make sure our disdain is understood in some way. It is all emotional expression.

Sometimes in our quest for orderliness and streamlined home life we forget that our children in their negative dialogue are really giving us a valuable window into their heart to shepherd and guide their social and emotional development.

I am saddened to hear stories of children who were physically abused simply because they stated how they felt on a given subject rather than using how they felt as a platform to develop relationship and balance their perspective. I do not think a child needs discipline the first or second time they let us know the red beets "taste yucky." We can use that emotional expression to tell them about foods we did not like but have since learned to like. We need to be careful that we do not, in a desire for order and efficiency, subtly teach our children that it is wrong to share their feelings.

Someday they may be married to a husband or wife who cannot understand why they do not communicate and do not open up and say how they feel. The truth is that all their childhood life they were taught that "If the way I feel is not positive or according to the house rules, it will bring pain to **say** how I feel." So, I will "keep it safe" and not say anything.

There does come a time when we learn to not trumpet our negative emotions, because everyone already knows how we "feel". Reaffirming the facts brings no additional value to the family dialogue or our emotional journey. Our children need to learn it is acceptable if we say our likes and

dislikes, but it is not acceptable to let our likes and dislikes monopolize our life or the lives of others.

4. Emotional stability is best understood in the context of personal value and response based on God's Truth.

Each child needs the security of knowing they are an important part of their family simply because they were created in God's image and because He placed them in their family. They shouldn't have the pressure of needing to somehow perform to earn love and acceptance, either from God or from their family. However, as children grow they will want to start doing things like Dad or like Mom. God commands parents to "train up a child in the way he should go..." Thus, it is necessary to carefully shepherd each child with proper guidance, allowing them to have enough freedom to learn lessons of life, while at the same time helping them learn to yield their will to the authorities God has placed in their life.

An extreme or extraordinary struggle with anger, bitterness, shame and guilt may be the outworking of a child raised in a home where their value to God, to society and to family was not communicated very clearly or often and they face life feeling devoid of value to others and to God. Their parents may have been better critics than encouragers. A fearful child may have not been lovingly told and shown he "can" at fearful moments and appropriate times. They had parents who did not raise the bar and encourage them to try new and bigger things. A child that finds himself constantly outside the realm of acceptable behavior may not have had enough guidelines defined in his childhood, or we could question how much those guidelines were given with compassion and relationship.

5. Our families need to see Dad and Mom working together to find balance in emotional expressions.

One of the most basic needs in helping our children emotionally is that father and mother work together with respect to each other's values and temperament rather than

oppose each other. There may be times when we feel that our spouse is allowing too much or not doing enough. We need to communicate together and work out an acceptable platform and a similar goal. If one parent lets Johnny whine his nap time disappointment the whole way from the sandbox to the bedroom, and the other disciplines at the first expression of disappointment, we will raise an insecure child who doesn't know what to do with their emotions.

I think one of the reasons God made opposites attract is that opposites fill the missing attributes in home life. One may set too many boundaries, the other may set too few. One may tend to be overly protective, the other tend to press development and advancement into their lap too early. As they work at their differences they can strike a balance that makes for good emotional stability in the next generation. But when they refuse to merge their values, they create a time bomb in the emotional fabric of their family.

6. Passing on emotional stability cannot be done without personal example.

Deuteronomy 6 advises us, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart."

As parents, we are being watched by our children.

The things we model—by design or by accident—powerfully communicate our convictions about right and wrong and about acceptable and unacceptable behavior in regard to emotional stability.

If Dad can express anger and frustration at the cows, but Johnny cannot beat up on the dog even if he's being disgusting, then something is wrong. Do not underestimate the power of association our children will make, when we discipline them for not being nice to Fido, but they know that we respond the same to the cows. This results in the emotion of anger toward us, due to our expectations of them versus our example. If we wish for our sons and daughters to accept the idea that there are absolute standards of right and wrong in emotional expression, we must let them see that we believe it ourselves by how we conduct our emotions.



The Day God Started a Tractor

Joshua Yoder—Age 16 | *Big Prairie, OH*

This summer my family moved from our old home to a new home closer to our church. As usually happens, not everything got taken along. So, it was, that our tractor was left behind while we took the other, more important household items like the toys, books, and furniture with us.

After we had moved into our new home and taken a week or two to get settled in, we began thinking about how to get the tractor from our old home to our new one. We decided that it would be best to have me drive it home one afternoon after I was done with my work for the day.

Thus, one warm, sunny day in August, I found myself putt-ing along on our small, Ford 8N tractor, enjoying the wind blowing in my face. The sky was clear and blue, and the birds were cheerily singing alongside the road. What a beautiful day it was! How thankful I was that I could be alive on a day like this and not cooped up at home, hurt or sick. I was even more thankful that, here in our country, we are free to worship God and to read His Word, unlike so many other children overseas.

By this time, I had been driving for a while, and had reached an area where the road became very hilly. Up and down, up and down, and up again, the hills continued on one after the other, seemingly without end. With all these

hills I had to shift the gears very often. This is where I ran into a big, big problem.

I was not being as careful as I should have been. Coming up one very steep hill, I didn't shift to a lower gear soon enough. As the tractor started losing power, it began to shudder. In my haste to find a lower gear, I missed and the gears made a terrible grinding sound. Then the tractor stopped.

Now, before I go on with the story, there are several things you should know about the little old tractor I was driving.

First of all, it was old and, although we had taken good care of it, its brakes did not work as well as they should have, and they slipped easily.

Secondly, the battery was dead, which meant that by itself, the tractor could not start.

So, there I sat on a steep hill, with almost no brakes, and no way of starting the tractor again.

