

AUTHENTIC

SPRING 2018 / ISSUE 4

MEN'S MAGAZINE

WE CHAT WITH WORLD RECORD HOLDER

Mary Wanhill

The faith and life of

CHRIS PRATT

WISDOM SERIES BY

Charles Price

MMM

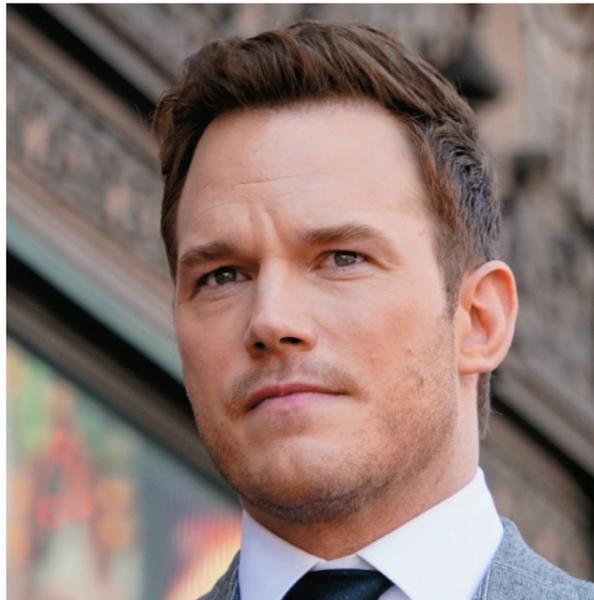
the Church's secret weapon!

PLUS

- Passionate Sons Ministry
- A Word to Homeschool Fathers
- The Great Snatch (The Rapture)



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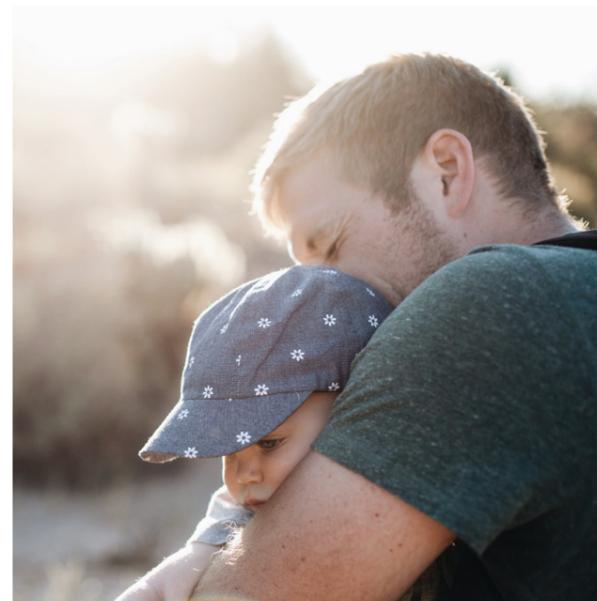
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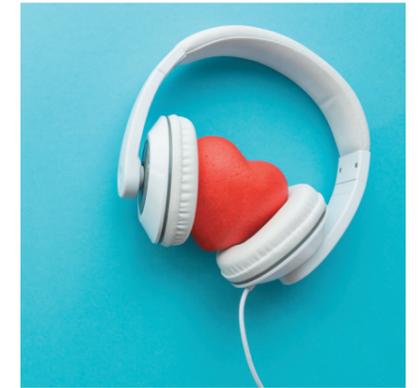
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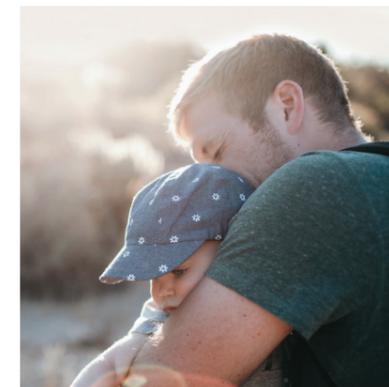
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WELCOME TO THE FOURTH EDITION OF

AUTHENTIC

May the 'Fourth' be with you!

I know I probably go on about it too much but how on earth can we be up to the fourth edition already? When I was 13 or 14 years old I remember an older gentleman telling me to 'enjoy life when you're young because when you get old the years fly by'. I don't think I took it too seriously at the time but, boy, that old fella was right!

Sitting down to write this editorial piece for each edition has become quite therapeutic for me. As you can probably imagine, a lot of work goes in to each issue and writing this usually means it's just about ready to zoom off to the printers!

I get to reflect on the things that have happened over the last three months. Which interviews we managed to get (and which ones we didn't). Which teaching pieces we used and which ones didn't make the cut!

Since our last issue we flew to Christchurch to represent Authentic Magazine at the Promise Keepers event there. We got to chat with loads of blokes about the magazine and more importantly, living an 'Authentic' life (you'll read later about an amazing group of guys I met).

Of course, behind the scenes there are also plenty of things going on. Authentic Magazine is now part of Authentic Christian Trust - an organisation with the express aim of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with the people of New Zealand. It's very exciting in many ways but it comes at a cost. Everything we do takes time! We're praying about how it all looks and we'd appreciate your prayers too. If we really want to be led by the Lord then we must listen to Him. Change is an inevitable part of life and can often catch us off guard, but when we focus on Jesus - the one that does not change - everything actually becomes much simpler!

I'll be in the UK when this edition hits the shelves and doormats, amongst other things I'll be meeting with Steve Legg, the founding editor of Sorted magazine and one of the main reasons we started Authentic! It'll be the first time I've seen him in many years (although we chat online and via email quite a bit).

It amazes me how I can look back over the years and see God's

handiwork in how He brought different people in to my life at different times and for different purposes. Steve is one of those people.

I first met Steve at a gig he was doing with Christian celebrities. He is a gifted communicator and hilarious to watch. He would usually do some magic tricks (don't worry folks, it wasn't real magic), a bit of escapology and a whole heap of comedy, then bring out a famous TV star or musician and ask them questions about their faith in Christ.

It was awesome!

Back then he was also running a Christian newspaper called 'The Son' but he had a vision to start a magazine for Christian blokes! Steve knew I was a 'marketing guy' so he asked me to get involved. I didn't do a great deal really but I now look back and realise that a seed was being planted. I mean, at that time I didn't even know I'd be moving to New Zealand, let alone starting a magazine. But the Lord did. Interesting, eh?

Well, as it's Father's day in September here in New Zealand I was thinking about my old dad. I'll see him while I'm over in the UK which, by God's grace, I've been able to every year since we moved out here ten years ago. I know it might seem a bit soppy but he's the father I'd love to be. Patient,



DAVE FIRTH WITH HIS DAD, JOHN.

kind, honest, gentle, hardworking, caring, generous, wise, focused, self-controlled and loving. Of course he isn't perfect - although I thought he was for many years - but he showed me (and still shows me) traits that I yearn to see in my own parenting. Thanks Dad. You rock!

For those of us that have been given the gift and the privilege of fatherhood, let's take some time to be thankful to the only 'good' father - our Heavenly Father! His love for us is bigger and deeper

than anything we could ever experience from an earthly father. And He shows us that love in and through His son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

'And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.'

Ephesians 3:17-19

■ Dave Firth: Editor of Authentic Magazine, Communications Manager, husband, father and follower of Jesus Christ

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We'd love to hear your feedback, ideas and input. You can reach out to us via social media or our website at www.authenticmagazine.co.nz



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So Busy, Too Busy.... Really Busy?

Written by Shaun Brooker

When did 'So Busy', supersede 'fine' as the stock standard answer to Joey's question, 'How you doing?'

time' and priorities. When we think about exercise, time with family, work for a non-profit, Church or sport so often the excuse we use for each of these things is time. Who can argue with that? As everyone knows, because we tell them frequently, we are busy people. In fact, every time we tell others we are 'so busy' we subconsciously (or consciously) reinforce to ourselves that we are 'too busy' for those other commitments we should tend to. Taking care of our families, eating better, exercising, getting right with God and making this world a better place without charging someone for it Are all things that we should find quality time for.

We tell ourselves and others the reason we cannot do such things is because of time, as everyone knows we have no control over time. The Earth spins on its axis and we get a day. The Earth orbits the Sun and we get a year. We are not God so cannot change time... therefore doing the things that are good for us are out of our control because we have no time and cannot do anything about it. That is the lie we need to believe. In reality the following is true;

Is exercise a priority? Yes for some it is and they do something about it. Is doing work for a non-profit to make this world a better place a priority? Yes, for some and they do something about it. You get the picture...

The next time you answer the 'How you doing?' question with the answer 'so busy' think of it a reminder that you need to change something. Otherwise, 'fine' isn't too bad an answer. | 

It is as if being 'busy' has become a medal of honour. As if being 'busy' makes us important. As if being 'not busy' is a bad thing. How long has it been since you have heard someone tell you that they are 'so busy'? Worse still when was the last time you told someone about how your life is, 'so busy'?

I have determined that I will try extra hard to never answer anyone with the answer, 'so busy'. Let me share why.

As leaders we make decisions all day every day, and how we spend our time is one of these decisions. Take a few minutes (if you have the time) to consider how this 'so busy' answer is interpreted by those following you.

Does it mean; too busy to have this conversation with you?

Does it mean I'm out of my depth? Maybe it means I'm not good at managing my time. The reality is that it is never interpreted as a good thing by those who rely on you, those who expect to be lead by you.

'I DON'T HAVE TIME', IS THE LIE WE TELL OURSELVES WHEN WE ARE TOO LAZY/AFRAID/IGNORANT TO ASK THE REAL QUESTION... 'IS IT A PRIORITY'.

If we find ourselves in a place where time management has taken a back seat, and the calendar has imploded with a life of its own, then it is time to recalibrate and decide what are the priorities. If the answer to prioritising is that everything is a priority then it is

time to learn about delegation, boundaries and what it means to be human.

The more we jam meetings, events and tasks into our calendar the less effective we become in ALL meetings, events and tasks we are assigned to or responsible for.

The simple test of whether you are too busy is whether you can follow Jim Elliot's advice. If you find yourself contemplating the next meeting or even tomorrow's

meeting in the now meeting, then it is time for a change. Worse again can you be 'all there' when you are with the kids, out on a date or when you 'relax'. If your schedule bleeds from one event into the next you need to change something!

PRIORITISING

I was listening to a speaker last year, sorry I can't think who (maybe I was too busy at the time to notice) when I was prompted about the connection of 'I don't have the

■ Shaun Brooker is the principal of Hamilton Christian School - he is a speaker and author on Leadership, Education and Technology. For more information visit www.christianeducation.org.nz



When Chris Pratt shares the love of God

By Carlos Rodriguez

It's hard to find an actor as likable as Chris Pratt. And in the last two years, he has become the top draw in Hollywood. From the leading voice in *The Lego Movie*, to the starting role in *Guardians of the Galaxy*, the dude is taking over a screen near you. His recent movies have dominated the box office and he's soon to become Harrison Ford's successor in the upcoming *Indiana Jones* reboot but...his faith in Jesus is as strong as ever!

(Evidenced by his recent speech at the MTV awards)

At the award ceremony in April, the 38 year old accepted the "Generation" award where he gave the following advice to young people:

"God is real. God loves you. God wants the best for you. Believe that. I do."

Here are some of the other "nine rules" (or life principles) that Pratt urged younger generations to follow:

"You have a soul, be careful with it."

"Don't be a turd. If you're strong, be a protector. If you're smart, be a humble influencer. Strength and intelligence can be weapons, do not wield them against the weak. That makes you a bully. Be bigger than that."

"Doesn't matter what it is, earn it. A good deed, reach out to someone in pain, be of service, it feels good, its good for your soul."

"Learn to pray. It's easy and it's so good for your soul."

"Nobody is perfect. People are going to tell you're perfect just the way you

are. You're not! You're imperfect. You always will be. But there's a powerful force that designed you that way. And if you're willing to accept that, you will have grace. And grace is a gift. And like the freedom that we enjoy in this country that grace was paid for with someone else's blood. Do not forget it. Don't take it for granted. God bless you."

Last year, Chris discussed a scare that he had when their newborn son was born nine weeks

prematurely and spent the first month of his life in an intensive care unit.

"We were scared for a long time. We prayed a lot," Pratt explained. "It restored my faith in God, not that it needed to be restored, but it really redefined it. The baby was so beautiful to us, and I look back at the photos of him and it must have been jarring for other people to come in and see him, but to us he was so beautiful and perfect."



"Our greatest fear should not be of failure but of succeeding at things in life that don't matter."

Even though doctors said their son, Jack, would live with disabilities due to the premature birth, God healed him in the NICU.

He shared his “born again” story with Esquire magazine... and it’s a good one:

“In Maui, about four weeks before I was discovered to go to California, I was hanging with my buddy. I wasn’t quite old enough to drink, so we got somebody to go in and buy us some alcohol.

This guy came by and was like, “What are you doing tonight?” I was like, “Oh, I dunno. I was just gonna wait out here, my friends are gonna buy me a bottle of Carlo Rossi and a sixer of Milwaukee’s Best Ice.

So he’s like, “Will you fornicate tonight?” I was like, “I hope so.”

“And drugs and drinking?” It’s like, “Most likely, yeah. Probably all three of those things. I mean, at least two of them, possibly all three.”

The guy was like, “I stopped because Jesus told me to stop and talk to you. He said to tell you you’re destined for great things.”

My friends came out, and I was like, “Hey, I’m gonna go with this guy.”

I gave my soul to Jesus within, like, two days. I was stuffing envelopes for his organization, Jews for Jesus. I’m not even sure, at that age—I was nineteen years old—I knew what Jewish was.”

A few days later, sober and filled with Christian Jew for Jesus vigor, Pratt returned to the beach. He ran into a friend, a pastor’s daughter who was smoking meth and “whoring around,” and told her



what he’d been up to. She asked him to get her to church, he called his new sponsor on a pay phone, and she became a Youth with a Mission pastor.

“I feel a little bit like my entire purpose was to get her.”

Chris says he sees how if a different man had approached him, things could have gone badly. But it was this man who was sent by God to save Pratt from jug wine, and then saved that woman from drug addiction.

A month later, while he was waiting tables at the Bubba Gump Shrimp Co., a director told him he was special and he moved to California to star in the 2000 horror comedy *Cursed Part III*.

Yes, that movie was a horrible start, but because of faith, hard work and good attitudes, this is now Chris Pratt’s mission, *“I have my eyes on the prize. The big picture is my wife and my son and I living somewhere other than L.A.,*

just being able to be a Boy Scout leader, drink beer on Saturday, go to church on Sunday, having fun. I could coach him in football. That’s the goal, and I need to do as many big movies as I can while there’s still time. Because you never know what’s next.”

Work hard. Play harder. Prioritize family. Go to church.

