

ABOVE RUBIES

www.aboverubies.org

Issue: Seventy-Five

Strengthening Families Across The World

In This Issue:

Living the Dream

Courting Stories

Peace in the Home

Training Sons to be Husbands

*Weddings
with a Difference*

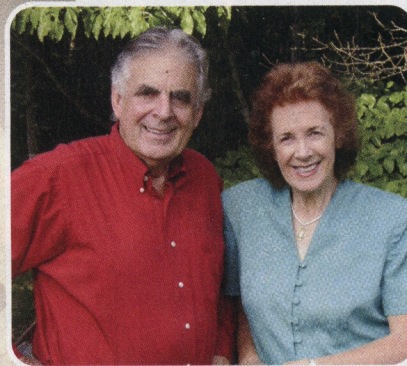
Girls' Sleepovers

**Coping with
Morning Sickness**

From Our Home to Yours

I have just returned from popping over to Serene's home. I love entering her bathroom where she has painted quotes on motherhood all around the walls. One quote, by Mother Teresa, reads: "Love begins by taking care of the closest ones, the ones at home." How true. How we act and what we accomplish at home will count for eternity more than anything we do outside the home.

I know you will enjoy the theme of courting and weddings in this issue. No matter what our age or stage of life, we love these subjects, don't we? Because of this theme, I decided to put a wedding picture on the front cover. I received hundreds of pictures in answer to my request: it was very difficult to choose. Some asked if I would put our wedding picture on the cover. I wouldn't like to do that, but I will print it in the editorial for you. This is



I feel as young as the day we married: why do we look so much older?

that I will see my great-grandchildren. Of course, I am looking for the Lord's coming, but I was hoping I would have time to receive these wonderful blessings!

Last issue of *Above Rubies* I showed you pictures

of Evangeline and I starting our gardens. Here are some pictures taken a little later.

You will see Arrow, Evangeline's seven-year-old standing by his cucumber grove. He wanted to plant a garden this year and was very serious about it. Evangeline made the arbor for his cucumbers to climb and as you can see, they did very well. Better than mine. In fact, my cucumber plants died and Arrow's thrived! What an opportunity for an entrepreneur! Every day Arrow arrived at my doorstep with cucumbers to sell at 50¢ each. I was spending \$10 a week on cucumbers! While I went broke he made a mint!

The summer is over and everyone has their "heads down" for the new home-schooling year. I miss seeing the grandchildren playing on the lawn or a group of



Evangeline with her nine children in her prolific garden.

Colin and me, over 45 years ago! We were married in Te Puke, New Zealand, 2 March 1963. What blessed and rich years the Lord has given to us, the riches of children and many grandchildren—the greatest riches than anyone could ever receive, 35 grandchildren at this count and hoping for many more.

I prayed a very selfish prayer before I married. I asked God if He wouldn't



Seven-year-old Arrow in his cucumber arbor.



A morning harvest of tomatoes from my 90 tomato plants. They grew so tall again this year that, although I am 6', I have to stretch to reach the top of the plants.

cousins walking by my office window together with blowguns in their hands, ready to take on some animal, or even birds and insects in my garden! Thanks, boys.

Because we live close together, the girls trade with their schooling. Evangeline teaches Pearl's Meadow high school along with her older children while Pearl takes some of Evangeline's younger children who are at the same level as hers. It works well.

Before school started, Serene and Pearl managed to complete their new album—songs of love and commitment to marriage. You will love it! The powerful words will bless your marriage. You will also want to purchase extra CDs to bless other marriages, especially those who struggle and need to be strengthened and encouraged. I know you will relate to the songs as Serene and Pearl share the depths of their own experiences, their joys and hardships.

They recorded 10 songs and everything was completed, when Pearl hit on another idea and the girls wrote another song! Charlie, her husband and producer, wasn't too happy to start again, but ended up giving in. Now you will be blessed with eleven songs in beautiful harmony.

Here are the words to the one they popped in at the last minute...

May God bless you and strengthen you as you daily nurture the children God has graciously given to you. We live in an age that is twisted out of God's pattern for living. You do not have to conform to its pattern. Instead, shine like beacon lights in this world as you raise your family for God and uncompromisingly stand up for the truth. Love righteousness and hate evil.

Raise your children to do the same.

He's not the type who brings home flowers,
Candlelight dinners, talking for hours,
That's not his thing, but don't feel sorry for me—
Can't quite figure out the reason
Our love grows with every season,
It's no fairy tale but I know all is well.

CHORUS:

Maybe it's the way he hugs our little girl
That makes me melt;
Maybe it's the way he looks at me and I know
I'm his world;
Could be that when he holds me
We're such a perfect fit,
Maybe that's it!

Went to the mountains on our honeymoon,
We say we'll get away again, just us two,
But that's okay life gets in the way,
But we don't need exotic places
To figure out our love is precious.
Who needs a fantasy when
you've got the real thing?

CHORUS:

Maybe it's the way he just comes home
And everything feels right;
Maybe it's the way he gave our son those
Same sky blue eyes;
Could be it's his simple faith in God
That never quits,
Maybe that's it!