*God, the One who
made us all, is always
watching over us.*



As you can imagine, this was not a good place to be. If I didn't do something quickly, the brakes wouldn't hold, and the tractor would start rolling back down the hill. This would most likely end with a crash into the ditch! The only way to start the tractor was to jump down to the ground, run back to the trailer, grab the starter pack that we kept there, run back to the tractor, fasten the starter pack to the battery, jump back onto the tractor, and then start it. However, all that would have taken much too long and if I had let go of the brake, the crash that I had feared would have happened. Realizing the desperate situation I was in, I did the only thing I could do—I prayed with my whole heart.

I prayed once and tried to start the tractor. It coughed and choked a little but wouldn't start. So, I prayed again; this time the starter jumped a little, as did my heart. But, just as quickly, it

died again. For a third time, I sent a desperate prayer heavenward. By now the brakes were slipping... slipping... and slowly but surely the tractor was backing toward the deep ditch at the bottom of the hill. I jabbed the starter button, and the tractor jumped to life with a roar and a cloud of smoke! I quickly shoved the gear shift lever into gear and I was on my way again! As I chugged along, the sky was still blue, the birds were still singing, and the wind was still blowing, but most of all I was safe. With a thankful heart I breathed a prayer to God, for it was He and He alone, who had saved me from crashing on the hills of Holmes County that sunny day in August. I hope this story will help us remember that God, the One who made us all, is always watching over us.





Vaccines— *the Cost of Security*

Wolf Miggiani MD
Millersburg, OH



13 Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. 14 And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses. 15 And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work. 16 And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah. 17 They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. (Nehemiah 4:13-17)

In the time of Nehemiah, the threat of attack was ever present, making it necessary to defend God’s people. The plan was simple—build the wall so the people could live in peace and safety. How would they do it? Families were responsible for repairing their own section of the wall (Neh. 3). While some worked, exposing themselves to danger, others stood guard. The enemy, seeing that “the breeches began to be stopped”, became “very wroth.” (Neh. 4:7) Nehemiah encouraged his people, saying, *Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses. -Nehemiah 4:14* Eventually, the enemy gave up, *.. for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God. -Nehemiah 6:16*

What does this have to do with vaccines? A lot. Remember herd immunity? That’s the principle whereby, most people

in any given community get vaccinated, thus providing protection for the unvaccinated and the vulnerable (or immune-suppressed) from specific diseases by not allowing those diseases an opportunity to “catch on fire”. An infectious disease that finds its way into that community from the outside would quickly die out if it could not easily find another person to infect. On the other hand, if some were exposed and there was a lack of herd immunity, an infection would find that community defenseless, and many who were not immune would contract that disease.

Here an important point needs to be made—individual immunity against a specific disease has nothing whatsoever to do with a strong immune system, nor with diet, nor with cleanliness. Anyone who has a strong immune system, eats healthy, takes special supplements, and practices the best personal hygiene is still not necessarily immune to certain

diseases. Diet, cleanliness, and overall health (including a person's genetics and strength), ARE important in determining the susceptibility of a person to a disease, and the severity that they may get it—perhaps even if they will survive. But do not be confused—susceptibility and immunity are not interchangeable—having a strong immune system is not the same thing as having immunity. Any person's body that is not immune (whether naturally, through past exposure, or through vaccines) will need to go through the process of fighting against any given disease that they are exposed to. It is through this process of the body fighting against the virus or bacteria, that antibodies are normally developed in that person. This (the antibodies) is what makes them immune. Thus, the only way an individual can be immune to a specific disease is for them to develop antibodies against that disease, either through a personal battle with that disease or through tricking the immune system into thinking it's under a full-scale attack through the use of a vaccine (a killed or weakened form of that disease) and thereby stimulating the body to produce antibodies.

Herein rises the confusion about vaccine-induced health issues. The only way antibodies can develop in an individual's body is through the process of fighting off the disease (or the perceived disease with vaccines). It is while the white blood cells are fighting off the disease that a fever or other physical complications will arise. This is NOT caused by the vaccine, per se, rather it is a natural result of the body fighting against the virus or bacteria of the disease they have just been exposed to through the vaccine, and therefore, it (the fever or any other similar physical malady) is a necessary part of the process of developing the required antibodies. (i.e. Any time white blood cells are dying off while fighting a disease, that person's body will develop a fever or some other normal side effect as a natural result of that battle with that disease.) In rare instances, as you will see, this process of developing the antibodies can cause unintended complications.

Immunity is like the wall that surrounded Jerusalem. Nehemiah found the city wall in shambles, which is like a community which has no herd immunity. The most vulnerable (the children and the elderly), were defenseless and at the mercy of the enemy, if an attack were to come. Eventually, the walls (of immunity) of the city stood strong. This would have been accomplished by the community gaining herd immunity either through directly fighting the disease or through vaccinations. There would still be vulnerable people (the immune-compromised—such as chemo recipients, the very old, and the very young), but they would be able to stand in the middle of the city and be defended by the wall. Another example of “herd immunity” is a herd of strong musk oxen standing in a circle, shoulder to shoulder, facing the wolves, with their young protected in the center.

Where there were breaches in the wall, there was an opportunity for the enemy to gain entrance and wreak havoc on the weak who were inside. This is like non-immune individuals (often unvaccinated) seen as breaches standing in that wall, potentially allowing the enemy to enter. This is why those who unquestioningly advocate the use of vaccines ask, “Why don't you (those who do not vaccinate) fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses (not to mention, your communities)—by getting vaccinated?!” It's a fair question.

The Bible does not say how many builders were attacked, or how many died for the cause of building the wall. According to cold statisticians, any such losses would be considered isolated cases of “collateral damage”—casualties that were unfortunate yet necessary for the greater good of protecting the community. In the case of our analogy (of the wall of Jerusalem and the wall of immunity) those who were injured and killed while building the city wall, would be the same as those who were injured, or those who died, while building the wall of immunity (i.e. those killed or injured by vaccines).