GOOD PLAN.

And maybe add the *sharing Jesus with the drunk kid at the beach* or sharing your testimony with the broken pastor’s daughter. You might be saving them from the stupidity of sin while loving them into the great destiny of God for their lives.

John Wesley put it like this:

“Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can.”
-John Wesley | 



■ Carlos Rodríguez is a pastor, a provocative preacher and author.

A word to homeschool fathers in nz

Having featured a challenging article about Christian Education in a previous issue, we thought it would be good to look at another challenging issue - homeschooling! Kris Baines shares his heart on this interesting and thought provoking topic.

When Christian homeschooling families are asked their reasons for educating their children at home, there are varied responses. Some say it is to “get out of the system” that would otherwise corrupt their children. Some argue that it is the most effective way to build and increase their child’s academic ability. Others may state a certain special need their child has, and therefore is catered for best at home. However, the least common response I hear is that as believers in Jesus Christ, we

have been given the primary responsibility for educating our children – simple as that. Taking this a step further, it is even more rare to hear a philosophy that is based on the leadership and responsibility of *the father* to disciple his children in the ways of the Lord, of which homeschooling is a natural by-product, or outflow of that conviction.

My sincere hope and prayer is that many fathers would read this article. But sadly, that won’t likely

be the case. Generally it seems to be mothers who read these articles. Many of those mothers will have a response with anything from “Right, my husband needs to hear this and I am going to make sure he does”, to “How can I respectfully encourage my husband to read these words without usurping his leadership or nagging”. I always prefer to suggest the “leave it open on the kitchen benchtop and pray” approach over the “wear him down with suggestions and if required withhold necessary food” approach!



“MY SINCERE HOPE AND PRAYER IS THAT MANY FATHERS WOULD READ THIS ARTICLE. BUT SADLY, THAT WON’T LIKELY BE THE CASE.”

There are 2 main areas in which I believe we are losing our way in regard to Biblical home education. Firstly, The Leadership of Home Education, and secondly, The Goal of Home Education:

THE LEADERSHIP OF HOME EDUCATION

One of the few exhortations about the responsibility of parenting in the New Testament is Ephesians 6:4...*“and you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”* The interesting thing about this verse, is the specific command towards *fathers*, in regard to their responsibility to train their children.

Then, in Deuteronomy 6:6-9 we have the “classic” and often quoted passage about the discipleship of children...*“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”* This passage is not simply a list of principles for a happy home. It is a strong call for obedience to His commands, and also to be *pass on those commands to our children*. It is a command that “assumes” the constant interaction of a father with his children, in daily

life, intentionally interpreting life through the lens of Scripture.

God has a pattern and a plan for Biblical family life, and that consists of a father, who bears and carries out the responsibility to lead his family, love his family, and disciple his family in the commands and instruction of God’s Word. Under that “big picture” it goes without saying that the home educating of children, should be a natural outflow of that structure.

“...GOD HAS A PATTERN AND A PLAN FOR BIBLICAL FAMILY LIFE, AND THAT CONSISTS OF A FATHER, WHO BEARS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO LEAD HIS FAMILY...”

This is not to say (and I want to be clear on this), that there is a difference in ability or worth between a father and mother who homeschool their children. But there is a difference in *responsibility*, and therefore *accountability* towards God. Look through the book of Proverbs and you will notice that nearly all of the instruction, is given in the context of a *father to a*

son. What does that tell us? Simply that it is again *assumed* that fathers are the primary authority in the discipleship of their children. Therefore, if homeschooling in essence is discipleship first (training children to know, trust and obey Christ in all things), and academics second (which is the Biblical pattern), does it not go without saying that fathers are to exercise leadership in the home education of their children?

Sadly, we see less and less of this today. Many mothers reading this know this to be true. Any fathers reading this, may not have even got this far! As difficult as it is to admit – as men, and as fathers, I believe we have largely abdicated our role as leaders in the home. This then affects us in the arena of homeschooling, because we have unbiblically separated discipleship from education. That leads us to the second main area in which I believe we are losing our way...

THE GOAL OF HOME EDUCATION:

When I make the statement “discipleship of character first, and academics second”, that might not make sense to some people. After all, we want our children

to be bright, competent and academically successful don’t we? Well not at the expense of godly character we don’t. *“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”* - Mark 8:36. Please don’t think I am saying the academic is not important. Not at all – I am just saying that it is *secondary*.

Is there anything more important to us, than the salvation of our children? If I compartmentalise my life in such a way that all I focus on is “bringing home the bacon”, or get distracted with career goals and personal hobbies at the expense of engaging myself in the discipleship and education of my children – what is it all worth? Fathers *must* be actively involved in the formation of godly character in their children, and therefore homeschooling should comfortably mesh and intertwine with the consistent practices of family worship, the study and application of Scripture, and purposeful involvement in the local church – all under the leadership and direction of the father.

How do you define success for your children? Is it doing well in exams and competitions? Is it achieving a good paying career with great prospects? Worldly success is allowable, and possible when it comes under submission to God’s will, God’s ways and God’s work, but it is never to be pursued to the *neglect* of God’s will, God’s ways and God’s work. Our greatest desire should be that they grow to understand and know the God of the Bible, are proficient in studying and applying His Word to their lives, and grow to be godly and wise, glorifying God with their lives.



IN SUMMARY

What does it look like then in real life, when a father takes leadership in the home, including home education? Well it doesn’t mean the father needs to quit his job, and take over all the activities his wife has been doing from day to day. It is quite right that the mother spends the majority of time with the children (particularly when young), and is their “primary” teacher. What does make the difference, however, is when a father accepts his leadership role within the home, and takes on board the *responsibility* of oversight and delegation, evidenced by meticulous engagement with his children in all areas of life. His wife may be far more able and equipped to educate their children in various subjects, but she is more happy and secure under the loving oversight and leadership of an involved husband who casts the vision, and “steers the ship”. When a father does this he is saying by his actions, “I am primarily

responsible before the Lord for how our children turn out, and I’m not just dumping that burden on your shoulders alone”.

For example, when a father comes home and sees his wife pulling out her hair from having a “bad day”, he doesn’t respond by saying “Hope tomorrow is better!” Instead, he takes responsibility in the situation, and sits down to talk and pray through a solution. In other words, the husband is aware of what is going on and he is actively engaged in the process as just one part of the whole of his discipleship efforts. He may have much less involvement when it comes to practically “delivering the goods” but his loving leadership has a presence that is felt throughout the day even when he is absent or working. When possible, fathers should be encouraged to include their children in their work/vocation. Some fathers have made great sacrifices to allow for this, and have reaped the benefits. |A



■ Kris Baines is a homeschooling father who lives in Rolleston, Christchurch with his wife Becky and their 6 children. In addition to his primary calling as a husband and father, Kris works as a paramedic, pastor, and composer, and also runs a ministry for Christian men called The Psalm 12:1 Project. Visit www.psalmtwelveone.org.nz to learn more



Why I chose to stay with my husband and his pornography addiction

By Focus on the Family NZ



We are privileged to be able present this exclusive guest article from a Kiwi wife and mother about the serious harms of pornography and the important lessons that she and her husband have learned about fighting back.

After hearing about the number of relationships ending as a result of porn addiction, I went in search of resources for spouses who are suffering because of it. My total dissatisfaction at the lack of sound practical advice that my search yielded has led me to write this post to share my experiences of how I dealt with my husband's porn addiction. I hope it can inspire you to help someone in your life who may be going through the same struggle.

We were teenagers in love, but only six months passed before I first discovered that my future husband had an attraction to something else - porn.

I had my suspicions that this was being kept a secret from me but I needed to be sure, so when the opportunity arose I searched his internet history and it immediately became clear that we had a problem.

With rage and disgust I confronted him. His initial response was denial, and then came an apology and a promise that he wouldn't do it again.

I trusted him and believed that our relationship was now back on

'WITH RAGE AND DISGUST I CONFRONTED HIM. HIS INITIAL RESPONSE WAS DENIAL, AND THEN CAME AN APOLOGY AND A PROMISE THAT HE WOULDN'T DO IT AGAIN.'

track and that it would continue to thrive.

But, as it turned out this was not the only time that I would have to deal with this issue, and each time his secret came out into the light I faced the same lies and empty promises.

As the years went by my trust completely diminished. I was paranoid, confused and became obsessed - to the point where I would turn down social events because I knew that if I stayed home it would lessen the chance he would give in to this addiction.

By this point I felt unworthy, like I was just not satisfying enough for him. How could I get through this? How could I compete with this world of lies and fantasies that was completely out of control?

Enough was enough, and so one day I gave him an ultimatum, telling him that if he did it again I would be out of his life forever.

Time healed the pain, my trust returned, he proposed, and we subsequently married - professing to love each other 'for better or worse.'

Then when I was in the early stages of my first pregnancy I came home from work one day to find my husband in a really foul mood. I knew straight away that something was up.

The next day when he left the house I built up the courage to search the Internet history, and

once again I was confronted with the stark reality of his porn addiction. I felt sick, and the pain and the anger immediately returned. How could he do this to me?

I was now pregnant so the thought of leaving wasn't an option. We were going to have to make this work.

Our baby was born and my love for my husband flourished as I watched him become a proud and loving father. When our baby was four months old I attended my Christmas work function and I remember being nervous, for this would be my husband's first time looking after the baby without me being present.

Those nerves should have been for another reason however, as I later discovered that our baby had slept the whole time I was out, thus leaving my husband bored and with the opportunity to look at porn.

I was heartbroken.

I needed help, so out of desperation I began talking with friends about the problem. Some tried giving advice like; *"you'll soon learn to get used to it, its the only thing you can do,"* or; *"there's no point in staying with him - if it's an addiction you're screwed!"*

I tried a Google search for advice, only to read the absurd suggestion that I should join in with him, because that way he wouldn't feel the need to lie to me about it anymore.

After sleepless nights, heartache, and prayer, I decided to research more about addiction to pornography.

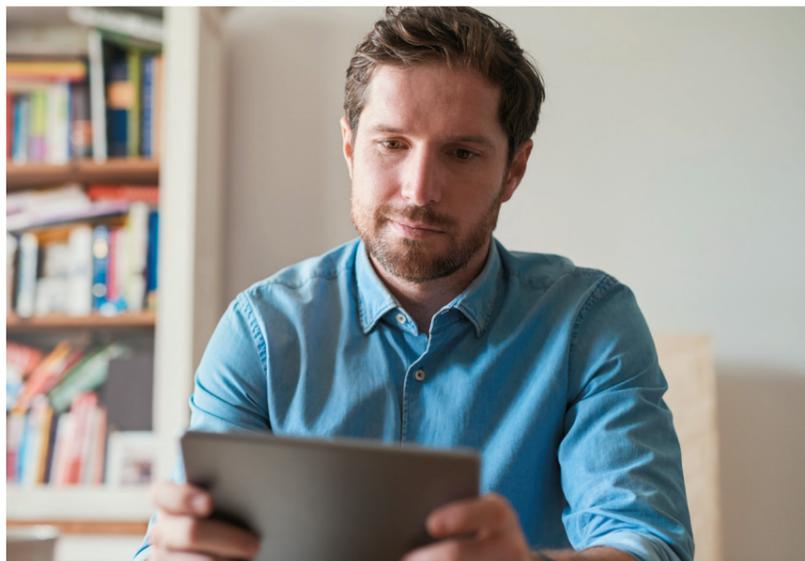
I learned about how becoming addicted to porn at the age my husband had first started viewing it can cause major effects on the brain's development, meaning that the urge to watch porn is similar to those addicted to drugs like heroin.

I then realised that I had been going about this all the wrong way.

My views quickly changed and my confusion turned into understanding. All of my fear, anger, stress and anxiety turned to a strength and determination to best support him in any way that I could.

We sat down and I told him it was okay, it wasn't his fault, and that we were not going to let this destroy our marriage and family.

This gave him the courage he needed to be honest about his addiction, and he shared with me about how bad it had really affected him in the past, to the point where the addiction would overcome him numerous times a day.



Focus on the Family New Zealand. www.family.org.nz

So, what have I learned about overcoming pornography as a result of this experience?

1. Without honesty there can be no success.

After opening up and being honest with me, my husband could then share with trusted friends and with other men in his prayer group about his struggle with pornography.

2. Keeping up our communication and sharing honestly with each other about how we are both coping is essential.

3. Attending church every week as a family is a non-negotiable.

It is there that we both receive the blessings and the strength from God that are necessary to continue to fight this addiction.

4. Limiting computer/phone/tablet usage is fundamental.

For my husband this meant leaving his phone in the kitchen and only using the computer if I was present.

'WE SAT DOWN AND I TOLD HIM IT WAS OKAY, IT WASN'T HIS FAULT, AND THAT WE WERE NOT GOING TO LET THIS DESTROY OUR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY.'

As a result of these steps, I have noticed an incredible change in my husband. He has more respect for me, he is a lot more patient with anything that the world throws at him, and he is just more content with life in general.

I am more in love with my husband than ever before.

We now have two children, and my hope and prayer is that they too will grow up to show the same strength that my husband has shown in his fight against pornography. I am proud of his courage and determination, and I truly believe that he is a stronger man because of his commitment to this struggle.

If you, your spouse or someone else you know is struggling with pornography, then I really urge you to visit the Focus on the Family NZ website, watch the videos, and encourage others to do the same, - fighting porn can be a tough and painful experience, but doing nothing and allowing it to overwhelm your life and relationships is a far worse prospect. |  

If you found this article helpful, please support the important work of Focus on the Family NZ - visit www.family.org.nz



GOD AT WORK

by Paul Curtas

BALANCE

When something or someone becomes out of balance, they become shaky, unsteady and able to fall. Be careful not to become out of balance at the workplace. How? First is by associating success at work to mean that one must achieve wealth and status there... and then conclude that these kinds of people are the ones God really uses to promote His kingdom work. Consider this... many of the success stories about people in the Bible that God used mightily did so in face of adversity and seeming loss (Hebrews

10:32-36). Money and position are not adequate measurements of success in God's scheme of things. Secondly, you can become out of balance when you assume that work is only a duty one does for people/company by providing a service needed... then we conclude it's all just incidental and means little to God and His ultimate plan. Consider this... though our calling to work is providing a service to

people/company in the name of Christ (Colossians 3:23-24), we are also being sent there to bear light in a place where there is darkness and where people are trapped in it and need to see God's great light (2 Corinthians 4:6). Have these or anything like them thrown you off-balance in the workplace? Consider: *"Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God"* (1 Corinthians 10:31)



GODtalk is a digital outreach-training resource for youth and youth leaders. It includes free online video content, and is purposed to see young people throughout our nation talking about the Christian faith again.