BRIDGE:

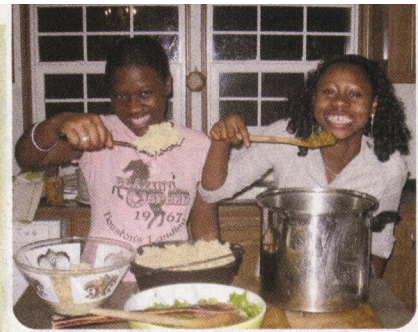
He may not be perfect,
May not be every woman's dream
But I know this,
I'll take all his flaws
But I wouldn't trade his goodnight kiss.

CHORUS:

Maybe it's the way he lets the children
Jump all over him;
Maybe it's the way he's strong and silent,
Yet he lets me in;
Could be it's the calm assurance that
He always gives;
Maybe that's it!

Lift up the banner of righteousness for it is only righteousness that exalts a nation.

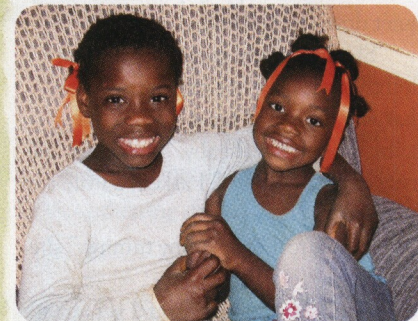
NANCY CAMPBELL,
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Our daughters, Mercy and Psalmody, dishing out the food in preparation for our evening meal. There are usually about 10 of us sitting around our family meal table each evening.



Abigail Maxwell, my Above Rubies helper, who has been serving so faithfully for the last three months, with some of Serene's children—Engedi, Vision and Cedar.



Two of Serene's daughters, Cherish and Engedi.

ABOVE RUBIES

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Above Rubies is a magazine to encourage women in their high calling as wives, mothers and homemakers. Its purpose is to uphold and strengthen family life and to raise the standard of God's truth in the nation. The name has been chosen from Proverbs 31:10 AMP, "A capable, intelligent and virtuous woman, who is he who can find her? She is far more precious than jewels and her value is far ABOVE RUBIES or pearls."

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PRINTING: Printed by McQuiddy Printing, Nashville, TN USA

COVER PHOTO: Gina Bacon. Craig and Gina were married May 31, 2008 in Columbia, South Carolina. Photograph by Danny Oakes.

Living the Dream

Our three year old girl, Autumn Rose, throws herself into make believe play. She changes her voice, her mannerisms and becomes a mother to her dolls. I love it when she plays Mommy. It is so sweet to hear her coo comforting words while rocking her babies with a contented look on her face. But, I have to be honest; one of the best parts is that I actually get a break for an hour or so. She becomes so involved in her little world of pretending to take her babies to Wal-Mart, feeding them and putting them to bed that she's not running riot in the house and things quiet down for a while.

She has one particularly well-worn doll that she calls her real baby. A few days ago she asked me when she was going to have a real baby. "Isn't your real baby in your stroller?" I asked, a little confused.

"No, a real baby in my tummy," she explained.

"Oh." I hesitated. "You'll get a real baby in your tummy when you grow up and get married like Mommy did."

Her eyes brightened, "When I marry a prince?"

"Yes," I laughed. She is a huge Cinderella fan.

She thought for a moment. "Can Daddy be my prince?"

"No baby, Daddy is already Mommy's prince."

She looked around the room and spied her older brother. "Can Noble be my prince?"

This was going to take some explaining I realized. "Your brother or your Daddy can't be your prince. He will be someone special you will meet when you're all big."

Autumn smiled with joy. "And I'll live with him all the time?"

"That's right."

She was so taken with the idea. Her delight and awe caught me off guard and

it dawned on me that I already had what she was imagining. I was living this dream. My long list of chores to be ticked off and my ever-present battle with contentment faded at the thought that I had something so special, even a child longed for it.

Autumn climbed on my lap and snuggled close, "Mommy, when I get a real, real baby you can live with me and the prince and we'll share the baby".

I thanked her for her generosity and silently thanked God for the gentle reminder of the blessed life he has given me.

A couple of days later I was in the shower and Autumn barged in the bathroom door. No surprise there. Anyone with little children knows there is no safe haven in the house; even the toilet is not off limits to their appearances.

"Mommy, who is my prince going to be?" she yelled over the sound of running water.

This conversation again? "Only God knows who he will be," I yelled back.

Then I heard her high squeaky voice, "God, who is my prince?" I had to cover my mouth to stop the laughter.

"God, tell me who is my prince," she insisted, louder. She opened the shower door and said, "God won't tell me." I managed to keep half a straight face. "He will show you when you're a grown up. You don't have to worry about it right now."

She seemed satisfied and ran out of the bathroom. Later that night she climbed on her Daddy's lap to tell him that he couldn't be her prince but she would get a different prince and then get a baby in her tummy. Of course my husband looked at me with wide eyes and I



explained our recent conversations.

Autumn listened intently and nodded her head. This was serious stuff to her.

The beauty of the maternal instinct struck me the next day as I watched her play her mommy game. It is inherent and God-given. I can't say she simply copies me. I am often pulling my hair out in exasperation. Three boys, you know.