It is here that our analogy breaks down, and where we can identify the chasm of discord between those who are unquestioningly either pro-vaccination or anti-vaccination. Surely, any godly man in Nehemiah's day would have risked his life building that wall to protect his family and his community. But that's the catch, to keep the analogy true—it is not the men who must build the wall of herd immunity, it is the children! Yes, the parents may be like those standing guard over the workers (by providing good nutrition, medicine, and access to good healthcare), but it is the workers (the children receiving the vaccines) who are exposed to the attacks and placed in the line of danger (vaccines). While godly parents would gladly take ALL the risk of being both guard and builder, our analogy will allow ONLY the children to be exposed to the risk. This is why so many parents are unquestioningly anti-vaccine. Not anti-vaccine out of a sense of neglect to protect the community, but anti-vaccine out of a sense of need to protect their children.

It would make little sense to accept a high risk to the workers (our children) through vaccines that are potentially dangerous, for a disease that has a low risk of long-term problems. Likewise, it would bring clarity to the confusion if it was clear that the risk to the worker was low (with a “safe” vaccine), and if it was clear that the disease was almost universally deadly. So where do we go from here to get more information to help us decide if vaccines are worth the risk?

Here is one last concept to consider before I answer that question. Many modern epidemics have started in plain communities, because the “Herd Immunity” was weak.

The largest outbreak of measles in the U.S. that occurred in decades started when a missionary from a plain church brought back a case of the measles from the Philippines in 2014. Hundreds were affected (382 cases), some with permanent complications, however, none died (even though there are still cases of deaths in the U.S. due to measles).ⁱ Normally, there have been an average of about 63 cases per year.ⁱⁱ The last case of a wild strain of polio in the U.S. was in an Amish community in 1979, which left 10 people paralyzed. In 1991, the last large rubella outbreak (across six states) resulted in hundreds being infected. Of those, 89 Amish and Mennonite women contracted the disease while they were in their first trimester of pregnancy. Ten children (possibly 7 more) were born with multiple serious birth defects associated with Congenital Rubella Syndrome.ⁱⁱⁱ There are normally less than 10 cases of Rubella annually, with an average of less than 1 case of CRS per year—for the entire country.^{iv} I mention these cases only to point out that there is a vulnerability that may not be recognized in a community of less than one million plain people that is relatively small in size when compared to a population of 325 million in the entire U.S. Certainly, there are other outbreaks not associated with the plain communities, such as in colleges and other schools, because vaccines do not produce 100% immunity, and sometimes the immunity wanes over time.

VAERS

So how do we know more about the risks of vaccines? There is a national “Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System” started in 1990. Here (vaers.hhs.gov) any person can access information concerning adverse effects of vaccines. Healthcare workers are required to report adverse reactions to vaccines, however, ANYONE (even parents) can voluntarily file a report. Its main purpose is to monitor vaccine safety. For example, if there is a batch of vaccines improperly or unsafely manufactured, and a cluster of complications occurs, such a reporting system would aid in discovering and isolating the problem quickly and accurately. Likewise, it can be used for monitoring adverse reaction “trends” due to the nature of the vaccines. VAERS is co-managed by both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), thus providing multiple forms of oversight so it is not so easily influenced by corporate dollars and special interests. Finally, VAERS is open to the public, so you do not need to be a professional to access the data, you can see it for yourself.

One study showed that from 1990-1993, there were 54 million doses of the oral polio vaccine given. The oral polio vaccine uses a weakened virus, but is easy to give, since it is mixed with sugar water and easily given to the child by mouth. It is very effective, but in rare cases it can

CAUSE polio. Over those 3 years, there were seven cases of vaccine-caused polio, making the risk of getting polio from the vaccine about one, in eight million.^v Because the last case of natural (as opposed to vaccine-caused) polio in the United States was in 1979, this average of two cases of polio per year was considered too high. So, because of the recognition of these numbers, the vaccine was switched to the injectable form, since it is a dead virus, and thus cannot cause polio.

Why vaccinate at all? The idea is to eradicate polio (throughout the world), in the same way that smallpox was finally eradicated, (with the last case being in 1977). The World Health Organization estimates that there has been a 99% reduction in the cases of polio, from the beginning of its worldwide eradication program that started in 1988, with 350,000 cases in that year, to just 22 cases in 2017. They estimate that 16 million people have been spared from contracting polio-paralysis during this time due to this effort. If there is even one infected individual, there is still the potential for it to rekindle a bonfire that can spread across continents, until the last case is smothered out by herd immunity.

Still, there is a cost. If you’re one of the 16 million who never got polio but would have gotten it had it not been for the vaccines, chances are that you will not have a full appreciation of what you were spared from, especially if you are one or two generations removed from the time when polio was commonplace. Yet, if you are one of the average of two children per year in the U.S. who got the vaccine-associated polio, you would certainly be reminded of that fact every time your friends went out to run and play. (While the oral polio vaccine is no longer used in America, it is still widely used in the developing nations, due to its ease of use and its acceptability. Therefore, vaccine-associated polio in America is now practically nil.)

The fact is that for many, but (not all) childhood vaccines, you are primarily vaccinating to protect the community, not your individual child. This may also be one reason why numerous plain people look at the medical community with some suspicion. There is an expectation that a doctor is always an advocate of the individual patient. However, regarding the issue of vaccines, they are the advocate of the community first, then of their own patient second. In the vast majority of cases, there is no conflict, but when complications occur, patients and their families will rightly ask, “Was this avoidable?”