View the Godtalk website at www.godtalk.nz

A close Encounter with Mary Wanhill

By Dave Firth

She used to be known as 'Scary Mary' Perkins, which is a strange title for one of the smiliest and friendliest women you could meet. Mary has a love for life that is infectious and she literally sees every day as a gift. Actually there's nothing scary about Mary! I caught up with the 'Guinness World Record' holder about her battles on and off the racetrack, and about a ministry that is impacting young lives with the love of Jesus Christ.

I read that you had started out fixing bikes?

Yeah, so I worked at the motorbike shops. I'd learned to ride on the farm.

I'd been tormented all my life by my brothers saying 'don't be such a girl'

So I was a late starter on the dirtbikes - when I was about 15 I hopped on the farm bikes.

Just really loved it and got into motocross racing straight away, then sponsored quite quickly and it kinda of escalated quite quickly.

One of the great things about working in the dirt bike shops is if you got injured they were ok with it - and I really enjoyed it. And I got to work with Dale Williams, so he was quite an inspiration, and he ended up becoming the Mayor!

So you were brought up in a Christian home. Do you remember a time when your faith become personal?

Yeah I definitely do. When I was about 11 or 12 years old I remember the Bible in Schools teacher saying that you don't become a Christian just because your parents are. She said it has to be personal and you

have to ask Jesus into your heart. I remember that moment quite vividly and I asked Jesus into my heart and then I felt I needed to tell someone. So I went and told my mum, who was very excited.

So how did you end up flying through the air on a bike and breaking world records?

I loved motocross racing and competing but I've got this other side of me that loves pushing boundaries and I saw this freestyle motocross and these guys just launching off these metal ramps and it just stuck with me - I want to do that!

I remember my brother telling me that I'd never be able to do it so that gave me more inspiration.

I wanted to give it a go and I got an opportunity to try it out and I just loved it. So I carried on racing after I started the freestyle motocross but it got to the stage where I couldn't carry on with both and do both well. So I chose freestyle motocross because it was more me and gave me the opportunity to really express myself. Plus I loved the social aspect of the freestyle community and the friendships that came out of it.

So you used to be called Scary Mary - where did that name come from?

I bungee jumped dirtbikes - I was the first one to do that.

I have a Guinness world record for the longest jump for a girl - 159 feet

I was the first girl to really progress in the world of freestyle motocross.

I rode with the Crusty Demons (now known as Nitro Circus)

So did riding with a team called the 'Crusty Demons' cause you any problems?

Never really got too worried about what people thought - especially while I was doing it. I didn't identify with that name or that culture. I didn't shift my values to their value system. It really strengthened my in who I was. I'm not saying I was perfect. There were definitely times that I messed up when I was trying to prove myself or something.

But my mum had really grounded me in my faith and one thing I made myself do when I was on tours for three months at a time was actually read my Bible every day. Just something. And always have it with me. I think that was





something powerful along with all the prayers that were going on for me.

Are there many Christians in the sport?

There were a few but it did seem like they were compromising and it was interesting because some would claim to be but they were definitely on a journey of knowing who they were and finding out how that looked.

But it's interesting that in America now there's quite a strong Christian influence in the sport which is really awesome to see and since I rode the sport really has cleaned up, so it's a much healthier environment now.

What would you say was the hardest part of your career?

The hardest part was the expectations. To keep progressing, keep getting better, keep proving myself. Here I am, a girl, and my greatest fear that I've had to work through was failure.

As I've looked back on it there was never a sense of success and even accomplishment because of that fear of failure.

My world record I was never super proud of it because I knew that I

could do better. So I put it on my bike (her bike number is 159 - the number of feet she jumped for the world record) as a statement to myself to remind me that, yeah, I have actually done that and it is awesome!

But there was so much more that I wanted to achieve and wanted to do better but I know that would've never ended.

What was the craziest thing you've ever done?

Well, I didn't tell my parents when I went for the world record. They actually found out on the news! I'd gone to Australia to do and we actually did it at the Coffin Cheaters' compound in Perth - they were one of the big gangs over there.

In fact one of the things that I am actually proud of is that I out-jumped Evel Knievel. He only managed 141 feet but to be fair, his bike wasn't as good as mine (smiles).

You've had some bad injuries. What made you get up and keep getting back on the bike?

I feel like I'm a bit of an overcomer and I really like a challenge. I just want to overcome and embrace challenges. I just never had those thoughts that I couldn't do it.

How many bones have you broken?

Yeah, I think it's about 40 - I've got quite a bit of metal inside me and have had quite a bit taken out.

So things changed in 2009 when you had the big one. Talk us through what happened.

I was just training and had a bit of a lapse in concentration. I thought, "Am I in the right gear or the wrong gear?" so I tried to pull out of a jump but I still went over the side of

it and launched over the jump but I came down just before the landing pad but without momentum so I landed on the bike but I just shattered both my legs.

I rolled off the bike and told the guys that were there to call the ambulance. They were freaking out so I just told them what to do. I was pretty relaxed about it at the time.

So it was in the ambulance on the way to the hospital that I had this overwhelming sense of peace and God just said to me, "You've done enough - I want to use you" and it was a ridiculous sense of peace and I started crying. Joel was in the ambulance with me and he said, "What are you crying about?" And I said, "God just spoke to me!" It was a peace that carried me through the whole thing. And I never looked back.

So, at that point did you know God was calling you into youth ministry?

I'd had youth on my heart and had a desire to do youth ministry work. But I felt a real strong sense to go and study counselling. So I did that but I was still running freestyle events for young people because we had all the ramps and stuff and that was the start of Encounter camps.

Having to deal with cancer as well as watch your mum go through it as well must have been incredibly hard. How did you handle life during that time?

Yeah, it was about 4 years ago and I was driving home from speaking at a camp and I was exhausted. But I had the bike on the trailer and I wanted to go for a ride but I couldn't physically manage it. I realised something was wrong and a few weeks later I was diagnosed. My mum's cancer had just returned after about 3 or 4 years and it

came back with a vengeance and she passed away not long after that so it was a lot to process at the time. But there was definitely a peace about her passing that she was in such a better place. Her relationship with the Lord was just beautiful. But not that it's easy to lose someone but that's what changed my life, going through that experience. And knowing God's presence just carried me through that time.

I realised through this time that my biggest fear wasn't dying. It was that all the work I'd done building the Youth Encounter ministry wouldn't eventuate the way I thought it would. So that was really good for me to re-evaluate what was important to me.

The cancer was really just another challenge that I wanted to beat. But it was the beating of my greatest fears that was the hardest thing I've ever had to overcome. Not cancer. Not getting more world records. But my own inner sense of myself and my belief system about myself and who God was.

So tell us about Youth Encounter and what you're doing now?

At Youth Encounter we have a vision for seeing God's goodness displayed in people's lives - especially young people. That they would see who they are in the light of what God has done for them. We want to see them encounter their God-given potential. Like unclipping a dog off its chain. God really wants us to know who we are in Him. We're all searching for something. So first and foremost, we want people to know that they belong. To a community, to something greater than themselves.

So we use dirtbikes as a tool to facilitate this. And it's a tool that's very appealing, especially to young



guys (laughs). We don't seem to have any trouble pulling them in!

If someone is interested in this how can they get involved?

We have quite a strong volunteer programme with about 50 people involved in various ways, helping at camps, mentors, race team, the community gatherings we have - we have 9 camps a year now plus we run Dirtbike Encounter days every week with at-risk youth.

Yeah, there's lots to do, so if someone's keen to get involved the best thing would be to get in touch with Tracey, who manages all our volunteers and is always keen to get more people involved.

We would love it if people would pray for us and the camps. Financial support is important for us too. We're a charity and we do charge fees for our camps, but many of the youth don't have the resources to pay, so for example, we had 8 high-risk youth sponsored on the last camp because they didn't have the means to pay the fees.

We have been blessed with resources too. The motocross industry have been incredible. We've had a bike donated along with riding gear - it's been amazing.

What other ways do you fund the ministry?

Ah, well we've actually created a business called Encounter Success solely to generate revenue. It uses the same equipment and resources by offering team building events, corporate events, social activities, 'learn to ride' days and we're now doing guided tours as well. It all generates revenue for the organization without more overheads. Our team building days work with the same philosophy - showing people the love of God and helping them feel valued.

Life looks very different these days - any regrets?

Nah, although I do regret not landing a backflip on a dirtbike. but I have to give that to my husband. He has actually landed one.

But I think ultimately the greatest thing has been the personal journey God has taken me on and showing me His love for me. And that He is just so interested in me. That's the greatest thing of all and I love to share it with other people. | 

For more information about Youth Encounter visit www.youthencounter.co.nz or contact Tracey Christian - info@youthencounter.co.nz



The GREAT SNATCH?

by Chuck Missler

I often received questions concerning the “Rapture of the Church” and its apparent contrast with the “Second Coming” of Jesus Christ. Where does this view come from? Is the term “rapture” even in the Bible?

The mysterious event known as the Rapture is most clearly represented in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, which encourages the grieving Christians that, at the “great snatch,” they will be reunited with those who have died in Christ before them.

In verse 17, the English phrase “caught up” translates the Greek word *harpazo*, which means “to seize upon with force” or “to snatch up.” The Latin translators of the Bible used the word “*rapturo*,” the

root of the English term “Rapture.” At the Rapture, living believers will be “caught up” in the air, translated into the clouds, in a moment in time to join the Lord in the air.

There are many that still hold to the view that emerged in the Medieval church (Catholic and Protestant) that the “Second Coming” of Christ and the “Rapture” are somehow the same. Yet there seems to be a number of indications that these are distinct and separate.

There is also predicted an unparalleled “time of trouble” that Jesus called the “Great Tribulation.”¹ Many hold to the view that the Rapture of the church will occur after that specific period of time, thus, closely associating it with the Second Coming. This is known as the “post-tribulation” view.

POST-TRIBULATION VIEWS

There are at least four distinct types of post-tribulation views:²

1. Classic post-tribulationism (J. Barton Payne, et al);
2. Semi-classic post-tribulationism (Alexander Reese);
3. Futuristic post-tribulationism (George E. Ladd);
4. Dispensational post-tribulationism (Robert H. Gundry).

These differing views are based upon different approaches, presuppositions, and argumentation. In fact, they substantially contradict each other. As one insists on literalness, each of these views must embrace increasing difficulties. Those of us who cling to a very literal view of the Scriptures believe that the church will be removed prior to the tribulation period (the “pre-tribulation” view). Why? What is the basis for this view?

THE PRE-TRIBULATION VIEW³

The Rapture is characterized in the New Testament as a “translation coming” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17) in which the Lord comes for His church, taking her to His Father’s House (John 14:3). However, at Christ’s Second Coming with His saints, He descends from heaven to set up His Messianic Kingdom on earth (Zechariah 14:4-5; Matthew 24:27-31). The differences between the two events are harmonized naturally by the “pre-trib” position, while other views are not able to account comfortably for such differences.

A NEW TESTAMENT MYSTERY

Paul speaks of the Rapture as a “mystery” (1 Corinthians 15:51-54), that is, a truth not revealed until its disclosure by the apostles (Colossians 1:26). The Second Coming, on the other hand, was predicted in the Old Testament

(Daniel 12:1-3; Zechariah 12:10; 14:4). In fact, the oldest prophecy uttered by a prophet was given before the flood of Noah and was of the Second Coming! It was given by Enoch, quoted in Jude 14-15.

The movement of the believer at the Rapture is from earth to heaven; at the Second Coming it is from heaven to earth. At the Rapture, the Lord comes for His saints (1 Thessalonians 4:16), while at the Second Coming the Lord comes with His saints (1 Thessalonians 3:13).

**"STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH."
2 TIMOTHY 2:15**

POST-TRIBULATION PROBLEMS

One of the strengths of the pre-trib view is that it is better able to harmonize the many events of end-time prophecy because of the above distinctions. There are some awkward difficulties with the post-tribulation view:

- 1) The post-tribulation view requires that the church be present during the 70th week of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27), even though it was absent from the first 69. This is in spite of the fact that Dan 9:24 indicates that all 70 weeks are for Israel. We believe the church must depart prior to the 70th week, before the final seven-year period (see our briefing package, Daniel’s 70 Weeks, for further study).
- 2) The post-tribulation view denies the New Testament teaching of imminency—that Christ could come

at any moment—since there are intervening events required in that view. We believe there are no signs that must precede the Rapture.

3) The post-tribulation view has difficulties with who will populate the Millennium⁴ if the Rapture and the Second Coming occur at essentially the same time. Since all believers will be translated at the Rapture and all unbelievers are judged, because no unrighteous shall be allowed to enter Christ’s Kingdom, then no one would be left in mortal bodies to start the population base for the Millennium.

4) Similarly, post-tribulationism is not able to explain the sheep and goats judgment after the Second Coming in Matthew 25:3-46. Where would the believers in mortal bodies come from if they are raptured at the Second Coming? Who would be able to enter into Christ’s Kingdom?

5) The Bride of Christ, the church, is made ready to accompany Christ to earth (Revelation 19:7-8, 14) before the Second Coming, but how could this reasonably happen if part of the church is still on the earth awaiting the Second Coming? If the Rapture of the church takes place at the Second Coming, then how does the Bride (the church) also come with Christ at His Return?

While many diligent scholars disagree, most of their views derive from their presuppositions about the Scripture. The more literal a view, the more there is an adoption of a pre-millennial pre-tribulation position. We encourage you to review the various passages yourself and develop your own conclusions. This is our “Blessed Hope,” and you will not find a more exciting and rewarding discovery. This is just a brief overview of a complex subject, so apply 2 Timothy 2:15:

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

This topic is perhaps the most demanding from the point of view of requiring the greatest amount of integration of many portions of Scripture. Remember Acts 17:11:

“Receive the Word with all readiness of mind, but search the Scriptures daily to prove whether those things be so.”

A more comprehensive treatment of some of these topics is included in our Expository Commentaries on the book of Daniel and the Thessalonian epistles. And if you don't happen to hold our views, don't worry about it. We'll explain it to you on the way up! Incidentally, Enoch is a model. He was pre-flood,

not mid-flood or post-flood!

For more information about these views, we encourage you to contact the Pre-Trib Research Center, 370 L'Enfant Promenade SW, Suite 801, Washington DC, 20024.

1. Matthew 24:21; Daniel 12:1.
2. John F. Walvoord, “The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation: A Biblical and Historical Study of Post-tribulationism,” Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1976, pp. 21-69. Post-tribulationism is not monolithic, but embraces many mutually contradictory views: amillennial post-tribulation, postmillennial post-tribulation, pre-millennial post-tribulation, and post-tribulation views that equate the Rapture and the Second Coming.