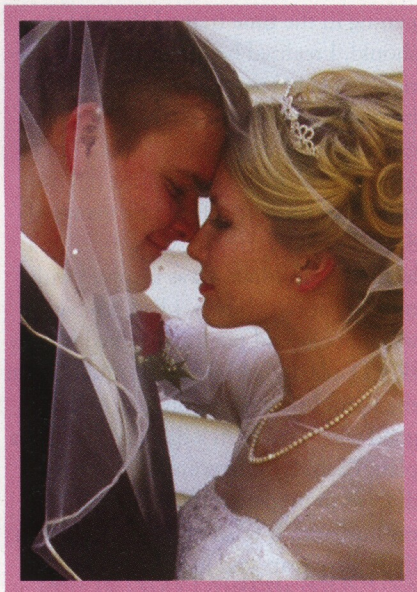
Her make-believe world inspired me again to capture the magical essence of being in love and raising a family. As a girl I would imagine having a kitchen all of my own and cooking meals for my husband. My heart would swell with the anticipation. I'll confess that now, I often view my kitchen as a place of drudgery. It is all about dishes and carving out meals from frugal funds. But, I also realize it is how I think about it. My husband loves my cooking and my children are well fed and very healthy. Isn't that a little girl's dream come true?

I imagine how much joy and satisfaction God must have when he watches us as mothers and wives in our homes, showing the same nurturing instinct that Autumn shows to her dolls. He must surely be delighted as we immerse ourselves in living out the dream He designed for us.

PEARL BARRETT

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Charlie and Pearl have five children, Meadow (13), Bowen (10), Rocklyn, (8), Noble (6) and Autumn Rose (3).



Will you Marry me?

Courtship Stories you will love to Read!

The Sunset Walk

Our families have worshipped together for years and both our mothers had been secretly making wedding plans since we were little. We were involved together in serving families in our church as well as participating in mission trips to both Canada and Mexico. Although best friends for years before our courtship, our family held us accountable and we maintained the highest level of purity.

I made a list of qualities I wanted in a Godly husband, and Nathan more than fulfilled all of them. It was just a matter of waiting... it had to be God's timing. I knew, and he knew, but it had never been discussed.

After I completed my home education, Nathan asked my father if he could begin courting me. Our courtship lasted about five months. On the 26th of October, and after dinner in town, he brought me home, and we took a sunset walk. He led me to Pine Forest, a wooded area on our property where he had planned a romantic location to propose. The ladies from our church had carefully carried out his instructions—rose petals on the walk, soft music playing through the trees and candles flickering. It was breathtaking.

After he proposed, and I accepted of course, we walked back to my parent's house, where several of the families from our church had gathered for a celebration. We were married two months later in a fairytale wedding at an historic chapel surrounded by our families and

closest friends. We saved our first kiss for our wedding day. Our wedding was beautiful, but our marriage is heavenly.

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Photos top left and right. They married in January 2008—Jackelynn was 19 and Nathan 20 and they are looking forward to God blessing them with children.

My Dream

Around the time I could seriously be thinking about marriage I received an offer that would have made all of my girl-ish dreams of romance come true. However, the only answer I could hear from God was, "Do not settle for your dreams; run after mine."

I chose Christ. He's the very essence of my life. Yet, that initial choice did not stop me from lusting after romance. And God, being the jealous God he is, began calling me to a higher commitment, into a sacred romance meant for just the two of us.

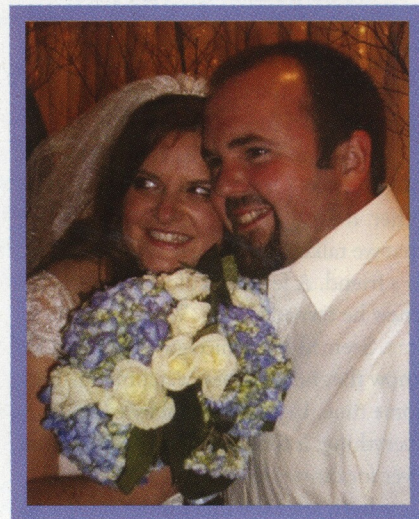
After a particularly hard relationship in my early twenties (mainly the longing for one with a certain boy) I came crawling to the feet of Jesus saying, "Take this burden from me. I can't seem to stay committed to you alone. Separate me unto yourself." He answered me, "My daughter, if you truly long for this you must surrender. And you must give up not only this man but your right to choose one."

My father came to me several days later and offered, unaware of the conversation that God and I had, to take over the duty of finding me a husband.

I agreed. From that day on I left the "looking" in my father's hands and tried my best to follow God. He led me here and there—overseas, to different states,

across streets and through cities.

I didn't do it perfectly. My gaze wandered many times... searching. The only allowance I gave myself was a journal written to my husband. Into that I poured my dreams, prayers and longings. Through that God drew my gaze daily back to Him. I prayed constantly: for grace to walk the path God had for me and for something to hold onto in the meantime. Then one



night I had a dream. This is the abridged version:

I was standing in a group of people. They were obviously friends of mine. Every little while some would leave and others would come. I became aware of someone who was watching me. I hadn't noticed the exact time he joined the group but once my eye was caught he walked towards me.

He smiled at me, picked me up and began walking away. At first I was a bit put out. Who was this guy? What gave him the right? But, as we walked he began to talk. He told the story of his longings and his dreams. He looked at me and said, "Share my dreams with me." I didn't know what to think.

After awhile we stopped at the top of a hill. There, out in the open, was a dance floor. It was beautiful cherry wood. Polished. Flawless. There were people standing around it but no one was dancing. The man walked into the middle of the floor then slowly set me on my feet.