Many people believe there are more complications than “only” catching the disease, bad as that might be. This is true. Frequently there are minor complications (for example, a fever and a rash), that do not cause long-term problems. These are not unexpected in a body’s immune system that is “gaining experience” in fighting a mini-battle against the

target organism. This is how immunity works; that way if the body “sees” it again (by being exposed to someone that is sick with the actual, culprit organism), the person’s body will immediately recognize it and defeat it before it gains a foothold. Then there are complications that are very scary to both parent and child, but are most often only time-limited, and don’t recur, such as febrile seizures. Finally, there are the complications that cause permanent disability and death. This is where we will now focus our attention.

The table below shows us the VAERS data for each organism over the last 10 years, and the complications for each. For simplicity, I will only address childhood vaccines covering children up to the age of 18 months. Some of you have questions concerning things like mercury, aluminum, and other potential causes of reactions. Here I will not go into every possible cause—that will need to wait for another time. This is because the statistics listed cover ALL causes, hypothetical and real alike, yet the numbers all remain the same. I will caution however, to not draw the wrong conclusions ahead of time, since as we will see, you can’t believe everything you read (or see).

Average Annual Vaccine Complications 2007-2017 VAERS Cases Reported [See Table 1]

Notice that some vaccines are “better” (or less bad) than others. Why is that? I put the vaccines in a certain order. They are not in alphabetical order, rather they are in the order that a child would receive them. Hepatitis B is given at birth, and the Hepatitis A, Varicella (Chicken Pox), and MMR (Mumps, Measles and Rubella) vaccines are first given at 12-15 months. Notice how the first vaccines (like the DTP) tend to be more “lethal”? There are a couple of reasons for this.

First, it seems to be a vaccine that tends to have more complications, mostly minor, such as fever or a rash. For this reason, it was reformulated to a DTaP in which the “a” stands for “acellular,” meaning that it was a more purified product. Second, and probably most importantly, the COD (Cause of Death) was most commonly due to SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). SIDS is a condition where the baby goes to sleep and does not wake up. It most commonly happens in the first half year after birth—just when the “most dangerous”

Table 1

Average Annual Vaccine Complications 2008-2017
VAERS Cases Reported

	Life Threatening Conditions	Permanent Disability	Total Serious Cases	Total Cases of Vaccine Associated Deaths	Total Cases That Resulted In Death, Disability or Life Threatening Conditions
Hepatitis B	Rounded to 0	0	Rounded to 0	12	12
Rotavirus	2	Rounded to 0	2	29	31
DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis)	2	1	3	20	23
Hemophilus	1	Rounded to 0	1	20	21
Peumococcus	2	1	3	37	40
Polio	Rounded to 0	0	Rounded to 0	3	3
Influenza	1	0	1	6	7
Hepatitis A	Rounded to 0	1	1	3	4
MMR (Mumps Measles Rubella)	1	Rounded to 0	1	4	5
Varicella	1	Rounded to 0	1	4	5
Totals	10	3	11	Adds to 138, but is actually 49 for ALL vaccines*	151*

Source: <https://vaers.hhs.gov/data.html>

* Sometimes there are up to 8 diseases being vaccinated against, all at the same time (at the 2 month visit, for example). When a complication arises, which vaccine did it? The way VAERS is designed, the complication is assigned to each and every entity or vaccine. That is why the Death Totals for the individual vaccines add up to 138, when it is actually 49.

vaccines are given. For us in the medical field, it has been a perplexing issue, as we have not been able to isolate the exact cause. The best we can say is that it usually is associated with parents who smoke, the sleeping position (lying on the belly) of the baby, and big, deep fluffy blankets.

There are up to six doctor’s visits and six sets of vaccines that are recommended in the first 18 months (78 weeks) of a baby’s life. If a child has a reaction to a vaccine, it will generally occur within the first week of receiving it. Therefore, there are only six weeks out of the first year and a half, (for a child who is receiving the full course of vaccines), that are within 1 week of receiving a vaccine. If SIDS occurs randomly, there should be about 6/78ths (or about 8%) of SIDS deaths occurring within one week of receiving vaccines. If it is more than 8%, then yes, the vaccines are VERY suspect. If it is 8% or less, then

any SIDS deaths that occur within one week of receiving vaccines are no more than what would be expected to have occurred randomly (though no less tragically).

So, what are the numbers? SIDS rates actually have been reduced by more than half, over the last 20 years, simply by placing the baby on his or her back to sleep. Still, in 2016, there were about 2,700 cases of SIDS, or an unknown reason for death. So, 8% of this number is about 216 cases of SIDS that would be expected if SIDS were to happen randomly, and not associated with vaccines. As it turns out, over the last 10 years, there have been an average of only 49 deaths (not 216 as expected) each year from ALL vaccines combined, for children up to 2 years old. Does this mean that vaccines protect against SIDS? Probably not, but it does mean that vaccines are less likely to be the cause for an extraordinary number of deaths. (Remember, VAERS is designed for the early detection of adverse effects, not for finely accurate statistics.)

Yet deaths do happen, and life-threatening conditions and permanent disabilities do come about because of vaccines. Nobody can deny this, but what is the alternative? The VAERS system reports an average of 11 cases per year of vaccine-associated, life-threatening conditions and permanent disability from ALL childhood vaccines. This

includes anaphylaxis (airways closing off), brain infections, bowel obstructions, and just about anything else bad that could happen. Personally, I believe the actual number may be significantly higher than this. To be on the safe side, let's assume this number is WAY under-reported, by a factor of 10. If this is the case, (and it may well be), there would be 110 serious, but not death-causing, cases annually. Complications that are serious tend to have "reporting sensitivities" that are close to the actual number, while minor complications are very under-reported. Thus, our estimate is likely an over-correction, but it will help to give clarity, as you'll soon see.

When I first became a Christian, I needed to answer doubts I had about the doctrine of non-resistance. What clinched it for me was when one of my fellow aircrew members (a Christian), while trying to dissuade me, asked who would fight the wars if soldiers, sailors, and airmen all became Christians and decided not to fight. No sooner had the question left his mouth than the answer seemed quite clear—if nobody fought, there would be no need of wars. Of course, we are all born with the sin of Adam, so that is not likely to happen. But the point is that Christians make the world a better place for all, if they stick to their sound doctrinal convictions, no matter the cost.