3. This article was excerpted from notes provided by Tommy Ice, Executive Director of the Pre-Trib Research Center, 370 L'Enfant Promenade SW, Suite 801, Washington DC, 20024.

4. The Millennium is the term used to refer to the reign of Jesus Christ upon the earth after His Second Coming (Revelation 20; Isaiah 65). There are many who do not take the Bible literally and allegorize these passages. (These are known as “Amillennialists.” We take the Bible more literally and believe that there will be a literal 1000-year reign, and are known as “Pre-millennialists.”) | 



■ Chuck Missler was an author, Bible teacher, engineer, and former businessman. He was also the founder of the Koinonia Institute. Chuck Missler sadly passed away in May 2018.

THE BULGING LEFT BICEP

A four part series by Eric Ludy



Foolishness Makes a Comeback

For those of you that are a bit incredulous about the phenomenon known as “the bowman’s bulging left bicep” and consider it either pure fiction, dangerous hyperbole, or something only witnessed by generations long ago—let’s consider for a moment the life of Hudson Taylor.

I grew up in Colorado. Being a midwestern state, we don't really have the classic sandy beaches that our coastal U.S. siblings boast. Instead, we have reservoirs with man-made beaches. But strangely, the man-made beaches in Colorado bring out the same juvenile “beach behavior” as those naturally-formed Southern California ones do. So, when I was in high school I used to stick on the swim trunks, whip off my shirt, slather on the baby oil, and strut along the reservoir beach in hopes that someone would think me cool.

I'm deeply embarrassed looking back upon those days. You see, I had a scheme when I was

eighteen. Before I would head out of the house I was sure to do 100 push ups, 50 dips, and 50 pull ups. That way my body would have an exaggerated amount of blood pumping to my upper body muscles, causing the more desperate of females lingering woefully upon the beach to possibly think of me as “a man of amazing muscle” and swoon in my direction.

It's always been a point of frustration for me, but I have always been of the more slender physique. “Skinny” was always the word of choice to describe me growing up. So, it's sad to admit, but my 100/50/50 plan didn't do

much to offset my overall lack of natural machismo. Though that was over twenty-seven years ago, I'm still chagrined, but not by the fact that I actually did impress someone, but that I actually tried to impress someone.

The modern Church is similar to this eighteen-year-old rendition of Eric Ludy. I was a “Christian” back then, dutifully attending youth group, reading my daily Proverb, but I had a serious problem with self-absorption. I reasoned everything through the grid of how the circumstance or the decision would or could benefit me, my reputation, my comforts, and/or my agenda. If it didn't benefit me, then

GOD AT WORK

by Paul Curtas

SUCCESS

The good news and bad news about success. The bad news is... whatever success looks like according to the world's standards, it will fade away and/or be surpassed by someone else. The good news is... whenever our accomplishments in this life are accredited to Jesus Christ and the Glory of God, their effects and influence will go beyond this life. God will use them to expand His glorious kingdom work and they will be recognized in eternity.

Consider: *For by it (faith in God) the people of old received their commendation. By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he (Abel) died, he still speaks.* (Hebrews 11:2, 4). Remember... God is not advancing His work by how the world praises our success, but by how we give glory to God in all that we accomplish.



I simply wasn't interested. And as a result I lived a spiritually defeated life. After all, it's a common known spiritual fact that self-absorption is a sure-proof way to empty the Christian life of "The Majesty." For a man who considers his own reputation above the reputation of His King, Jesus Christ, will never see his left bicep bulge.

Would you humor me for a moment and let my imagination go back twenty-seven years to the shores of the Boulder Reservoir? It's funny, but an eighteen-year-old Eric Ludy just doesn't mix with the bravehearted ideas contained in this series of articles. And that's precisely what I sense is wrong in the modern Church. The powerful Gospel is not welcomed anymore. Old "Eric Ludy" is standing in the way. This "Return of Majesty" notion seems old-fashioned, out-of-place, and a bit too much for the sleek, hip, trendy-minded generation we all find ourselves in.

So, imagine a coalition of Charles Spurgeon, William Booth, and C.T. Studd time traveling together to Boulder, Colorado in the year 1989 with a message personally wrapped and packaged for an eighteen-year-old Eric Ludy. Nowadays I would consider a personal encounter with a coalition like this to be the highlight of my entire life, but I shudder to think how I might have received their package back when I was eighteen and in love with myself.

I can just see it now. The three arrive in a poof of smoke and awkwardly step out onto the fake sandy beach in their wing-tipped shoes. I would likely be strutting along the reservoir's shoreline seeing if anyone had yet taken note of my tricep muscle that I worked extra hard on that morning before hopping into my red '62 Volvo and heading to "The Rez."

Now suddenly, out of nowhere, I've got three thick-bearded men in old-fashioned attire standing in front of me in and amidst my personal patch of coolness. A thousand pimply-faced, barely clothed teenagers sit on their beach towels and look up with equal fascination.

**I SIMPLY WASN'T INTERESTED.
AND AS A RESULT I LIVED A
SPIRITUALLY DEFEATED LIFE.**

Booth is the first one to speak. He says, "Mr. Ludy, I presume?"

I stop walking and awkwardly acknowledge with a slight head nod that I am in fact Mr. Ludy. But at this acknowledgement Booth looks at Spurgeon inquiringly. Then Spurgeon looks at Studd with the same inquisitive stare. Studd says to Spurgeon, "Look Charles, I handed it to you before we stepped into the time travel thingamajig." Spurgeon gives an understanding nod and then pats at his suit coat pocket. Sure enough, there it is. He pulls it out and says, "Mr. Ludy, we have come all the way from the 1800s to give you something very special."

I find myself acutely aware of the staring multitude of greasy-haired humanity. The throng is watching, wondering, attempting to figure out if I'm actually chummy with these three thick-bearded old guys. As the three men stand there in their old-timey suits and talk to me, their voices are uncomfortably loud—and I find myself instinctively wanting to escape from them. Their presence is pure embarrassment. Sure they are time-travelers, and you would think that would be something I would be proud to be connected with, but this blast from the past is a serious threat at present to my

good standing amongst the crowd. My cheeks suffuse red, cold sweat breaks out on my forehead, and I find myself awkwardly rubbing my nose (the action I'm known to do in all strained and strange situations).

Spurgeon hands me the small package.

"What's this?" I stutter.

"It's a bulging left bicep," he states matter-of-factly.

"A bulging left bicep?" I mutter in laughing disbelief.

I look at the small package. It has a picture of a pink and orange blow-up floaty arm band on it with the words, "The Power of the Gospel" written in bold letters across the front.

"You're not serious!" I say with incredulity. "Is this some kind of joke?"

"Put it on!" says Studd.

"I can't wear this!" I state with a huff.

"Put it on!" says Booth.

"It's pink and orange!" I reason. "Everyone would think I'm an imbecile if I wore this foolish thing on my arm."

"They certainly will, Mr. Ludy!" responded Spurgeon. "What looks like foolishness to the world, is anything but foolish in the Kingdom of Heaven."

"Pink and orange?" I questioned with a furrowed brow. "Those two colors clash!"

"You are seeing this gift," said Studd, "through the eyes of the world and not through the eyes of Heaven!"

Booth moves in close, stares me in the eyes, and booms his opinion of my cowardice. "Mr. Ludy," he

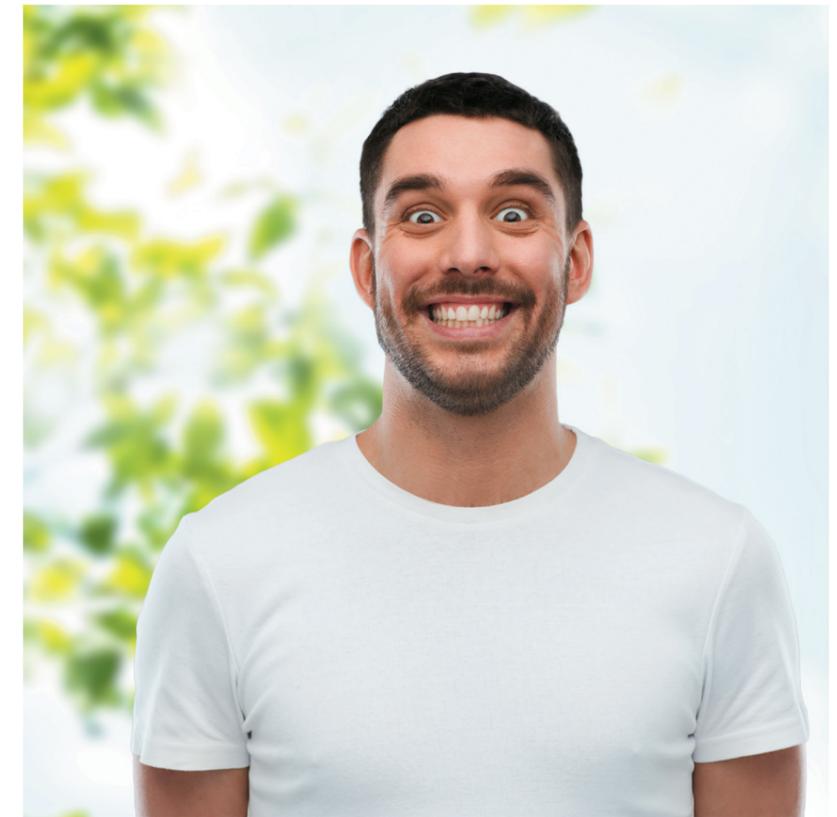
bellows, "We are giving you the secret to 'The Majesty' returning to the stage of time! Wear it. Wear it boldly. Wear it unashamedly." He then points at the thousand teenagers and says, "You must die to their good opinion, Mr. Ludy! You are being commissioned to live in such a way that they will mock, ridicule, and oppose. If the strength of the Gospel is going to return, it will return in and through humble vessels that have died to the applause of their fellow man!"

**'A CONTINGENT OF MIGHTY
MEN AND WOMEN HAS INDEED
ARRIVED IN OUR MODERN DAY
TO STAND BEFORE EACH OF US.'**

Spurgeon, not to be outdone, adds his thunderous comments to the situation:

"Mr. Ludy!" he growls in his famed manly tone, "What on the outside looks like weakness to you, is, in fact, strength. What looks like foolishness to you, is, in fact, wisdom. And what looks like the end of your life, is, in fact, a new beginning." He points his long finger at the package and shouts, "This is how the ancient Longbow is pulled! You wear this unashamedly, and the world will once again behold the impossible on this earth!"

An eighteen-year-old Eric Ludy is a very unstable entity, vulnerable to the slight winds of public opinion drawing him away from good sound judgment. He is vulnerable to "pulling an Esau" and forsaking this gift of a lifetime. Three of the strongest proponents of "The Majesty" in their generation have all joined together to deliver an eighteen-year-old Eric Ludy a package, and yet I'm not fully confident that the



eighteen-year-old rendition of Eric is ready to receive it. And likewise, I'm concerned that the modern Church is inclined to consider the good opinion of the greasy-haired humanity over the golden opportunity they have received to bring back the gusto and grit to the Church of Jesus Christ.

Please prove me wrong.

The Majesty is there for the taking. It's not hidden. It's sitting on the surface of the text of Scripture in pink and orange color begging to be slid on and up over the left bicep of the Church once again.

Just as I'm concerned about the eighteen-year-old Eric's response to such a commission, I'm concerned about your response. A self-absorbed Eric Ludy only sees pink and orange when he hears about the grandeur of the Gospel returning full force. He's distracted by the ill effects this would all have

on his precious reputation. He's disabled by the idea that he must lay down his cool vibe and bear the rather uncool clothing of his Redeemer. He wants big muscles, but not for the same reason God wants them. He wants his muscles to gleam with baby oil and draw attention to himself—but God wants to build an unusually large mass of strength on his upper left arm and slather it in the oil of the Holy Spirit that the attentions might be drawn to the Person of Jesus Christ.

The Return of Majesty hinges upon the Church choosing God's good opinion over this world's good opinion. And to the degree that the Church is willing to start looking odd for the Glory of their King, is the same degree to which it can be a flow through channel of the thunder, the authority, the oomph, and the majesty of the Almighty.

Will the pink and the orange look

funny to this world? Of course it will. But the willingness to wear that badge of infamy for the glory of our King and for the sake of this dying and lost world will, in so doing, open up the floodgates of the Almighty River to once again course into this land and redeem the dying people of this earth.

I laugh out loud when I read William Booth's response to wearing the pink and orange blow-up floaty arm band of his day . . .



■ Eric Ludy - pastor, author and the president of Ellerslie Mission Society. www.Ericludy.com

IF I THOUGHT I COULD WIN ONE MORE SOUL TO THE LORD BY WALKING ON MY HEAD AND PLAYING THE TAMBOURINE WITH MY TOES, I'D LEARN HOW!

The saints of God have always known that the ways of Heaven are contrary to the ways of this earth. Do you know it?

A contingent of mighty men and women has indeed arrived in our modern day to stand before each of us. I want you to picture the vast array of heroes and heroines encircling you right now. The writer of Hebrews calls this contingent "The Great Cloud of Witnesses"—and they have a package for each one of us. There's George Müller, and there's Corrie ten Boom. Over on this side I see Amy Carmichael and William Carey. On this side stands John Hyde and Jim Elliot. Right behind you is David Brainerd and Major Ian Thomas. Oh, and there's Rees Howells, Gladys Aylward, Edward Payson, and E. M. Bounds. Wow, there is too many to even mention. They are everywhere. Wurmbrand, Spurgeon, Ravenhill, Tozer, Whitefield, Chambers, Moody, Paton, Slessor, Murray, Torrey, Stam, Reidhead, DeShazer, Roberts, Livingstone, and McCheyne. They all stand holding out to you and me a package—the contents of which, if we truly put it on, will forever alter our lives and will force the world around us to make a decision—yay or nay—for Jesus Christ.

Do we dare put such a pink and orange spectacle upon our arm?

Or maybe the question should be posed a different way.

Do we dare NOT put on such a precious treasure? Do we dare ignore this gift? Do we dare pass over the singular most valuable treasure in all the universe in exchange for a little human comfort? This is a package that men and women all throughout the ages past have suffered greatly to pass down to us. These saints of old have endured every indignity that you might receive this package, and that you might wear it just as they did in their generation.

The Majesty of Jesus Christ will return to this earth. But will you be one ushering it forth or one embarrassed by the profound power and beauty of our Risen Conqueror?

I exhort you to receive the gift.

And as Studd and Booth both so eloquently stated to the eighteen-year-old Eric Ludy.

"Put it on!"

It's high time that foolishness makes its long awaited comeback. |A

'FOR A MAN WHO CONSIDERS HIS OWN REPUTATION ABOVE THE REPUTATION OF HIS KING, JESUS CHRIST, WILL NEVER SEE HIS LEFT BICEP BULGE.'