"Why aren't the people dancing?" I asked him.

He looked at me and smiled, "Because this is our dance floor. I made it for you so that we could dance together."

"But you couldn't have known me when you were building this." I was confused as I looked around then back at him.

"I had the hope of you. I built it and I prayed for you; then I searched until I found you." He answered.

Right then vivid pictures flashed through my mind. Him working. Sweating. Pounding nails. Sanding. Varnishing. Work. Work. Work. Just to dance with me.

We started dancing. And I cried.

When I woke up I felt God say, "This is what I have for you." Right then, a love began growing in my heart for the man God had for me.

Amos and I knew each other for quite awhile. Or rather, knew "of" each other. It wasn't until December of 2006 that we talked directly. He was my brother's friend. A few years older than me. I knew he owned a farm. Worked on tractors. Seemed like a nice guy. Little did I know that he had been watching me for some time. In fact, I was oblivious to everything; it took my father inviting him over for dinner to open my eyes.

Even after the first dinner it took a little time to realize that he was serious. In 2007 I spent the better part of the first six months in Brazil helping a missionary family. On my return our "courtship" became serious. We didn't date in the usual sense. Mostly we talked. We talked about everything you can imagine. Our past. Our present. Our future. Our dreams. Our fears. Our nightmares. Our passions. Our visions. Our joys. Our pain. And God.

By the end of the first "intense" week of courtship I knew without a doubt that this was the man God had been telling me about. I wasn't "in love" in a worldly sense but I was completely confident that this was the man for me.

I met his parents (as his girlfriend, not just a random girl at church) and he

met my extended family. Some thought we were crazy to be talking about marriage so soon, but they hadn't sat through our discussions. And they hadn't watched every promise from God play out in our lives.

I chose to love him. It wasn't an emotional choice; it was definitely a factual decision. I was attracted to him physically, emotionally, and most importantly, spiritually. This was it.

He took me to his farm. Settled at the top of the hill. So beautiful. He told me how much he had prayed for someone to share his life with him. The picture of the dance floor from my dream drifted across my vision. And I fell. I mean... head-over-heels, crazy-can't-see-straight, I-can't-believe-he's-mine IN LOVE. Not because his farm is so beautiful (although I do love it) but because I recognized him from my dream. And all that love that had been growing and building up for the man who would care for me so deeply... spilled out.

He proposed on the farm. In the living room of his house. I said yes.

My father's approval had been given from the start. He HAD invited him over for dinner after all!

How could I say anything else when God had so carefully orchestrated our love story from the very beginning?

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We Saved the Kiss

My parents said that from the age of three, I talked and dreamed of getting married. I remember times when we went to visit my Grandma. I would sneak upstairs and pull out the special, mysterious white box that held Momma's veil she wore for her wedding. I was almost afraid to touch it so I would just look. As I grew older, I would take it out and put it on. I dreamt of how it would look on me as I walked down the aisle and how I would feel as a beautiful bride. I wondered how my story would pan out and who the person that I was dreaming about would be.

Since getting married wasn't hap-

pening in the time frame I thought it should, I realized being content in singleness was going to be important. This became my new goal. Pretty soon a new excitement came over me. I still hadn't met my husband! That exciting day was still in my future ready to be discovered! So, I decided to stay busy. I worked at a local bank fulltime. I was involved with ministry at our church. I had hobbies. I wrote books and poetry. I studied how to be a Doula and helped Mom and Dad on the farm. I read books on how to be a good wife. I wrote in a diary and...I had a plan. Each day I determined that what I did was in preparation for marriage and my husband. It wasn't always easy. Often there were tears and heartache. There were times when I wanted to give up hoping. I really had a dream and desire to be a wife and mommy, but at times, I didn't think it would happen.

Sometimes the Lord surprises us



when we are least expecting it. Maybe those are the times when we have finally given up our will for His will. It's when we are ready for whatever He has in store for us, knowing His plans are not our plans. And then it happens.

I met Stephen via email (under my dad's supervision) and we communicated by emailing for about three weeks. At one point Stephen expressed a desire to meet me. I directed him to Dad. This was important to me. This would be the test. If the young man said "why" or "no" that would be a sign he wasn't the right one for me. If he proceeded, even if he was a

bit nervous, well...now we were getting somewhere.

Stephen did email Dad and expressed an interest in meeting me. Unbeknownst to me, Dad and Stephen set up a time to get together first, before we would ever meet. The meeting went well. Dad approved.

November 18th of 2006, we were having a birthday party—mine. Friends, family and Stephen were gathering at Mom and Dad's home and I was nervous. This would be the first time that Stephen and I would meet in person. Stephen stayed until midnight and we talked and talked while Mom and Dad were nearby within listening range (albeit—groggily). Stephen went home and I wondered if I had just met my husband.

Within a short time, we officially courted. We spent many hours at his or my parents' house, on the phone or emailing. Rarely were we alone unless traveling in the car from one place to another.

Although Stephen and I were not engaged at this point, we knew we were headed towards marriage. After a discussion about our boundaries (hand holding and kissing), he called me at work one day and said, "Stacie, I have decided we will wait until our wedding day to kiss." Tears welled up in my eyes. Suddenly, I was someone who was so important, special and treasured in someone else's eyes. He would sacrifice his desires for me. This was someone special. I had never kissed anyone in my 28 years of life and I wanted to keep my first kiss for the man I was to marry.