Table 2

TABLE. Estimated number of illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths prevented by routine childhood immunization for selected vaccine-preventable diseases among children born during the Vaccines for Children era — United States, 1994–2013

Vaccine-preventable disease*	Cases prevented (in thousands)		
	Illnesses	Hospitalizations	Deaths
Diphtheria	5,073	5,073	507.3
Tetanus	3	3	0.5
Pertussis	54,406	2,697	20.3
<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type B	361	334	13.7
Polio	1,244	530	14.8
Measles	70,748	8,877	57.3
Mumps	42,704	1,361	0.2
Rubella	36,540	134	0.3
Congenital rubella syndrome	12	17	1.3
Hepatitis B	4,007	623	59.7
Varicella	68,445	176	1.2
Pneumococcus-related diseases [†]	26,578	903	55.0
Rotavirus	11,968	327	0.1
Total	322,089	21,055	731.7

* Vaccines were considered as preventing disease for birth cohorts born in all years during 1994–2013 except for the following, which were only in use for part of the 20-year period: varicella, 1996–2013; 7-valent and 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccines, 2001–2013; and rotavirus, 2007–2013.

[†] Includes invasive pneumococcal disease, otitis media, and pneumonia.

Source: Benefits from Immunization during the Vaccines for Children Program Era — United States, 1994-2013, MMWR

Is it then unfair to ask ourselves the question, “What would happen if we all forsook vaccines? Would we, as our brothers’ keepers, leave the world, (of which we are the stewards), a better place?” Naturally, these are personal thoughts and positions, not approaching that of doctrine, but in 2014, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) took it upon themselves to answer that very question. Their findings are shown in Table 2, where it is claimed that the number of American people saved by vaccines since 1964 is 731,700. Note that the numbers in the table are in the thousands of cases.^{vi}

However, the numbers in Table 2 assume 1960s treatments and technology. Plus, some diseases, such as diphtheria, could be managed much easier with today’s medicines and technologies. Diphtheria is caused by a bacterium that infects the throat, giving it a “Bull Neck” appearance. The airway can close as a gray membrane closes it off. This membrane cannot readily be scraped off since it bleeds easily. Another complication is that toxins which are produced can lead to paralysis and heart failure. Many years ago, anxious parents exposed their children to turpentine and tar fumes in a desperate, yet futile effort to cause them to cough up the membrane. Medically, it was initially treated with antitoxins, developed at the beginning of the 20th century. (Remember the children’s book about Balto, the sled dog, that ran antitoxin to save the children of Nome, Alaska?) Before the antitoxin, death rates for diphtheria were about 50%. Afterwards, rates were still as high as 20% in children under five years-of-age, and in adults over 40, but 5-10% for the rest—even with the use of antitoxin and antibiotics.^{vii} This vaccine, introduced on a large scale in the 1930s, took a high of 200,000 cases per year in the 1920s, down to 2 cases per year over the last 14 years (in the U.S.). However, the World Health Organization (WHO) reports that there are still tens of thousands of cases per year (worldwide), and thousands of deaths. We know the numbers didn’t decrease mainly due to good sanitation and nutrition, because the rate of disease has diminished greatly in areas of the world that are still in extreme poverty yet have used vaccines.

Deaths due to measles also decreased worldwide from about 546,800 in the year 2000 to 114,900 in 2014, largely due to an MMR initiative by the World Health Organization. It (WHO) claims 17.1 million lives were saved during that time. (The accountants among you will note that this number does not come close to matching the data. It’s probably more like 3-4 million unless they are correcting for vast underreporting due to poor reporting sensitivity, which they don’t mention.)^{viii} Yet big numbers of sick and dying children are real. When I did medical mission work

in Africa, I witnessed a country in which one out of five children died before they were five years old—mostly from these very preventable childhood diseases.

But the problem I have with the estimates in Table 2 is that realistically, with modern technology, (while it is best not to get the disease in the first place), medicines and supportive measures would most certainly reduce the mortality rate to much less than the 10% they estimate. In 1995, in the wake of the Soviet Union collapse the Kyrgyz Republic faced an epidemic of diphtheria; but even with their strained resources, they saw only a 2.8% mortality rate, which is close to a quarter of the CDC estimate.^{iv} So even if the numbers of these cases are exaggerated, those spared in America by vaccines are still in the hundreds of thousands.

Which brings me to this point, I believe some people are suspicious of government statistics and medical agents (doctors pushing vaccines) because of somewhat exaggerated statistics (though 2.8% of five million avoided-diphtheria cases is still a big number). In science, when trying to convince a skeptical crowd, speakers use conservative numbers.

When speaking to a receptive crowd, or if the speaker thinks the audience isn’t smart enough to figure it out, he will use inflated numbers to make the case more impressive. There is too much bullying by those in the medical community—too much trying to convince parents that their child will be stricken with all sorts of diseases if they don’t get vaccinated.

This may be true for some vaccines, but let’s remember, most childhood vaccines are given to protect the community, not the individual child. Most unvaccinated people will be protected by herd immunity (if there are enough immune people in their home community), unless they or one of their acquaintances travel to areas of the world (as missionaries sometimes do) where the disease is still common. I believe that parents will make wise decisions, when faced with realistic data, and considering their family situations.