Faith & Faithfulness

by Charlie McCall

Thirty-two years ago my wife, Patsy and I came to His Hill, the Torchbearers Bible School in Texas. Four kids and four grandkids later, we are still here. Is it faithfulness just because we've been here a long time?

Faithfulness, in the true biblical sense, requires faith in Christ. As far as God is concerned, no matter how long a person serves or how responsible he has been, there is no faithfulness apart from faith. Faithfulness is due to faith.

Faith is the emphasis of the parable of the talents in Matthew 25 -- specifically, the faithfulness of the two investors who doubled their master's money and the unfaithfulness of the third slave that buried what was entrusted to him. In reading that parable, we fail to see how highly improbable it is for two men to both have a hundred percent return on their money, especially when neither man knew how long he had to invest the money. It was not due to the intelligence or hard work of the investors.

It seems to me that two people seeing the exact same huge return on their money while investing separately from each other and not knowing when the investment period would be over is so unlikely as to be unexplainable apart from the activity of God. The

'GOD DOESN'T PRAISE PEOPLE FOR BEING STEADFAST AND PERSEVERING IN THEIR OWN STRENGTH.'



AUTHENTIC | DIGGING DEEPER

not return, he buried the money, hoping that he would be able to keep it for himself. He had no faith in the master or his return.

The other two servants were quite certain that sooner or later the master would come back. They were full of faith in the master's return. Hence, they were praised as being faithful; literally, full of faith. Faithfulness has much more to do with God than it does us! Faith is trust in, and dependence upon, the character and activity of another. Faithfulness is faith in another over a length of time – a length of time that is almost always unknown. Yes, it is a character quality to be faithful. But in the Bible that character quality is the consequence of faith in God over time.

God doesn't praise people for being steadfast and persevering in their own strength. He praises those things when they are an outflow of faith in Christ. Steadfastness and perseverance by human effort is stubbornness. Stubbornness is humanity unyielded to God. It is as the sin of witchcraft (1 Sam. 15:23). A faithful man is not stubborn. And a stubborn man is not full of faith in Christ. Getting back to the parable, the two faithful slaves saw the increase they did because God was working through their faith. There is no other explanation. He didn't praise them for being shrewd investors. He praised them for being good and faithful. You can't be good without God, and you can't have faithfulness without faith in God over time. Jesus praised people for their faith. It is through faith in Christ that we receive eternal life (Jn. 20:31). It

is by faith that we approach God (Heb. 11:6). Whatever is not of faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). Apart from faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). When He returns, He will be looking for faith (Lk. 18:8).

So what should we expect from Satan, the enemy of our souls, except to try to keep people from faith in Christ? He wants the unsaved to never trust Jesus for salvation. He wants the Christian to stop living a life of dependence upon Christ. The devil wants to have believers stop believing Christ in the daily stuff of life. He wants them to become unfaithful, to depart from the faith, to apostatize.

I believe the primary tactic of the enemy is not to kill us physically but to slyly, quietly, erode our continuous, daily, active dependence upon Christ in faith. He wants us to live life by our own effort or to give up on ever knowing the abundant life that Jesus promised. Jesus simply wants us to trust Him. Faith in Christ is all that He wants, nothing more. It is the one thing that He praises in us. It is the one thing that the devil, the enemy of our faith, wants to destroy.

Be honest. Are you still believing in Jesus today, are you full of faith? He who saved you by grace through faith wants you to have the joy of seeing Him accomplish in you and through you what only He can do as you walk with Him today in the same way that you received Him yesterday -- by faith (Col. 2:6)! He wants us to have the joy of hearing Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant (Matt. 25:21,23)!" | 



■ Charlie McCall is the director of His Hill – the Torchbearers Bible School in Comfort, Texas. To learn more about the ministry there visit www.hishill.org

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Seeing Jesus in Psalm 18

By Nathan Johnson

Jesus is all over Scripture, Old and New Testament alike. Though His Name doesn't appear in the Old, everything points and finds its fulfillment in Him (see Luke 24.27,44-45). This is certainly true about Psalm 18:



'I will love You, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies.' (Psalm 18.1-3)

Do you realize and live as if this is true in your life? This is not some feel-good statement found in the Bible, to be placed on your refrigerator and forgotten. This is the living reality of an individual who is found in Christ.

Jesus is... **our Rock.**

He is our solid foundation that is unchanging and unmovable. We can stand secure and confident upon Him.

Jesus is... **our fortress.**

He is our protection and our fortification. The enemy cannot touch us unless he goes through Jesus (who is impregnable) – thus

the enemy cannot touch you unless you deliberately walk over to him and yield your life into his hands (see Romans 6.11-14). You can rest in Christ because He is the walls that surround, buttress, and protect your life.

Jesus is... **our deliverer.**
And what a Deliverer He is!

Jesus is... **our strength.**
Do you realize that you do not have to be strong to be a part of the Kingdom of God? In fact, weakness is a prerequisite because if you rely upon your own strength, you will not rely upon Him. So as Paul declares: "And [Jesus] said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in



weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities [weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." May we never live out of our own strength but live in His!

Jesus is... **trustworthy.**

Jesus is so trustworthy that He is called the Truth and the Life – which means there is no falsehood or lie or death found within (or near) Him. What He says is Truth! You can build your life around Him and His Word because He has promised and He cannot lie!

Jesus is... **our shield.**

Ephesians 6 talks about the armor of God. Did you know that every piece within the armament of the Christian is Jesus? He is our belt of Truth. He is our breastplate of righteousness. He is our shoes of the Gospel of Peace. He is our helmet of salvation. He is our sword of the Spirit (the Living Word of God). And He is our shield of faith. In short, He is the protection of the Christian. We must "sink down within" our armor (which is what the "put on" word means in verse 11: "Put on [sink down into] the whole armor of God, that you

may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.")

Jesus is... **our salvation.**

It is a tremendous reality that Jesus does not merely give us salvation but He is our salvation!

Jesus is... **our stronghold.**

Do you need a place of refuge? A place of safety, rest, and security? Come to Jesus who is your stronghold. He is the place where you can hide from the onslaught of the enemy. He is your protection and covering. He is your strong place. Take refuge in Him.

Jesus is... **worthy to be praised.**

If these are all true, can you stop yourself from lifting your hands and shouting praises to Him? Oh He is most worthy to be praised! If these were not merely facts upon a page but became living Truth in your life, you couldn't stop yourself from giving Him the glory and honor and praise and adoration that He so rightly deserves. I dare you, just try to stop yourself. On second thought, don't try, just worship. | 



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It's OK to Try!

By Jeremy Suisted

You know that feeling when an idea suddenly bursts into your brain? The tickling of possibility explodes into a never-ending cascade of how it could come together. The imagination runs free, thinking of how this idea could become a powerful reality.

I was hit with one of those ideas in 2012, when I was Youth Pastoring.

We had a big group of young people, who were trying to integrate their faith with their public life – bridging the gap between church and school. This required a whole lot of imagination and risk-taking – and we were seeking to support them in this.

But then the genius idea arrived. Each school day, at 4pm, a different member of our Youth Community Leadership Team would be at a spot around Cambridge. This spot would be on the way home from High School, and members of our Youth Community could stop there for a few minutes to pray, read Scripture and reflect on what God was calling them to do.

It was brilliant. It was simple. It would help bridge the gap between school and faith. I was excited, shared the vision with my team, planned it, promoted it to our youth – and then launched.

So, it was with some excitement that I parked my car by a park bench down town on Day One of Genius Idea. I got out, grabbed my Bible, and sat down – awaiting streams of young people.

Some walked past and said, “Hi!”
Others avoided eye contact.
Not one paused to chat, pray or read.

After 20 minutes, I packed up and went home.

The next day, one of my Youth Interns went to take their spot. They text me at the end – “No-one came.”

After two weeks of trying this out – we had exactly zero young people take up my amazing idea. We shelved it.

The idea failed. I'd thought it was great – but it wasn't. And that's OK.

I know this seems like an obvious story, but the church has a fear of failure. I think it's due to a faulty perspective of the will of God. We think that if we are always in the will of God, hearing what He's saying – nothing we do will fail.

Therefore, if we try something – and it fails – we've misheard. We've done something we shouldn't have – heck, is God angry at us?

Time and time again, I've seen churches and leaders afraid of trialling something new – for fear of it failing.

And yet – we are the community that claims to have the monopoly of grace! We should be the ones who are happy to take risks and trial – because we follow the God of grace and forgiveness, one who calls people into the unknown, in peculiar ways.

So often, leadership can fall into Permission Denying within churches. It ends up creating a culture of fear and stagnation, with members unwilling to suggest or try anything new.

I overheard a story of a church member with a fantastic idea of gathering people together, to launch a small community focused on helping those in our world who have the least amount of social capital.

As this person was talking to their pastor about it, the pastor said, “What are you waiting for? Go for it!”

And the person responded with, “Am I allowed?”

It's saddening to think that the Western church had created a culture where members would think they aren't allowed to gather, plan and launch new initiatives for the Kingdom of God.

See, the Christian faith is one that tries new things. Supported by the Spirit and the grace of God, grounded on the faith of what we know – it builds off of this to explore and create new possibilities, and try new ways.

Failure and learning are not a mark of sin – but they are the way we trial and improve.

Think of Paul's practice in the book of Acts. He comes to faith in a remarkable way. He has no model to follow of church-planting. So he gets out there – and tries things.

At first, he goes with a sole-focus

of preaching to the Jews. We learn that this had mixed results, and sounded like an aggressive approach – as they ended up seeking to assassinate him!

From there, Paul decides to meet with people in safer spaces, interacting with less influential members – including women and slaves, washing clothes by the river. In Athens, he trials meeting with the philosophers and wise people of the day, engaging in public debate and sophisticated speech. In Corinth, he works as a tent-maker, rubbing shoulders with the working class – while also trialling house-churches.

'THINK OF PAUL'S PRACTICE IN THE BOOK OF ACTS. HE COMES TO FAITH IN A REMARKABLE WAY. HE HAS NO MODEL TO FOLLOW OF CHURCH-PLANTING. SO HE GETS OUT THERE – AND TRIES THINGS.'

Building off Paul, the church as a whole has then trialled myriad approaches to church-planting – from building massive cathedrals, to gathering in forests, to purchasing abandoned pubs in Alexandria.

Trying new approaches is good – and is faithful to the way of our history. Let's not become fearful of trial and afraid of failure – but boldly imagine – and attempt – new ways of seeing and being the Kingdom of God in our world around us. **IA**

■ Jeremy has a fascination with exploring the intersection between faith and life, and loves sharing his thoughts and observations with others who are interested in looking deeper and closer. www.jeremysuisted.com



How passionate are you about sharing Jesus?

By Dave Firth

In August this year we were invited to showcase Authentic Magazine at the Promise Keepers event in Christchurch. All these lovely Christian men were arriving on the Friday night and all was well...then the Passionate Sons walked in!

These guys didn't look like your average 'Christian conference' kind of guys. They were loud, unshaven, they had leathers jackets, tattoos, caps...they were a gang!

I must admit I was wondering if something bad was about to happen. But then I noticed one guy, who seemed to be their leader, had the words 'JESUS IS LIFE' on his cap in big capital letters.

I'm not usually shy when it comes to meeting new people so it wasn't long before I had met him - Luke Bowler, leader of the 'Passionate Sons Ministry'.

I asked Luke to share his story but he said he could sum it up in six words: "I was lost. Now I'm found."

Fortunately he didn't stop there and he let me ask him some questions...

So, what was life like for you as a young man in New Zealand?

"Not good, man. I ripped off family and friends. I hurt a lot of people. From age 16 to 22 I couldn't keep a job. When I was 17 I went to prison for the first time where I met a lot of bad people. It was a dark place."

Did you have any kind of a faith before you went in to prison?

"Nah, not at all. I didn't believe in God. I actually would laugh at



Christians and mock people that believed all that stuff. But when I was down in Invercargill prison, one night God just literally grabbed me. He got my attention and I just felt this peace that I'd never experienced before. It was the

weirdest thing. I got out the next day and told my mates but they thought I was high."

So how did the Passionate Sons come about?

"I think I'd always had pretty low

self esteem growing up and had struggled to relate to people. That's probably why I had the social problems and got into committing crime. But one day after I was saved I was reading Matthew's gospel and in chapter three verse seventeen it said that God called to Jesus from heaven and said, 'This is my Son, whom I love,' and I realised in that moment that I was HIS son. Then I was driving one day and I literally saw the image that is now our logo and God showed me that he was going to use me to encourage others that have struggled in life."

So, do you consider yourselves a gang?

"Nah, we're not a gang. We're just a crew of mates that love Jesus! We just want to have a space where people can come and belong. It's not just for the lost. We're also here for Christians that don't fit in or feel valued.

I mean, yeah, you need to be clean and straight for 100 days before you get a vest, but even then if you struggle we're not going to kick you out. We have values but we're not about rules.

If Speedy wants to jump up on a table and preach then he can." (and apparently he does!)

So how did your upbringing influence how you live your life today?

"My parents split when I was four and I developed anger and hatred towards my dad, who was a heavy drinker. But after I came to know Jesus I was able to forgive him. And I was able to ask him for his forgiveness for all that I had done too.

Through my Heavenly Father I was able to love my earthly father. Now I'm grateful that I can be a loving father to my daughter and break

the cycle - to bring her up in the love of Christ."

So what's next for the Passionate Sons ministry?

"We just want to hang out and support each other on our personal journeys with Christ. We all need Jesus. I did everything in my power to get it right but it was never enough. I love the scripture that says, 'Taste and see that the Lord is good' - well, He really is! We will go wherever God calls us. Speak in churches, youth groups. We're on a journey to help people come to know Jesus. That's all."

I was blown away by this group of young men. Their love for the Lord is evident and their passion to share His life with the hurt, needy and marginalised is inspiring.

Pray for Luke and the Passionate Sons. | A



Building His Kingdom -one brick at a time!

By Dave Firth

The Church in New Zealand has a secret weapon – a group of men and women that get in alongside ministries to provide practical support and encouragement. They don't look for praise, recognition or even money! They quietly and expertly provide support to ministries that are proclaiming Christ.

Basically, if the church is Batman, MMM is Alfred the butler!

Howard Robinson and his wife, Ave, started working with MMM when they were in their 30's. They now lead the ministry in New Zealand that is seen by many Christian organisations as a significant part of God's provision to His church in New Zealand. We caught up with Howard to see why he, as a qualified builder has spent the last 19 years as a volunteer working for a charitable trust, rather than working in a lucrative industry that could earn him a lot of money!

So what is the purpose and aims of MMM as an organisation?