On April 1st 2007, my family and Stephen's family had an Easter Potluck. The evening progressed with food, laughter, fun and an Easter egg hunt (which I found out later was planned to throw me off as to why everyone had cameras and video cameras). Once the egg hunt was over, the children sent off to enjoy their new goodies, the adults were left to play a game. At my turn, I picked up the cards and on each of those cards was my name. The cards said, "Stacie, would you be my wife, the mother of our children, my best friend and share my initials for a lifetime?" I said yes! We hugged while everyone whooped and hollered and congratulated us. It took me weeks, months, to realize that I was getting married—and to

someone who truly cherished and loved me.

We chose September 29th 2007 to be our wedding day! And by the way, I did wear Momma's veil!

The wedding ceremony was beautiful—a one-hour ceremony full of meaning. The music, the special words from my Dad, the symbolic elements we had in the wedding—the lighting of a memory candle, signing our wedding certificate in front of witnesses, presenting our moms with flowers, the seven Jewish blessings to a Bride and Groom that were sung to us in Hebrew and then translated by my Dad (we are not Jewish but it was an element that I wanted), the funny gigantic ring I had the best man hand to Stephen during the ring ceremony—and the kiss. Oh yes, the kiss. It was so worth waiting for. There wasn't anything better in the world than the knowledge that I had saved that kiss for Stephen. It was a wonderful moment, so sweet and gentle.

Stephen and I have been married for almost a year now. I realize more and more that I married a wonderful, Godly man who loves me unconditionally. I appreciate his qualities. He is very relaxed and laid back which complements me since I am the one who seems to have a bit more red in my hair! No, it hasn't been easy and there have been some really hard times. But the good outweighs the bad and the rewards of a sanctified marriage are amazing. We look forward to having a family of our very own and being able to raise them with Godly values and morals.

STACIE EARLEY

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No More Dating

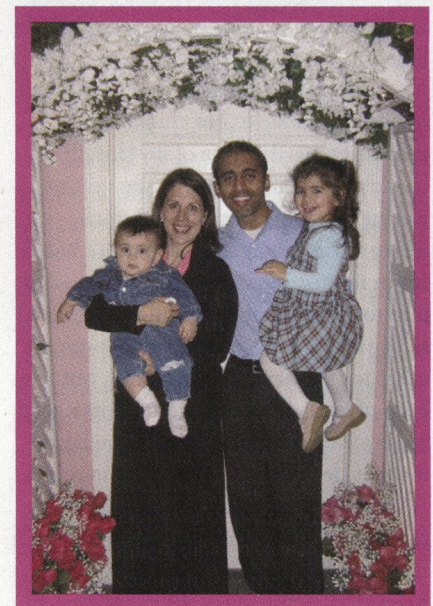
In 1997 I surrendered my life to the Lord and told Him I never wanted to date again. I wanted to be courted. I prayed that my "future husband" would ask to court me and I asked the Lord to protect my heart and purity until I was standing at the altar.

In 2002 I met Glenn. We became friends and he honored me as a sister in the Lord. For 18 months he waited for

the Lord to open my eyes and heart towards him, hiding his feelings and guarding his heart as well as my own. In 2003 the Lord opened my eyes. I couldn't believe I had never "seen" him in that way before! A month later he sat me down and asked to court me. We immediately made ourselves accountable to a married couple from church. Since both Glenn and I lived in apartments by ourselves we asked this couple to hold us accountable, especially in purity. We asked our pastor to do the same. It was a sweet courtship.

In June of 2004 Glenn felt the Lord tell him it was time to ask for my hand in marriage. Before the Lord ever opened my eyes towards Glenn I had a "list" of things I was praying for in my future husband. I kept it in the back of a journal to present to him on our wedding day. I had two very specific requests, one: that my future husband would ask my parents permission for my hand in marriage, and two: that he would wash my feet. I saw the act of foot washing as one of the deepest, most intimate acts of service.

The night Glenn proposed he took



me on a city-wide scavenger hunt. I had NO idea he was going to propose that night. For one of the clues I got rather dirty, especially my feet. It wasn't planned that way but God knew. At the end of the night Glenn asked if he could wash my feet.

As he began to wash my feet my eyes filled with tears. "Oh Lord, You remem-

bered, he is washing my feet!" He asked for my hand in marriage. I of course said yes. I asked him how he knew to wash my feet and he said the Lord led him to do that as well as to visit both my birth father and parents to ask them for their permission. Glenn and I married October of 2004 and shared our first kiss at the altar! God REALLY is the greatest romantic!

KELLY FERNANDES

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Glenn and Kelly have 2 children in heaven plus Elizabeth Joy (2.5) and Elijah (1).

Opposite Sides of the Continent

My husband grew up in Washington State, served in the military, moved throughout the mid-west, and was in Minot, North Dakota when he first heard my name mentioned. I lived at home, helping my family. I had graduated from school, served overseas, served in local ministry, and the Lord led me to stay home and help my parents take care of a grandmother and my recently adopted siblings.