There is a chart available for download on the CDC website that provides a wealth of information, but it is too big to put in this article. This is the link: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/downloads/appendices/appdx-full-e.pdf> where it is available. I will draw from this chart to develop some points for comparison. For clarity, let’s look at those diseases for which there is still no medical cure once contracted. Let’s look at just ONE serious complication (encephalitis) from just ONE disease (measles). The chart says that vaccines prevented about 71 million (look closely, it’s not 70,748) cases of measles over 20 years (or about 3.5 million cases per year). The

There is too much bullying by those in the medical community...

rate of encephalitis (a brain infection due to measles) is 1 in 1,000 cases, so there would be about 3,500 anticipated cases of encephalitis annually (with permanent disability or death) if there were NO vaccine (or herd immunity). Of these 3,500 people with encephalitis, 80% (or 2,800) will not make it (they will die!), and the remainder (700) will be severely disabled.

Let's compare:

Present Conditions—With Vaccines

- 49—Deaths per year, due to ALL childhood vaccines (as reported by VAERS)
- 110—Average yearly cases of ALL permanent disabilities & life-threatening conditions DUE to ALL vaccines

Estimated Conditions—Without Vaccines

- 700—Average yearly cases of ONE Complication (encephalitis) from ONE Disease (measles) if there were no vaccinations
- 2,900—Deaths per year, due to measles alone if there were no vaccinations
- 600—Average yearly cases of congenital rubella (babies with birth defects) if there were no vaccinations
- 62,200—Average yearly cases of polio if there were no vaccinations

That's a lot of numbers. You can draw your own conclusions as well as I can. Someday, scientists should be able to take a person's own immature stem cells by a simple blood draw, and program (or "school") them to produce antibodies for any number of diseases. It seems like there is a greater acceptance among plain people regarding stem cells (especially if they are their own). The vaccine issue will then become obsolete, because the side effects, minor and major, will be greatly diminished, if existent at all, while offering greater protection for both the individual AND society. Until then, we have the opportunity, Lord willing, to eradicate other diseases (next is polio, where two out of the three wild polio strains are gone forever—only Type 1 remains).

So, in the jumble of all these numbers, it is important to remember that there are real human lives at stake. We need to recognize the pain experienced by families in which a child is afflicted with a permanent disability, even death, due to a vaccine given to him or her. (This is no different from a situation in which a parent gives a medicine to his child, and the child undergoes anaphylaxis, and is severely injured or dies. In these situations, God recognizes the heart—the intent to do good.) At the same time, we also need to acknowledge that parents from developing countries mourn no less for

their children than we do for ours, that we are our brother's keeper, and that we do not live on an island.

In days of old, people used another term for "complication," when stricken with illness, disability, or death. The term they used was "the hand of God." For no matter how good or bad our science is, or no matter what decisions we think we make independently, He alone is sovereign. May God grant each of us wisdom as we consider His will in these matters.

In the next issue, I will discuss ways in which Christians have approached this difficult issue of vaccinations within their families and churches. We will discuss the rights the government has afforded us, and the trends in the future. I welcome your input and suggestions.

Endnotes:

- i. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/ohio-measles-outbreak-wasnt-caused-anti-vaxxers-amishtraveler-180954090/>
- ii. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6204a1.htm>
- iii. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00017145.htm>
- iv. https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/24/4/17-1540_article
- v. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1615747/?page=1>
- vi. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6316a4.htm>
- vii. <https://www.cdc.gov/diphtheria/clinicians.html>
- viii. <http://www.who.int/news-room/detail/12-11-2015-measles-vaccination-has-saved-an-estimated-17-1-million-lives-since-2000>
- ix. <https://www.uptodate.com/contents/clinical-manifestations-diagnosis-and-treatment-of-diphtheria/30/abstract/3>

Editor's Note:

There seems to be some question by a few of our readers asking why we have been printing articles on this vaccine issue. Originally our burden was to publish the concern that many vaccines are grown on tissue from aborted fetuses. This fact is referred to by some as "tainted vaccines" and in our minds develops cause for concern when evaluating this in view of Christian ethics. This is the reason we decided to publish several articles on the matter.



However, in order to have a proper balance and perspective on the matter, we saw the need to first establish the historical facts of why, where, and how vaccines first came into use. It also seemed necessary to show the medical and scientific reason that the concept of vaccines is imperative to the health of human beings, by eradicating diseases that had become epidemic due to a lack of proper treatment options.

From the beginning we had planned to only print three (3) articles: 1) the introduction, origin, and the ongoing need, 2) the “tainted vaccine” issue, and then 3) a conclusion on various options with recommendations for us as Christians living in a fallen world. Due to questions and concerns that were raised by some, we saw the need to print several more articles to help bring clarity to the issue. The bottom-line is that some wanted to place us in the camp of the unquestioningly PRO-vaccination camp and others thought we were in the unquestioningly ANTI-vaccination camp, depending who it was and which article they were reading. The truth is that we were not trying to promote either camp, rather share the pros and cons along with some recommendations, then leave it up to individual families and churches to decide what is right for them.

We encourage each one to do their own research on the information listed in this article using the links that are supplied. Finally, lest it is thought that this is a non-issue or an outdated one, it may help bring some reality and perspective to the matter to start following the current epidemic of measles in Europe. In the first half of 2018 alone, there were already over 41,000 cases of measles documented and at least 40 deaths to date this year. This is directly linked to a strong push in their society over the last number of years by those who are anti-vaccine, therefore, many of their population are not immune and the herd immunity in their communities is diminishing. This is not one or two sources trying to create fear-mongering. See for yourself all the news sources who have reported on this current problem—“Europe is in the midst of a massive measles outbreak... The deadly virus has spread to 21 out of 30 countries in the region, and the World Health Organization says cases have hit a record high, with more than Europe’s annual total during the past five years. Italy has recorded more than 2,000 cases of the deadly infectious disease this year — and it’s one of seven European countries with more than 1,000 cases. (The others are France, Georgia, Greece, Russia, Serbia, and Ukraine.) England’s National Health Service just announced that its ongoing outbreak involves 876 cases — more than three times the 2017 amount.”ⁱⁱ