Our remit is to get alongside churches, ministries, camps, etc. and provide practical help with building and maintenance projects to support the Church and other Christian ministry in New Zealand and overseas. We use the phrase 'serving those that serve'

So tell us how you got involved with MMM and what were you doing before?

When I was 9 my dad went to Fiji with a team to help build the Gospel School in Suva. That inspired me to be a builder and build for God. When MMM began in New Zealand in 1998 I was foreman for a building firm in Mount

Maunganui and Ave was a stay at home mum. The couple that came from MMM Australia to NZ to begin the work came to our church in Tauranga! It was like we had front row seats to the start of this ministry in NZ.

For a couple to be involved full time in ministry both need to be called. When I first expressed interest in MMM and started volunteering on the odd day Ave tried hard to ignore it because she knew that getting involved in MMM would be life changing. She wasn't wrong! Thankfully she also knew that if my interest in MMM was from God she couldn't fight it and through a Bible reading in Nehemiah she was challenged by the way this heathen King got right behind Nehemiah's building project even though it wasn't his wall or his kingdom. She realised my interest was for God's kingdom, how could she not support that!

The first M of MMM is Mobile. We quickly realised the best way to do this ministry as a family was in a mobile home so we brought a bus import and spent six months converting it to a mobile home with a bunkroom in the back for our three kids aged 4,2 and six months at the time.

So we spent five years travelling around New Zealand doing

projects and maintenance for those involved in God's mission – Mobile Mission Maintenance

As a family I can imagine there were some real highs and lows during that time. Give us a few that might scare or encourage us!

The high of the bus years was definitely the incredible ministries we got to work alongside. When you work with MMM you come alongside ministries that are striving to grow God's Kingdom and that's just awesome. We set out to bless others and we were the ones that had our socks knocked off with blessings! My second trip to China was a full on miracle! There we were in the middle of winter, at the bottom of the South Island and I see an ad in the latest MMM magazine calling for a builder for project in China. I immediately believe it's time to go back to China. My sometimes sceptical wife who knows the bank balance casually says, "All you need is a couple grand and you can go!" Which, at that time, was definitely impossible pie-in-the-sky stuff! The next day a cheque for \$2,000 arrived in the mail! And even more amazing was the fact it had been posted 5 weeks before in Auckland! New Zealand ain't that big! Our God is an awesome God! The lows, well imagine a week of rain, in winter, with three kids in



a bus, and say one or two sick with a vomiting bug and... you would have a text book low!

You spent 8 years in Hong Kong serving with MMM. For a Kiwi family that must have been an incredibly challenging adjustment to a very different culture. What encouragement can you give to men (with families) that may be considering doing something like that?

Considering serving overseas with kids... hmmm. There have been times we certainly doubted our kids would ever thank us for their experiences growing up in another culture! But they have actually thanked us for the years they had in Hong Kong as they were able to learn to appreciate another culture. It certainly taught us the value of prayer, working together, listening to one another. It was healthy for our kids to see a broader picture of life and I would certainly encourage parents to take their kids on short term mission trips or not to shy away from serving overseas. It is important for kids to get a bigger view of God's world we are called to reach, love, serve and bless.

We have always sought to be obedient to God. If he is directing us somewhere, that is the best



place to be, its not always the easiest place to be but it is better to be in a place of obedience and out of your comfort zone, than in a place of disobedience and comfortable.

Your wife, Ave, is at your side and has been involved with MMM as long as you have. What's it been like working so closely with your wife and how has it impacted your marriage?

I am thankful for a longsuffering wife who is happy to go along with my crazy ideas and to share an adventure. We are very thankful for excellent pre-marital counselling we had that meant right from the start of our marriage we understood we had some pretty big differences. We learnt to consider those differences, to pull together, to laugh at the difference and so we work together well and enjoy the shared journey.

You've got three kids, two boys and a girl. Being in full time 'ministry' can sometimes scare us blokes off for fear of the impact on our children. What are your thoughts about that?

When we were heading off on this MMM adventure people would ask but what about the kids and my answer was always "God knows we have kids and when he called us, he also called our kids and he will do right by them". One of the strengths of the ministry of MMM is prayer and I think our kids have been hugely blessed to be raised in a ministry that has a strong prayer base. They have been prayed for from people all around their world all their lives, that's incredible! We have always strived to keep our kids informed and would hold family meetings. Sometimes with hilarious results. When we think we have big news and one of the kids would guess something completely out of the box like, "Oh no we are moving

Inner Mongolia!" After a call like that everything else seems pretty small! Early on when the possibility of moving to Hong Kong came up we sat the kids down and talked to them about it- they were 9,7 and 5 at the time. The nine year old said, "Yes! We get to go in an airplane and watch movies." The 7 year old said "But in China you are only allowed one child and there is three of us?!" and the youngest said, "But in China they don't speak English no one will understand me?!" Right from the start we were amazed at what our kids understood and how they adapted. I believe they are better young adults for the experiences they have had.

And what type of projects do you get involved with here in New Zealand?

We get involved in a wide range of projects. Alterations to churches, renovations in mission offices, upgrading accommodation at Christian camps, painting buildings at bible training centres and everything else in between. We have teams operating in both the North and South Islands.

...we also have a centre operating in Fiji and have sent six teams there so far this year.

Interesting! Tell us more about Fiji. In fact, to be honest, a lot of us blokes probably get a bit more excited about serving in Fiji than in Invercargill (sorry all you Invercargillians!) so this could be a good hook in.

There are great projects to get involved with in Fiji and the South Pacific islands. It could be yourself, your men's group, we have had Dad's take son's that are reaching their teen years. This is a great opportunity to get away, deepen relationships, enjoy time in another culture and serve together.

So, as a ministry, what would you say is MMM's biggest need?

People! A lot of our team have been with us for a long time, which is good as it shows that they see it's a worthy ministry to be involved in, but we'd love to see more people getting involved. Sometimes we do look for new projects and occasionally funding, but we're always looking for people to join our teams and take part in the projects. Whether it's just a few days here and there, or for a few months or full time, whatever time you have, you can be a blessing!

What kind of skills are required if someone wanted to work on a MMM project?

Anyone with a willing heart can serve with MMM. We need the tradies to lead the volunteers but there are great opportunities for learning new skills too. Generally our teams are a mix of skilled tradespeople; builders, joiners, plasterers, painters, roofers, competent handypeople, to keen DIYers. To be honest, if you can hold a hammer and you have a willing heart, God can use you in MMM!

When I describe MMM to people I often say, "If the church is Batman, MMM is Alfred the butler!" Do you think that's an accurate summary of what MMM does?

Yeah I like that - One of our mottos is "Serving those who serve" so we are happy to be Alfred, the one who is behind the scenes supporting the good that is going on in the world. Our vision is that the Christian community would have facilities that are effective for the mission God has called them to. We all need an Alfred in our lives or at least would really, really like one, someone who is saying 'I believe in what you are doing and I

will support you to get it done'

We at Authentic Magazine love the work of MMM because you simply get alongside ministries and support them without expectation of anything in return. If our readers are challenged by this article, is there something they can do to help you guys?

Tell people about MMM and the opportunity to serve! We have a video about the work they can download and show in their church. There's information on our website too. We're even happy to come and speak at a church service, an event or a men's breakfast if you'll have us.

I know you don't actively look for money but if someone doesn't have the skills, health or time to get involved in a project, how can they support the work financially?

If the Lord leads you then we would happily receive donations to further the work.

MMM is a registered New Zealand Charity so donors receive a tax deductible receipt at the end of the financial year. All details about how to do that are on our website.

Out of interest, how do you fund the work?

We are wholly funded by support and gifts. All MMM workers, whether they are staff or volunteers staff, are 'living by faith' and we testify again and again to God's amazing provision.

What about people that read this and are part of an organisation that could really benefit from MMM's services?

Absolutely! That's what we're here for. Write MMM an email (to projects@mmm.org.nz) briefly explaining the ministry you are



involved with, where it is, how your ministry impacts God's Kingdom and what work you would like to have done.

We often have projects scheduled for 6-8 months in advance so the sooner you get in touch the better.

And lastly, if someone wants to know more or keep in touch, what's the best way?

MMM has a quarterly magazine and also our monthly prayer list that is sent out called, "Prayer Force" if you would like to receive the MMM News or Prayer Force and be a part of this vital ministry contact the MMM office.

Howard, you are a legend and the work that you lead here in New Zealand is a huge blessing to others. Thanks so much for talking to us.

Come on fellas! Let's get praying about how we can support this awesome ministry! |

www.mmm.org.nz



HALLOWEEN: An Invitation to the Occult?

by Chuck Missler

This is always a difficult time for Christians, especially those with children. It has been suggested that for a Christian to be asked to celebrate Halloween is like asking a Holocaust survivor to celebrate Hitler's birthday!

It is also a dangerous time for some, since many of the seemingly "harmless" involvements associated with Halloween can also be "entries" for the occult, and can prove very tragic for the unwary.

PAGAN BACKGROUND

In ancient Britain and Ireland, the Celtic festival of Samhain was observed on October 31, the end of summer. November 1 was the new year for both Celtic and Anglo-Saxon calendars and was one of the most important and yet sinister calendar festivals of the Celtic Year.

Settling in northern France and the British Isles, the Celtic people engaged in occultic arts and worshiped nature, giving it supernatural, animistic qualities. (Much like our Federal government is attempting to enforce today.)

The ancient Druids were the

learned priestly class of the Celtic religion. Many of their beliefs and practices were similar to those of Hinduism, such as reincarnation and the transmigration of the soul, which teaches that people may be reborn as animals. The Druids believed that on October 31, the night before their New Year and the last day of the old year, Samhain, the Lord of Death, gathered the souls of the evil dead who had been condemned to enter the bodies of animals.

The Druids also believed that the punishment of the evil dead would be lightened by sacrifices, prayers and gifts to the Lord of Death. (This begins to reveal the strange link between this holiday and the non-Biblical concept of purgatory.)

The souls of the dead were supposed to revisit their homes on this day, and the autumnal festival

acquired a sinister significance, with ghosts, witches, hobgoblins, black cats, fairies, and demons of all kinds said to be roaming about. It was the time to placate the supernatural powers controlling the processes of nature.

And, on October 31, 1517, Martin Luther drove a stake into the heart of many of the prevailing non-Biblical concepts by nailing his famous 95 theses to the Castle Church door in Wittenberg, Germany, which started the movement known today as the Reformation—the single most important event in modern history.¹ Appropriately, he did this on Halloween.

MODERN HALLOWEEN TRADITIONS

In early American history, Halloween was not widely practiced until the 20th century, when it was

introduced by the Irish Catholic settlements. Gradually, Halloween became a secular observance, and many customs and practices developed. The carved pumpkin may have originated with the witches' use of a skull with a candle inside to light the way to coven meetings.

Since 1965 UNICEF, an agency of the United Nations, has attempted to incorporate into the Halloween observance the collection of money for the United Nations Children's Fund. This exploitation by the ungodly United Nations of this pagan holiday seems strangely appropriate.

THE OCCULT IS INCREASINGLY POPULAR

Halloween is, for many, a "crossover" involvement in which innocent games can lead to serious entanglement with real witches, neo-pagans, New Agers, and other occultists.² A common pastime is the use of a Ouija board to attempt to contact ghosts or spirits that are believed to be roaming about. This can lead to serious consequences including demon possession.³ Demons have a vested interest in Halloween because it supports the occult, and it also offers novel and unexpected opportunities to control and influence people.

Forms of the occult can include mediums, channelers, clairvoyants, psychics, spiritists, diviners, mystics, gurus, shamans, psychical researchers, Yogis, psychic and holistic healers, astral travel, astrology, mysticism, Ouija boards, Tarot cards, contact with the dead, UFOs, and thousands of other practices which almost defy cataloging.

Occultism includes Satanism, astrology, Kabbalah, Gnosticism, theosophy, witchcraft and many forms of serious magic. It includes activities seeking the acquisition of "hidden" things—which are expressly forbidden by God in the Bible.

THE BIBLICAL VIEW

Halloween practices can open the door to the occult and can introduce forces into people's lives that they are not equipped to combat.⁴ There is genuine power in the occult, but it is demonic power.⁵

Any serious study of Biblical demonology will reveal Satan as the power behind false religion, witchcraft, idolatry and the occult.⁶ The Word of God makes it clear that these are all to be shunned as dangerous. There were many superstitions and false concepts in ancient Israel about which the Bible is silent. However, occultism, in any form, was punishable by death! Why?

The spiritual power and reality behind idols involves demons.⁷ The Bible commands us to shun occult practices. Mediums and spiritists are expressly prohibited.⁸ Nowhere are such practices acceptable.

A HALLOWEEN PROJECT?

Every year, many people are perplexed as to how to deal with the children's celebrations surrounding Halloween. On the one hand, participating in the perpetuation of the usual pagan (and occultic) rituals are hardly the enterprise of a Biblical Christian. On the other hand, creating constructive alternatives can be challenging.

Many churches and families organize a "Harvest" festival with games, prizes, etc., as an alternative party opportunity. These are gaining widespread interest and are to be encouraged.

Organizing a drama event to involve the older children is an alternative candidate; such an effort could include Saul and the Witch of Endor, from 1 Samuel 28, as a play.

[The winning scripts resulting from a play-writing contest held a few years ago are available through K-House.]

YOUR PROTECTION

Intellect alone is insufficient. "If it were possible, it would deceive the very elect." This is another example of the necessity to truly understand the Armor of God as outlined in Ephesians 6. This brief review was excerpted from our featured briefing package, Halloween: Invitation to the Occult? | 

1. Manuscript by his son D. Paul Luther preserved in the library at Rudolstadt, quoted by F.W. Boreham in *A Bunch of Everlastings or Texts That Made History*, Judson Press, Philadelphia, 1920, p.20.
2. See *Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs*, Harvest House, Eugene OR, 1996.
3. The case studies underlying William Blatty's *The Exorcist* indicate that the trouble all began with a child playing with a Ouija board.
4. Russ Parker, *Battling the Occult*, InterVarsity Press, Downer's Grove IL, 1990, p.35.
5. Isa 47:9; Mt 24:24; Acts 8:7; 13:6-11; 16:16-19; 19:18-20; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 6:7-11, 22; 2 Tim 3:8.
6. Deut 32:16,17; Ps 106:35-40; Acts 16:16-19; 1 Cor 10:19-21; 2 Thess 2:9, 10; 1 Tim 4:1f.
7. 1 Cor 10:20; Ps 106:37.
8. Lev 19:31; Deut 18:10, 11, 14 2 Chr 33:6.

■ Chuck Missler was an author, Bible teacher, engineer, and former businessman. He was also the founder of the Koinonia Institute. Chuck Missler sadly passed away in May 2018.