One of my husband's friends moved to our area, came to our church, and became engaged to one of my closest friends. Andy, my husband, was volunteering at a Bible Camp and a small, newly started church, so he did not have much money. However, our friends asked him to come to their wedding and offered to pay his way! We both heard about each other for the next eight months... but both of us had made commitments not to get involved with anyone until the Lord made it clear that we were to get married.

At their rehearsal, I saw Andy and thought, "I am going to marry that man." I avoided him (not easy since I was helping with directing the wedding and he was in it). The next day, he came to church, and we were briefly introduced. But that was it.

Two weeks later, a letter came in the mail. Andy and my Dad corresponded for three months until Andy came to visit our whole family. We spent some time together and ended the week deciding to pray and seek the Lord's will. However, He made His will clear to me when my par-

ents told me that if Andy asked me to marry him, I should say yes.

A month later, Andy came for another visit, and our first in-person courtship visit began. Two months later, my family visited him in North Dakota, and he proposed! He was able to visit once during our engagement (we spent most of the time not wedding planning but taking my grandmother to surgery and then to doctor's appointments). We did not see each other for four months before our wedding, which occurred exactly one year after our friend's rehearsal dinner and the first time we saw each other!

The Lord was so good to us! We saw each other only five different times before our wedding, but we knew we were in His will. We spoke on the phone at most two times a week until we got married, but we were confident that we were marrying our closest friend. Both of us had despaired of ever meeting "someone." We were both in unusual positions in life: Andy was doing volunteer work and was able to fit all his worldly goods in his car, while I was cooking and cleaning for my family all day.

The Lord managed to bring together two people from opposite sides of the continent and put them together. We are convinced that He does indeed bless those who wait for Him. We will soon celebrate our fifth anniversary.

JENNIFER OTT

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Andy and Jennifer have three blessings, Elisha (3), Abigail (2), Shiloh (8 months) and 4 with the Lord.

A Step of Faith

As a single I always wondered and asked God how I would know which guy was the one for my lifelong mate. When friends with Doug, my husband now of 11 years, I prayed for what seemed like an eternity, "Lord, is he the one you have for me?" After two years it came to the point in our relationship where we both needed to know if we were to be married.

Doug left for Africa on a mission trip and I was in Tennessee working in a local hospital. After work one night the Lord led me to a small pond in the middle of town. Sitting in my car looking over the

pond, I prayed a familiar prayer that I had lifted up to the Lord many times, "Lord, please let me know if Doug is the one I am to marry. I need to know beyond a shadow of a doubt."

As I finished my sentence the Lord spoke to my heart, "DeAnn, do you see the water in front of you?" I replied, "Yes, Lord." He continued, "Do you remember the story of Peter walking on water? How Peter stepped out of the boat and as long as he kept his eyes on me he walked on water but when he started looking at the wind and the waves he began to sink? DeAnn, your life is like that. You need to trust me, keep your eyes on me, take a step of faith and get out of the boat and marry Doug. Don't look at the wind and the waves, things like not having any savings, a house of your own, and not having finished college yet. Step out in faith and keep your eyes on me."

As Doug was flying home from Africa he watched the movie, *Sense and Sensibility*. The story line was about two sisters—one sister truly loved a man with all her heart and soul; the other said she loved a man but the truth was that although he would be a good provider and a good man, deep down in her heart she didn't truly love him.

Doug prayed while on the plane, "Lord, I don't want DeAnn to marry me just because I would provide a good home life for her and be a stable, strong spiritual man. I want her to love me for those things but I also want her to be passionately in love with me. Lord, at the airport, let her run and jump in my arms if she is the one you want me to marry."

As I waited at Doug's parent's home to ride with them to the airport to pick up Doug the phone rang. It was Doug's voice and he was one flight away from being home. A month had passed since I had heard his voice. My heart pounded and tears began to fall; I missed him desperately. During that phone conversation I said to Doug, "Is it O.K. if I run down the airport and jump in your arms?" Doug answered in shock, "Do as you feel is best."

We arrived at the airport. There were many people coming off the plane but I didn't see Doug's face. As I anxiously waited, I talked with the Lord again, "Lord, there are so many people here. I can't take off running in the middle of

the airport! People will think I am crazy!"

The moment I saw Doug's face, I felt the Lord whisper in my heart, girl you are running! And I did. I ran until I reached his arms.

After leaving the airport we returned to Doug's parent's home and shared all the things that had happened the month he was gone. I told him what the Lord said to me about Peter getting out of the boat and walking on water. Doug began to cry. "What night was it that the Lord spoke to you?" he asked. It turned out it was the very same night he was preaching on the same subject of Peter getting out of the boat and walking on the water.

I knew my prayer was answered and that God had confirmed it. I knew he was the one to walk this life with me. As God spoke to my heart in Tennessee, he also spoke to the heart of my soul mate, giving us the same Scripture at the same "exact" time on two different continents of the world.

Now, as we serve as missionaries overseas with five children, I look at him and know he is the one God chose for me. What amazing things God can do when we give our lives fully to him.

DEANN HAYES

Serving the Lord in an undisclosed country.
hayessower@mymailworld.com
Doug and DeAnn's children are: Hannah Grace (8), Hope (7), Haven (5), Haysen (4) and Holden (9 months).