One source stated, “Immunity rates in parts of Europe are lower than in some African countries.”ⁱⁱⁱ Another source wrote, “Most cases in England are being seen in

teenagers and young adults, the group born at the turn of the millennium when anti-vaccination fears exploded into the mainstream after now-retracted paper from disgraced physician Andrew Wakefield claimed it causes autism.”ⁱⁱⁱ While still another source had this to say, “Over 41,000 cases of measles have appeared in Europe this year, and the trend may spread to the U.S. if the anti-vaxxer community continues to grow... Forty have died from the European measles outbreak, a disease spread that was unthinkable less than a decade ago... Experts claim European countries hold higher populations of anti-vaxxers, adults who chose not to vaccinate their children for the main, preventable diseases... It’s the main factor leading to the outbreaks... It’s unacceptable to have in the 21st-century diseases that should have been and could have been eradicated.”^{iv}

These statements are the conclusions of the various health agencies who are desperately trying to reverse the problem. Are these logical conclusions? What would you do about a mass medical situation of this nature? Would you feel comfortable if your neighbor would travel over to one of these hotspots in Europe right now, then come back and invite you and your young children over for a Friday evening cookout next week? Christ taught that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. So, how do we make that practical? We’ll consider more about that in the next issue.

Endnotes:

- i. <https://www.vox.com/2018/9/20/17875238/measles-cases-europe-record-high-austerity>
- ii. <https://www.economist.com/europe/2018/08/25/anti-vax-fears-drive-a-measles-outbreak-in-europe>
- iii. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/measles-epidemic-europe-record-high-symptoms-vaccines-who-world-health-organisation-a8499491.html>
- iv. <https://www.vox.com/2018/9/20/17875238/measles-cases-europe-record-high-austerity>

More Links

- <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/20/health/measles-europe-record-who-intl/index.html>
- <https://www.newsweek.com/measles-outbreak-europe-warns-us-anti-vaxxers-possibilities-experts-say-1180192>
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-45246049>
- <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/kids-health/measles-outbreak-raging-europe-could-be-brought-u-s-doctors-n922146>



Genuine Relationships

Regina Martin
Huaral, Lima, Peru

“I wish I could ask other sisters at church advice on things I face with my teenage girls. But I’m scared to open my heart to the sisters here anymore; it doesn’t feel safe...” Veronica’s voice trailed off wistfully.

Washing and cooking for a dozen relief workers was strenuous work for Edna. And now newly-married Fonda, whom she had expected to help with the work, spent most of the day in her room. She appeared for meals, gingerly picked at the food, and scraped unwanted items onto her husband’s plate. The young couple took frequent jaunts down the street, where they purchased snacks at the corner convenience store.

I sympathized as Edna vented her frustration. “Are you sure Fonda doesn’t have morning sickness?” I wondered.

“No, from something she said, I’m sure it’s not that.”

Months later I met Edna again. “Did you hear that Fonda is expecting?” she asked. “I feel bad for the attitudes I had toward her while they lived with us. But why didn’t she tell me? I would gladly have tried to cook to please her, and it sure would have helped my attitudes.”

“God bless you!” Ruth greeted teacher Serena. “How are you doing?”

Serena shrugged and with a giggle replied, “Oh, just fine, I guess!”

After more small talk, Ruth plunged ahead. “This is not a big deal, but a few of us moms were wondering if you could give something other than candy for rewards in school. Between visitors, friends, and school, our children have been getting so much candy lately...”

“Sure, I’ll try to change that,” Serena promised. Another sister tapping on Ruth’s shoulder ended the conversation.

Several minutes later Ruth was shocked to see Serena wiping tears. Moving over, she slipped an arm around her and whispered, “Is it because of what I said?”

“Not really,” replied Serena. “It’s just that I’ve been feeling overwhelmed recently, and now this...”

Ruth’s mind swam. So why did she say she’s just fine when I asked? How do I know what she’s going through or when the right time is to share something if she’s always “just fine”?

All of us want to be “just fine.” But most of us simply aren’t. At least, not all the time. And that, my sisters, is just fine. Weakness is not shameful. Burn-out and morning sickness are not meant to be faced alone. Everyone needs advice and encouragement, not only the weak or the young in the faith. Yet we each bumble along under our heavy shell, scared to stick out our head and reveal our weakness.

Perhaps we think revealing weakness will be a discouragement to the brethren and a bad testimony to unbelievers. After all, isn’t our weakness a lack of availing ourselves of God’s grace? So, we spin our wheels harder and stuff those weaknesses further back under our “just fine” shell.

Is our veneer a blessing or a hindrance? I have been grappling with this question as I compare our fear of transparency with comments I’ve heard made by friends from a non-plain background.

“We all have weaknesses, and we won’t find help until we let them be seen, but some folks just seem so perfect, so angelic, that I’m uncomfortable around them.”

“Sister, please don’t be offended, but the life you live is too sublime. I lack so much. I feel I’ll need to change drastically before you’ll be comfortable with people like us. I admire you so much, but as I see my own needs I feel intimidated around you. We’d like to come visit again, but I’m afraid our children will misbehave, and you will be uncomfortable with us...”

How can we live lives of transparency?

I'll share a few Scriptures I found while searching for answers.

1. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. -James 5:16a

It is a command, not a suggestion. Confess... Your... Faults... But what will people think? Victory and healing often cannot be found until we surrender to this command.

"May I share some of our recent marriage bumps in my sermon about marriage tomorrow?" my minister husband asked. "Folks may as well know we're human." God was testing my transparency, and it didn't feel good. "Well, um, I guess."

Pray one for another. Humility is the key here. Are we transparent with God and with our husbands about our struggles? Are we humble enough to be honest in our prayer group or one-on-one with a sister, sharing our struggle and asking for prayer? I have missed blessings by being too proud to share or considering my problem too insignificant with which to bother others.