The Warrior-Poet's Dream

by Eric Ludy

Let's crawl into the cranial lobe of an honest-to-goodness real-life Man of God. (And, yes, girls this breed of male does actually exist – like the Arctic Wolf, they are out there somewhere behaving regal and strong, though they are a seriously endangered species)

In this manly cranial lobe, we will find, outside of countless meditations on the grandeur and glory of the King of kings, a perplexing nagging thought. It's a thought that pesters this poor

man and keeps him awake at night and has led him to hours of diligent prayer in search of an answer.

The thought translates a bit differently in the heart and mind of every honest-to-goodness real-life Man of God, but it basically sounds something akin to:

“Are there really girls out there in this world that are all about Jesus Christ – that are noble, and elegant, and pure, and (ahem) beautiful? Is this path of true manhood meant to be a lonely journey, or is it somehow possible that there might actually be a woman out there that shares in my singular passion for the Glory of

Jesus Christ and delights to give her entirety into the service of His Kingdom?”

One day when Leslie and I were talking about her Set-Apart Girl conference, I thought, “If only those honest-to-goodness real-life Men of God could see such a gathering.”

“ARE THERE REALLY GIRLS OUT THERE IN THIS WORLD THAT ARE ALL ABOUT JESUS CHRIST – THAT ARE NOBLE, AND ELEGANT, AND PURE, AND (AHEM) BEAUTIFUL?”

‘EVERY WARRIOR-POET HAS A DREAM. AND IT’S NOT JUST A DREAM TO GET MARRIED TO A TRULY SET-APART WOMAN OF GOD – RATHER, IT’S A DREAM TO SEE FEMININITY ONCE-AGAIN BECOME AS IT OUGHT TO BE.’

This conference is exactly what every true God-built man dreams about. And, I'm not referring to lustful selfish dreams. Not at all. In the most princely pure-hearted way, a man of God desires to see women of God fashioned by the Almighty Potter's hand into demonstrations of true world-altering femininity. For there is truly nothing more beautiful!

Unfortunately, guys, you are not invited to this conference - it's for girls! If we opened it up to guys, I have a hunch we would have the wrong sort show up (if you catch my drift). No, this is a girls-only conference, unless you happened to be married to the one heading the whole thing up and your name is Eric Ludy.

So guys, I'm writing this to let you know that the pestering perplexing thought within your cranial lobe actually has an answer. It's yes – a thousand yesses! There are honest-to-goodness real-life women of God out there in this world that are devoting everything to Jesus and like Amy Carmichael they are leaving everything to serve him overseas, like Jackie Pullenger they are pouring out their lives for the least, like Gladys Aylward they are fighting

for the glory of God even at the diminishment of themselves. And these women are stunningly beautiful – for they radiate with the love of heaven. These girls are built after the historic pattern of elegance and nobility. They walk different, talk different, and dress with stylish dignity. Long and short, they are set-apart for the pleasure and the glory of Jesus Christ, and they are quite something to behold.

Guys, I know you won't be able to participate in a Set-Apart Girl Conference, but at least you can know that girls like this are actually real.

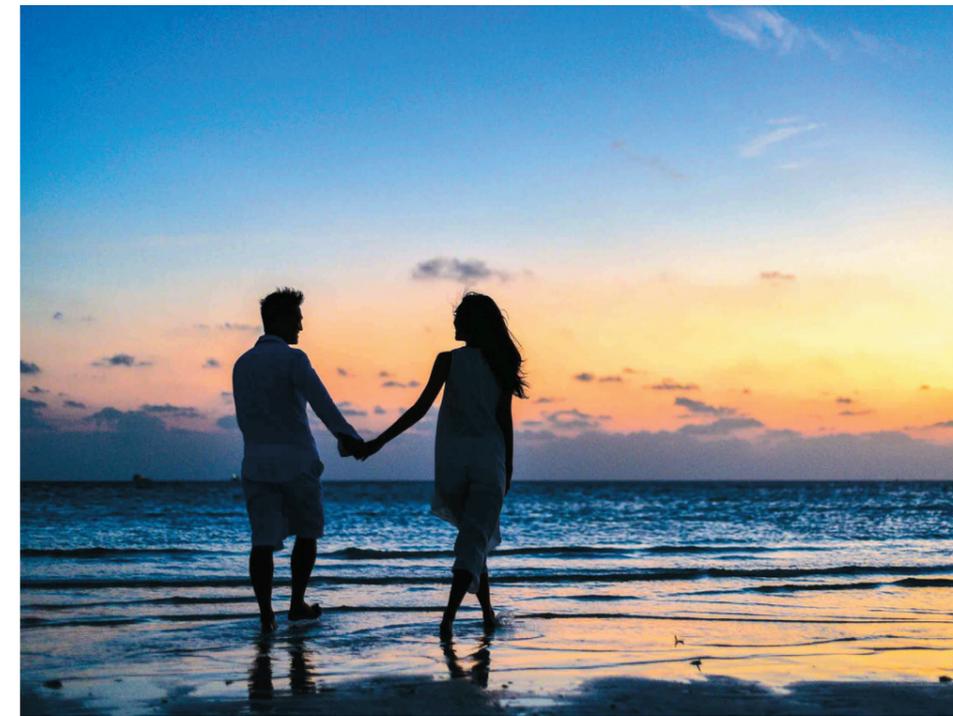
“So, how can I marry one of these girls?” all the guys out there are asking.

Leslie and I have joked for years

that we could start up the ultimate matchmaking service. But, before you start thinking that Leslie and I are going to start competing with E-Harmony, remember that we wrote a book entitled, “When God Writes Your Love Story.” We believe that the absolute best way to build lifelong love stories, is to allow God to hold the pen and script the story. An Eric and Leslie Ludy written love story might have a sparkle of romance in it, but it just couldn't match up with God's version.

Every warrior-poet has a dream. And it's not just a dream to get married to a truly set-apart woman of God – rather, it's a dream to see femininity once-again become as it ought to be.

Here's to the stunning beauty of a God-fashioned girl! | 



■ Eric Ludy - pastor, author and the president of Ellerslie Mission Society. www.Ericludy.com

Why should I WATCH CHRISTIAN TV?

By Dave Firth



According to research, New Zealanders watch an average of three hours of TV per day!

It's easy to get a negative view of something or someone when you find a theological difference and that can happen walking in to a Church, a Christian bookstore or turning on a Christian TV channel.

We watch a whole host of TV channels but not every programme on that channel meets our tastes or standards (hopefully). And, to be honest, it's the same with Shine TV and other Christian channels.

I love Charles Price – a Shine TV staple for years. His sermons grab me and fix my eyes on Christ every

time. But there are others I might not like or enjoy.

You see I wander round the supermarket filling my trolley with items I desire to eat, whilst avoiding several products that I deem 'unworthy' for my consumption. I don't boycott the store if it sells something I don't like!

This isn't so much a plug for Shine TV or other Christian TV channels, but rather a rallying call to us all that we should think carefully where we 'shop' for our spiritual food.

'IF WE ARE ALERTED TO OUR BODY'S PHYSICAL NEEDS AND OPTIONS, WHY WOULD WE SO EASILY DISMISS OUR MINDS?'

The rise of organic produce has highlighted that people want good, healthy stuff rather than processed junk that's made of plastic. If we are alerted to our body's physical needs and options, why would we so easily dismiss our minds?

'ALTHOUGH OCCASIONALLY WE WOULD NOTICE SOME INAPPROPRIATE THEMES, GENERALLY WE FELT IT WAS HARMLESS AND JUST DECIDED TO ENJOY THE LAUGHS.'

In the 90's my wife and I watched the TV series, 'Friends'. We laughed through every episode cringing occasionally but loving the quick quips and brilliantly written gags. Although occasionally we would notice some inappropriate themes, generally we felt it was harmless and just decided to enjoy the laughs.

But it was far from harmless.

Did the writers and producers have an agenda to undermine Christian values? Possibly not. But the enemy saw this as a vital tool in his efforts, for sure.

It was unwholesome. Promiscuity was praised, lying was laughed at, blasphemy trivialised (I wouldn't be surprised if the rise of 'Oh My God' can be traced right back to this show alone).

There were rumours that at least two of the lead actresses were encouraged to wear tight, form fitting outfits to reveal a little more than most TV series' were showing!

One episode focused on Ross's four months 'dry spell' during which he hadn't slept with a girl. This was seen as terrible by the other



characters and they all pitched in with suggestions as to how this could be remedied.

I know we like to laugh and we seem to enjoy watching TV shows. But at what cost?

I have heard many people talk about how hard it is to find time to read their bible or pray. But often these same people don't struggle to find time to watch the latest TV shows that arrive on Netflix (sometimes several seasons long!)

Christian TV is a blessing and we should all be sifting through, looking for the stuff that is good and healthy for us.

Whether its movies, kids shows, Bible teaching or documentaries, I've found that there is some really

good stuff out there – if we can be bothered looking for it.

We at Authentic want to help with this so we're going to do a 'we watch' feature in future issues.

This will be supported by the 'we watch' section of the Authentic Magazine website so you can easily find the stuff we recommend. |A

We encourage you to check out Shine TV and other sources of good quality programming that support and encourage us in our walk with the Lord.



Dave Firth is a husband, father, bible teacher and communicator. He loves the Lord and has a passion for His Word. For more info visit www.davefirth.org

Challenges of Fatherhood

by Charles Price

There is the seductive myth that possessions, status, reputation and accomplishments give meaning and value to our lives, so we are tempted to spend an inordinate amount of time pursuing these things. They may have a place in the big picture, but they only ever play a secondary role. It has been said that, "No one on his deathbed ever says, 'I wish I had spent more time at the office.'" So, what would he wish he had done? I have no doubt his answer would have to do with his relationships. The true quality of life derives from our relationships, not our possessions or reputation.

Much of the book of Proverbs is built around one of the key relationships of our lives. It's a manual of advice by a father for his sons! Twenty-eight times he addresses his wisdom to 'my son', or 'my sons', and gives one very beautiful memory of his own father

taking him aside and giving him the most important advice of his life, to *'seek wisdom and understanding, though it cost you all you have, get understanding'*. No wonder when Solomon came to the throne, and God invited him to, *"Ask for whatever you want me to give you"* (1 Kings 3:5), no doubt remembering his father's words, Solomon said: *"Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong"* (v.9). Solomon's famous wisdom is the legacy of his father implanting sound advice into his son.

For those of us who are fathers, it is both the most exciting, and the most intimidating role of our lives. Most look forward to having children, but the next two decades of having them in our care, under

our protection, subject to our discipline, safe in our love, following our direction can be incredibly intimidating. We don't have a trial run and we have learned our best lessons about fatherhood when it is time for the children to leave home. I would relive the dependent years of my three children if I could, and would do so many things differently. I would learn that the biggest expression of love to my children is time. Not 'quality time' (a poor substitute for making up for our absence) but just time. According to a Sunday Times article in the UK, research suggests that children would choose to

have more of their parents' time above the highest standard of living in the world. Splashing out on birthdays and Christmas in attempt to make up for lost time, is a waste of money. Children need time with adults to play with them, listen to them, talk with them. This is what makes them feel wanted, loved and significant and what creates healthy self confidence. Time can be making sure we eat meals together, talk, play, have adventures and pray together.

When our first child was three days old, she was brought home from hospital. I carried her into our home, and said to my wife Hilary, "Now what do we do?" Do you know what we did? Over the next weeks we read the book of Proverbs together, and noted everything it had to say about parenting and children. It was so helpful to us, that later Hilary wrote a series of articles for a monthly family magazine called 'Parenting in Proverbs'.

Our relationship with our parents lays a foundation for the rest of our life. It was they who wrote on the blank sheets of paper that were our lives in those early days. No father is perfect, but we leave a legacy that remains for life. I see in myself responses to my own father and in my son responses to me as his father, that are for both good and ill.

I have always been drawn to Winston Churchill. The seeds of his greatness were sown by an inadequate father. He spent his life trying to prove his father wrong having told him as a teenage boy he would never amount to anything. His father died when he was twenty and only knew him as a restless young man, unsure of his purpose, who he reprimanded for his lacklustre approach to life. Towards the end of his own life



Winston's daughter asked him one day who he would like to invite to dinner, if he could invite anyone he wanted to, whether alive or dead. He replied immediately, 'My father. I want him to know I turned out well.'

Every parent is different, every child is different, and we all bring different histories, personalities, strengths and weaknesses into the relationship. There is therefore no 'one size fits all' recipe for good parenting, but Proverbs does give us big picture principles that need to be broken down and applied into individual circumstances. These apply generally to parenting, whether by a father, a mother, or both.

1] Teaching our children.

Probably the best-known verse in Proverbs about parenting is, *"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it"* (Prov 22.6). That is a proverb not a promise. It requires appropriate responses from the child, but as a general statement it is true. Children need 'training' and guiding. The alternative is: *"a child left to himself disgraces his mother"* (Proverbs 29.15b).

The *"way he should go"* probably refers not to a straight moral path of integrity that most of us want our children to follow, but considers the unique person

this child is, their aptitudes, interests, skills and aspirations and the encouragement to let these flourish to the full. Some parents want to train a child in the way they themselves think they should go (or want them to go) and have aspirations for which they are not skilled, nor in which they are interested. I know too many situations where a father has planned the life and career of his child (based usually on the father's interests), and in the course of years has brought great turmoil to the child, and damage to the family.

The primary role of parents is to guide our children from dependence to independence, from irresponsibility to responsibility and from immaturity to maturity. When a child is born into a home, he or she is totally dependent, irresponsible and immature. Parents make every decision for them – as babies they put food in one end, wipe it off the other, decide what they wear and when. But little by little we teach them to make decisions, to do things for themselves, to become responsible, increasingly independent until the day comes when the child says: 'I can cope alone now, I want to leave home'. When that day comes, it is not failure that makes them want to go, but success! Parents can mourn

their loss to the home, but rejoice in their gain to the world, at the same time.

To his son, Solomon writes, “My son, keep my words and store up my commands within you... Bind them on your fingers, write them on the tablets of your heart” (Proverbs 7.1-3). Derek Kidner says, to ‘write them on your heart’, is to develop wise habits of thinking and to ‘bind them on your fingers’, is to develop wise habits of action. Helping our kids to think well and act well.

Solomon grew up in a busy home. His father, David, was King of Israel, yet Solomon records how as a boy, his father took him on his knee and taught him all the virtues of wisdom, concluding with: ‘Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life’ (Proverbs 4.23).

Elizabeth Elliot wrote that parents used to want their children to be good, and as a result they were happy. Now parents want their children to be happy and as a result, they are often not good! Parents first responsibility is to teach their children to be good!