We Just Knew

I was 22 when my pastor-to-be husband died quite unexpectedly. The Valley of the Shadow of Death was my new path, and though the grief gushed through me, leaving my soul and body to literally ache, God was there with His amazing peace and grace. I had been blessed with a fantastic husband, the kind every girl wants and every parent wants for their child. He and I met in Jr. High and were best friends all the way!

I told the Lord I did not want to "date" and that that if He had another husband for me, I would just "know" he was the one upon meeting the man

Two weeks after Anthony's death, my "spiritual mom" Shelly, (my husband's cousin) and her pastor husband, Tim, took me out to dinner. They asked if I

would begin praying for a new husband. I was shocked.

"It's only two weeks since Anthony's death!" I replied. I told them I had already made the commitment not to date, but to actually pray for a husband so soon? Well, I obeyed, and prayed for this man.

Most every Sunday after church, I went over to my cousin's house for lunch. One sunny, summer Sunday there was a car I didn't recognize parked out front. I thought it was odd as I know everything about Tim and Shelly. I parked my truck and walked across the road to see a young man playing ball with their youngest son in the front yard. As soon as we made eye contact, I knew. I knew. It was him. I freaked, but tried to remain calm, running into the house without saying a word. Shelly immediately ushered me

Three weeks later, on July 4th, I hosted a cookout at my house before the Wednesday evening services and fireworks. Craig was there, and it was pretty obvious he felt the same way about me, though we had only seen each other twice before at Shelly's. Unknown to anyone else, he had been praying for quite some time for a wife. He also did not want to date, but wanted to just "know".

He felt it would take someone very special to be his wife, not knowing the longevity of his new liver, or what complications might arise. At the close of the evening, after everyone had gone home, Craig and I sat on my front stoop. "You know, don't you?" I stated. And he replied with a simple, "yes." There was a long silence. It took some time to really believe that God had brought us together and we would be husband and wife. This



back out for an introduction, but I was shaking like a leaf, which is unlike me. She formerly introduced Craig and me. We said hello, shook hands, and it sealed the deal. Though I tried to hide it from Shelly, not totally believing it was true, Shelly, my wise, spiritual mom, knew.

After lunch, Craig saw and read my key chain: "Children need the darndest things, be an organ and tissue donor." He asked me if my husband had been a donor. I replied "yes" and he said that he was celebrating the one-year anniversary of his liver transplant. He expressed his deep gratefulness for the choice his donor family made in the midst of their grief and asked if I could help him write a letter to them. Of course I said "yes."

was really big! HUGE! After a bit, I asked him what his last name was! We laughed and the rest is history! We're living happily ever after.

MOLLY WILCOX

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Craig and Molly's sweet blessings are Olivia (5) and Mason (3) and five in Heaven through miscarriage. Molly adds, "Because we both have experienced the fragility of life, separately and together, we strive never to take life and what the Lord has given us for granted. Every breath, every step, even in the valley, is so precious. Looking back on nine years of marriage, I wouldn't change anything, the mountains and the valleys."

Every Moment a Special One

As a mother of seven, people often ask how my time is divided between our children. How can one homeschooling mother give seven children quality time? I find that opportunities abound daily for special one-on-one moments with my sons and daughter—and husband as well. I believe every minute has the potential to be a special one. Quality time is perspective. It is everyday life!

Almost every morning (like clockwork), my oldest sons (14-year-old twins) arrive in the kitchen to give me their individual sports updates. They come as individuals, but tell me almost the same story—verbatim! That’s identical twins for you. “Mom, the Pistons won. The Tigers lost. The Redwings play tomorrow night.” Today they shared that the Green Bay Packers had not yet cleared out Brett Favre’s locker and that he had not signed his retirement papers. Could this be ESPN Radio rumor? Who knows and who cares? It’s my boys coming to tell me something they want to share with “me”, their mom. I smile and listen with great interest—because I really am interested in sports! You ought to see us during football season!

My son, Greyson is a scientist and he is either doing an experiment, building some contraption or dreaming of doing both. We sit for the longest time discussing different scientific theories or doing scientific experiments. We used a peppermint essential oil solution to kill bugs as our latest experiment. We are also observing the

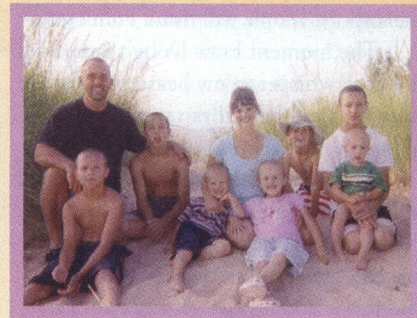
seeds we planted in the garden to chart their progress. I love these talks!

Elijah, my nine-year-old, loves to talk about his passions...reading *The Adventures of Tintin* by Herge (his absolute favorite), *Indiana Jones* films or his Lego movies on our computer. He often asks for my input on why Tintin did this-or-that or why did Indiana Jones have to get so old or “can I please make another Lego movie on the computer?” (No!)

Rachel, the dear seven-year-old, princess of our children, loves to help me in the kitchen. She also enjoys it when we clean her room together. We have the longest talks while doing this. It is a special blessing when mother and daughter (who are SURROUNDED by testosterone) spend some time together just being feminine and girly. We talk about babies, flowers, pretty things, birds, cats, etc.

John, the almost five-year-old genuine boy, says he is going to marry me. He wants to kiss me all the time. He then flaunts this in front of his daddy who in turn goes after him and jokingly tells him that I am already married. John loves it when I read to him. He also loves to help in the kitchen and laundry room.