Our enemy offers cover behind the wall of insecurity and comparison. He provides a faultless, impenetrable helmet for those times we lift our head above the wall to take a quick peek at our sisters. Two of his favorite shields are labeled "Fear" and "They won't understand." We gaze enviously at those happy sisters who bless others and are blessed in turn. They must have never been hurt like we have.

2. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous. -1 Peter 3:8

How can we "be of one mind" if we haven't a clue what is in our sister's mind? Is there a sister you simply can't connect with? Try spending more time with her. Be compassionate, but not nosy. For the quiet, withdrawn sister, ask questions such as "What was the best part of your week?" or "I'm out of menu ideas. What are you cooking these days?" These will be more productive than "How are you?"

"Having compassion" is a result of God's love in our hearts and is a must to build trust and transparency. We cannot give what we do not possess. If our hearts are void of compassion toward certain sisters, let's go to the Source of love (our Lord) and pray for them. Amazing changes happen when we pray; mostly in our own hearts and attitudes. Praying helps us view our sisters through love-tinted lenses instead of the magnifying glass.

"Be pitiful." My Spanish Bible says merciful. Only as we realize how undeserving we are of God's grace to us can we in turn extend it to other sisters. Those who have been forgiven much, love much. -See Luke 7:37. Those who have been forgiven much will not run in horror when a sister begins to open up a can of worms.

Our enemy forms calloused hearts and sensitive skin; God creates sensitive hearts, but sturdy skin. Ladies often need to unload to get things off their chest. Let us give each other that privilege, and just listen. I thank God for sisters to whom I can unload, ones who listen to my complaints without taking me too seriously.

"Be courteous." One definition of courteous is "marked by respect for, and consideration of, others." I may not understand Fanny's health obsession, Lucy's fear of strangers, or Amy's passion for writing. That's fine. Those who view differences as something delightful will learn from each other and become beautifully balanced.

With whom should we be transparent?

Modern technology offers many aids in communication. I fear it has facilitated communication with those from afar, and hindered communication with those nearest us.

When grieved with my lot in life, when persevering through morning sickness, when feeling overworked and underpaid, it is much easier to pour out my woes to a sister from across the continent than to my sister who is my neighbor. I am not saying that is always bad.

Pouring out to neighbor 'Sue' is scary. We want to be brave and pull our share of the load; we don't want to be a complainer. If Sue knew we had company every day this

*If our hearts are void
of compassion toward
certain sisters, let's go to the
Source of love (our Lord)
and pray for them.*

week, she might send food over, then we'd feel foolish. If Sue tells her husband about a struggle or opinion I shared, he may come trotting to my husband with concerns. Ouch. The carnal response is to go by feelings and promise ourselves that, "I'm never telling anyone anything anymore!"

So, we unload our grievances to 'Alice' from afar. She sympathizes and promises her prayers. But she is at a disadvantage, especially when she is a stranger we mainly know through written communication. Alice does not know my besetting sins, nor what a wretch I was in the situation I'm reporting to her.

Sharing with Alice is not always wrong. At times those removed from our situation can give advice we desperately need, specifically those true friends who not only pat us on the back but also mete out stripes. But if the sisters we feel closest to are those from afar, beware.

Concerns shared by local sisters should hold more weight than condolences from sisters afar. Anyone can pat us on the back. But if we desire to see our blind spots, we need insights from local sisters who know us best.

Though phones and e-mail were non-existent in Bible times, perhaps this danger is older than we think, for the proverb writer advises, *...better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.* -Proverbs 27:10 Being open and transparent with neighbor Sue is scary; it even hurts a lot at times. But close, unfeigned friendships with our local sisters are worth the price.

Are there times it is best to not share what's on our heart?

Yes. Transparency is not speaking all we know to all we meet. Prudence is cautious about what is shared, and with whom. God's Spirit can help us discern when keeping our mouth shut is prudence, and when it's plain old pride.

Extra care is in order, when our heart is not in order. Opening our mouth when harboring a root of bitterness can transplant the toxic root to others' hearts.

Yet all of us face struggles we can share. When visiting with a young girl, share something you remember from when you were her age. Tell about your mistakes, even those that will make her laugh. Is a sister struggling with child training? Instead of loading her down with advice, share something positive you see in her mothering.

Transparency. Communication. So lovely; so difficult. So much potential for helping or hurting. Take off your helmet, sister. Stick your head out from under your shell. Soften your heart. Toughen your skin. It's dangerous, I know. But it's the only way to meaningful relationships.

So, "How are you, sister?" It is just fine, if you answer "just fine", ...if that is true. If not, please say otherwise.



Transparency. Communication. So lovely; so difficult. So much potential for helping or hurting.



While Life Is In the Prime Of Youth

Father, in my life's young morning,
Now I owe my all to Thee;
You deserve my best, yea, utmost,
For You've paid the price for me.

Life seems young, and looks inviting,
But I do not know the hour,
When this life shall cease forever,
And I'll see Thee in Thy pow'r!

I could waste my life, and squander,
All these blessings freely mine;
But I'd reap for it, and dearly;
How much better to be Thine!

On the altar, Lord, I lay down,
All my self, ambitions, pride.
Search me, try me, Saviour, cleanse me,
For I cannot from Thee hide.

Use me, fill me, and possess me,
With Thy Spirit so divine.
Leaving all earth's joys to serve Thee,
How I joy to call Thee mine!

Talents, thoughts, desires, and service,
Love's devotion, and my time:
Lord, they're Yours; I freely yield them
Up to You, and in life's prime.

Susan M. Stalter

The Heartbeat of
The Remnant

c/o The Berean Voice
P O Box 279
Shreve, Ohio 44676

Non Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Erie, PA
Permit #227

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Philippians 4:6