2] Being an Example to our Children

Solomon wrote, “He who fears the Lord has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge” (Prov 14:26). Godliness in the home is not learned just from how we talk about God but how we talk about problems, people, each other and the world. These things are much better caught than taught! When Samson was born, his father Manoah asked God to teach him and his wife how to bring up the boy, God’s answer was not to give him a pattern of behavior for the boy, but for his wife, “She must

do everything I have commanded her” (Judges 13.14). The message was that the greatest contribution to a child’s upbringing is not so much what parents do, but who they are in and of themselves, in terms of their character, values and integrity.

Very unhealthy habits were learned from parents in Scripture. Jacob stole the birthright from his brother Esau, then deceived his father, he cheated his father in law, manipulated his circumstances around his own selfish interests, and he learned it all from his mother Rebecca! God had to work hard on Jacob for many years, and wrestled with him to break that damaged heart, and then rename him “Israel”, which means Prince with God.

Salome, daughter of Herod asked for head of John Baptist on a platter because her Mother suggested it. I wonder what kind of monster Salome grew up to become!

3] Correcting our Children

The second most quoted statement about children in Proverbs is: “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him”, often paraphrased as: “Spare the rod and spoil the child” (Proverbs 13.24). This is a politically correct minefield for Solomon to walk through today, but there are principles here that don’t change. “Folly is bound up in the heart of a child...” (Ch 22.15) When we first meet our innocent cute offspring we can hardly believe such a thing. But watch them for a few years and it becomes painfully obvious. The verse continues, ‘Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the

rod of discipline will drive it far from him’. Here is another controversial minefield that Solomon walks into, but however we administer discipline, administer it we must. Clearly, consistently and compassionately. Stuart Briscoe in his succinct way says about parenting, ‘Be firm. Be fair. Be fun.’

Children themselves must respond to discipline constructively. “He who ignores discipline despises himself”. (Proverbs 15.32) It is in accepting discipline that we build self-esteem. Speaking of a young man who is sexually promiscuous, Proverbs says that “At the end of your life you will groan... You will say, ‘How I hated discipline...’” To not discipline children is the height of irresponsibility in parents. To impose a permissive environment on our children is to breed deep insecurity. Children need boundaries, and boundaries need enforcing. The child may live within the boundaries freely, but crossing them needs to bring consequences. The boundaries expand with time and growth and maturity, until they eventually disappear, but by then the child has learned their own boundaries and the safety and security of living within them.

Some wit has said, ‘When you were born you were crying and everyone else was smiling. Make sure that when you die, you are smiling and everyone else is crying’. Morbid it may seem, but that is what good parenting does! Wordsworth wrote, ‘The child is father to the man’. The man we become, is a product of the child we were. The child we were, was molded by the parents we had. |A



■ Charles Price, Minister at Large, The Peoples Church, Toronto, Canada and Living Truth TV and radio.

5 REASONS WHY You Should Love Listening to PODCASTS

By Nathan Johnston



“WHO LISTENS TO THE RADIO ANYMORE?”

I looked at the lanky teenager who asked the question and replied that it has been years since I’ve turned a dial looking for something to listen to. With the ever increasing popularity of “on demand” options, why would I want to get stuck listening to someone else’s choice for music, news, or edifying content?

In truth, I love the option of on-demand content. Whether I pull up Spotify to listen to music or my podcast app to listen to content—I love being able to choose what I want to listen to when I want to listen to it.

I’ve been an avid podcast listener for years. Currently, I subscribe and listen to 17 podcasts (the number has been as high as 48)—many are sermons or Bible-based

subjects, but I also have podcasts on topics such as health, business, finance, productivity, manhood, and communication. Most of these have weekly episodes, and though there are a few other podcasts I pick and choose from when there appears to be a good episode, I try to listen to every episode and stay up-to-date with these 17.

Yes, it takes some time—but that is the great thing about podcasts: it is on-demand content that I can take with me wherever I go. In fact, let me give you five reasons why I love podcasts and think you will too:

1. ON-DEMAND CONTENT

This is probably the greatest reason for podcasts in my mind. I live a busy life and I admit it’s hard to find time to listen to edifying content—but podcasts allow me to pick and choose what I want to hear when I want to hear it. I

‘I LOVE PODCASTS BECAUSE YOU CAN GET ENDLESS CONTENT WITHOUT SPENDING A PENNY.’

subscribe to a few great podcasts and listen to them while I drive, work out, cook, clean, or a variety of other activities (which means it doesn’t take any additional time in my day to listen!).

2. PODCASTS FOCUSED ON A VARIETY OF TOPICS, THEMES, AND SUBJECTS

Not only can you control the influences (what podcasts you hear), you literally have thousands of choices of podcasts. Yes, that can appear overwhelming, but I love being able to be choosy with who I listen to and allow a voice in my life. There are continually

new shows being created in every niche, so if you think you might like to listen to a podcast on a particular subject, there is likely one out there.

3. FREE!

I had a great friend who use to say, "If it's free, it's for me!" I love podcasts because you can get endless content without spending a penny. Many podcasts give you incredible content—and you can sometimes learn more about a subject via podcasts than you could if you attended college classes (and you have to pay for college classes). It has often been stated that if you drive 12,000 miles a year, in three years time, if you listen to audio programs (like podcasts) in your car, it is equivalent to two years of college education. Whether or not it is true, using time to listen to podcasts gives you a boost in your understanding and propels you forward faster.

4. MANY PODCASTS HAVE SHOW NOTES AND RESOURCES

Many podcasts today refer listeners back to a page on their website where an outline of the podcast is located along with any resources mentioned in the

'IF YOU HAVEN'T STARTED LISTENING TO PODCASTS, I HIGHLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO DO SO. PODCASTS HAVE BEEN A RICH BLESSING IN MY LIFE AS I'VE LOOKED FOR INSIGHT ON A VARIETY OF TOPICS.'

podcast. It may not seem like much, but this added benefit can help you locate information and resources quickly as well as help you scan text quickly for reference. I can't tell you how many times I've listened to a podcast and later went to the show notes page to download a bonus freebie, look up a book mentioned, or grab a quote that was used.

5. A COMMUNITY

One of the neat, and perhaps unexpected, things about podcasts is that it invites you to become a part of a community. People who listen to similar content become a tribe or community following the podcast. You can receive help with certain topics or situations and you can seek advice from others who share similar passions (whether through online forums, the podcast facebook page, etc).

If you haven't started listening to podcasts, I highly encourage you to do so. Podcasts have been a rich blessing in my life as I've looked for insight on a variety of topics.

WHERE TO START?

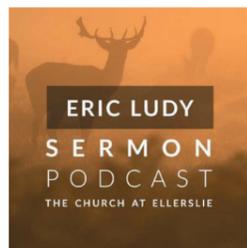
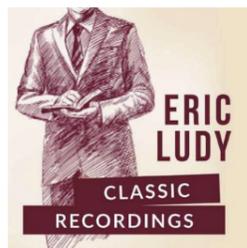
Hands down, the main hub of podcasts is still iTunes. iTunes has the biggest selection of podcasts—and whether or not you have Apple products, iTunes can be a great way to find a new podcast.

It's simple to start—find a podcast you like, hit subscribe, and every time a new episode is released (for many podcasts it's weekly), that episode/show will automatically appear in your iTunes.

There are other great apps you may consider using like Stitcher or the one I prefer: Overcast (gives you a lot of listening options).

RECOMMENDED PODCASTS

Need a couple recommendations? Granted these are biased, but I strongly support the new podcasts in the Bravehearted Christian Podcast Network (and not just because the new deeperChristian Podcast is one of them):

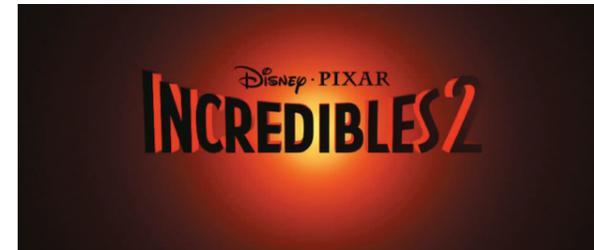


Visit www.authenticmagazine.co.nz/podcasts to see these and other podcasts recommendations



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MOVIE REVIEWS



INCREDIBLES 2

Superheroes are messy.

Yes, admittedly they may have the best of intentions. But every time they do battle with a bad 'un, collapsing buildings are sure to follow. Superman and Zod destroy half of Metropolis in *Man of Steel*. The Avengers defeated Ultron in Sokovia, but they don't exactly leave the city better than they found it. Why, the only folks who unreservedly love superheroes these days are insurance adjusters.

The Parr family knows all about the prejudice against superheroes. Never mind that they conquered the evil Syndrome (as chronicled in the gritty documentary *The Incredibles*). No matter that they just stopped a new felonious evildoer, Underminer, in his subterranean tracks: "Supers" are still illegal. And, frankly, the politicians wish they would've left well enough—and the Underminer—alone. Bob and Helen (once the beloved Mr. Incredible and Elastigirl) along with their supercharged progeny (Violet, Dash and baby Jack-Jack) still aren't allowed to use their superpowers. It's all right there in the book: section 27, paragraph 32, line c or thereabouts.

Marketing tycoon Winston Deaver wants to change that.

Winston believes that these days, superheroes need to be more than pure of heart and strong of muscle. They need a good PR campaign, too. For way too long, superheroes have done their hero thing and slipped back into the night without a word, capes a-flapping. All the public sees is the destruction heroes leave in their wake. They don't see the heroes behind it and what made the destruction necessary. No wonder they're not so popular these days.

Winston wants to reintroduce Elastigirl to the world. When it sees all the good that Elastigirl does, all those anti-super laws will collapse like an evil lair made of balsa wood. And the Parr family will be allowed to use its powers freely again. However, that plan comes with a dollop of irony: "To fix the law, I gotta break it," Helen says. And to help her family, she'll have to leave it for a while—leaving Bob, that big galoot who typically solves problems by punching them, in charge.

Yep, superheroes are messy.

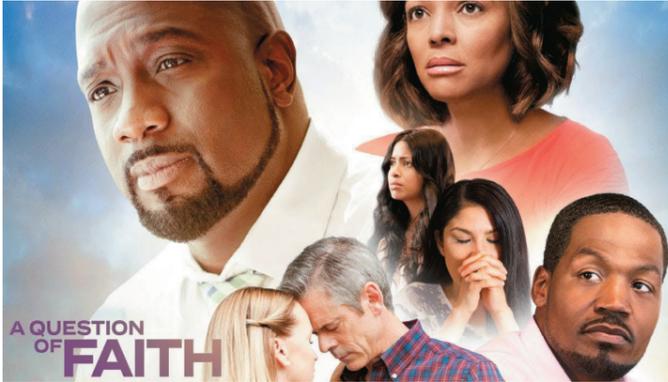
So, who's the hero? The costumed crime fighter who saves innocents, stops runaway trains and bops the bad guy in the nose? Or the stay-at-home parent who loses sleep to help his son with his homework? *Incredibles 2* gives us an unmistakable answer: *yes!*

As fun as *Incredibles 2* is (and it is), as excellent aesthetically as it may be (and it is that, too), Pixar once again encourages us to go deeper as we laugh and marvel and cringe and smile. It encourages older viewers to consider some of its ethical conundrums even as, like Dash, it sprints by them. And it asks its younger fans to reconsider the heroes in their own lives—the same folks who likely bought them movie tickets.

Incredibles 2 doesn't match the majesty of *Up* or the profundity of *Inside Out*. But I think a lot of people will enjoy this movie more. It's funny and smart, thrilling and sweet. Moreover, like any flick worth its price of admission, it may make you look at your own world just a little bit differently—and the people we find and love therein. |A



A QUESTION OF FAITH



Pastor David Newman is a good husband and good dad.

And he's going to be a solid senior pastor once his own father retires. But, frankly, those are pretty big pastoral shoes to fill. There are all the congregational demands, the church management meetings, the new building project, weekly sermons, hospital visitations. The list stretches on and on ... and David is feeling pretty stretched, too.

But tough times are coming! His and some other lives will be changed forever. It'll make each of them question what they believe and wonder about the purpose of life.

God is good. Of course, He saw everything that was coming. He sees how all the pieces fit. He sees all the threads and all the ties and He sees all the possibilities. And He wants those desperately seeking him to have ... a little trust in His goodness.

Scripture repeatedly tells us that God's eyes are always upon us, that He sees all of our steps. He sees everything we do, every choice we make, every thought we have. And God sees how all those things—the good and the bad, the gaining and the losing—fit together.

We mere humans, on the other hand, are a myopic lot. It's often difficult for us to see the big picture, to see past our own anger and pain and confusion. That's why the Bible goes on to tell us, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

That straightforward truth is what A Question of Faith sets out to illustrate. With an omniscient storytelling

perspective, this movie dramatically shows us that God is aware of all our failing and flailing. He knows the horrible stuff of our lives—such as a child's accidental death, a crippling disease, the corruption of racial bigotry—and He can use it all to transform and reshape us, if we only let go of our consuming thirst for control and trust in Him. That's a message that this film delivers in some involving and emotional ways.

There are, though, a few weak points. Sometimes the film's cinematic structure can seem a bit forced. And viewers may be distracted by the fact that the story occasionally feels a bit like a public service announcement lauding organ donation and warning against the dangers of texting while driving.

But, like us, this film's weaknesses aren't the make-or-break factor in this mix. They're just a small part. What's most important, is what God can do with all the rest. **A**

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Plugged In is a Focus on the Family Website designed to shine a light on the world of popular entertainment while giving families the essential tools they need to understand, navigate, and impact the culture in which they live.

Through their reviews, articles and discussions, they hope to spark intellectual thought, spiritual growth and a desire to follow the command of Colossians 2:8: "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ"

Each month, Plugged In is visited more than 1 million times by people looking for detailed information about what's really in popular movies, videos, television episodes, songs and games. Entertainment industry ratings only tell you so much. We go deeper, diving into specific content and the meaning behind it. Our award-winning website also offers news and blogs.

JUST FOR *Laughs...*

Why didn't they play cards on the Ark?

Because Noah was always standing on the deck

Why didn't Noah ever go fishing?

He only had two worms.

What kind of man was Boaz before he married Ruth?

Absolutely ruthless

What do you get if you cross a Jehovah's Witness and a Unitarian?

Someone who goes around knocking on doors for no apparent reason.

Who was the first tennis player in the bible?

Joseph because he served in Pharaoh's court

Where was Solomon's temple located?

On the side of his head.

What did Adam say the day before Christmas?

It's Christmas, Eve!

How does Moses make his coffee?

Hebrews it, obviously.

Who was the smartest man in the Bible?

Abraham. He knew a Lot.

Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible?

Samson – he brought the house down

Which Bible character had no parents?

Joshua, son of Nun (Joshua 1:1).

Editor: I'm so sorry.



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