Samuel, our two and a half year-old baby boy, is so loving and huggy to me. If John kisses me, he is right there to counter it with a kiss of his own. He loves it when I sit with him, read to him, or lie down with him at naptime. Like John, Sam enjoys cooking and folding laundry too, though



“folding” has its own definition for a toddler boy!

My husband, Roger, enjoys spending any time together. Our daily routine begins with coffee before the children arise. We rarely miss these moments; we both value our time so much and hate it when it doesn’t happen. Sometimes we are very tired and look forward to a nice cup of coffee. Though our conversation may not be enthusiastic on the tired days, we are there together. The touch of a hand or a foot rub and we both feel better. We encourage the children to leave us alone as we talk.

Our culture emphasizes quality time with our loved ones. What a blessing that I get plenty of it everyday just living in this household—walking, talking, working, struggling, smiling, laughing, eating, sleeping, bathing children, cleaning house, brushing little ones’ teeth... the list goes on-and-on! Not everyday is perfect all the time but I seem to remember many more happy moments than sad.

CAMY LALONDE

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Roger and Camy's children are Malcom and Noah (14), Greyson (11), Elijah (9), Rachel (7), John (5), Samuel (3), Josiah (went straight into the arms of Jesus on 6/07/08), and a baby due in April 2009.

Do you have Peace with God?

The most important thing in this world is to have peace with God, your Creator and Savior.

You cannot have peace while there is sin in your life. God is separated from sin and to be true to Himself, He must judge sin. But He loves the sinner. He sent His only beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die for your sin and take the judgment of your sin instead of you. Romans 5:8 says, “God demonstrates his own love towards us, in

that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Acknowledge and confess your sin. Thank Jesus for dying for you. He is the pure, spotless Lamb of God who shed His precious blood to atone for our sins. Hebrews 9:22 says, “Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.”

Fall at His feet with repentance and accept His great salvation. This is your way to peace.

Everyone is looking for peace—peace in their soul, in their home and in their country. Peace is perhaps the greatest possession we can have. The wonderful thing is that we can own peace, regardless of circumstances. We could own a mansion and all the material blessings we crave and yet not have peace. We can own nothing and yet be blessed with peace.

God is peace—the originator of peace. Jesus came to guide our feet into the way of peace. (Luke 1:79). He said, “Come and I will give you rest...” and “My peace I give unto you...” But His peace and rest are not automatic. Nothing happens by itself. As Henry Drummond says, “The Christian life is not casual but causal.” We cannot get away from the eternal law that we reap what we sow.

In Zechariah 8:12 God says, “I am planting seeds of peace and prosperity among you...” God spoke these words to encourage the people when rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem. God is a seed-planter. He is not only a God of peace, but He sows seeds of peace. We, who were created in the image of God, should also be peace seed-planters.

How can we sow seeds of peace in our home and family? The following are some seeds that you can plant that will help bring peace to your heart and home.

Pray for Peace

Every morning when we have devotions as a family, my husband prays for peace to fill our home. If we constantly pray for it, we are well on the way toward making it happen.

God commanded us to pray for the peace of His city, Jerusalem. (Psalm 122:6) It is just as important to pray for the peace of our homes. Can you imagine what would happen if every family prayed daily for peace in their family?

Speak Peace

We should not only pray for it, but speak it. As we were raising our older children, my husband would constantly confess, “I am a man of peace” or “I am for peace.” We needed that confession in the midst of our six very exuberant and outspoken children. Unfortunately, our children have loudness in their genes. My husband comes from a family of nine children,

Help!

How can I have

PEACE

in my Home?

who, although committed believers and many are serving the Lord full-time, have very loud voices, are very opinionated and not afraid to speak their opinions. How we love being together.

I come from a smaller family, but just as loud. A friend of ours, who lived with us for a while as we were raising our family used to say, “What hope is there for your children with a ‘Crowin’ Campbell’ for a father and a ‘Blowin’ Bowen’ for a mother?” Amazingly, in the midst of all our loudness, we mostly had an atmosphere of peace.

As you pray for your children each morning, minister the peace of God upon them. Walk into your kitchen with your “gospel of peace” shoes on your feet and release peace on each one of your children. Pray it over them. Confess it over them. Speak it into their lives. Be a peace-bearer rather than a tension-bearer.

Peace is a noun, but the Bible verbs it. It tells us to extend peace, pursue peace, love peace, make peace, establish peace, preach peace, proclaim peace, seek peace and speak peace.* This is how it happens—by sowing the seeds. Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers...” (Matthew 5:9) Do you notice that you have to **make it** happen?

Ask God to help you be a peacemaker today. I know it’s not an easy task. You have to bite your tongue. You have to practice speaking words that are affirming, encouraging, cheerful, comforting, forgiving, healing, helpful, kind, loving, positive, reconciling, respectful, strengthening, supportive, sweet, uplifting, and wholesome. You have to smile instead of scowl. You have to think of ways to reconcile.

Shut Your Mouth

Perhaps this is one of the biggest ways to keep peace. It is easy to spout off words that cause discord. It is easy to react with words that cause pain or even incite rebellion. It is easy to answer back when accused. I am always challenged by Jesus’ reaction when he was accused:

Isaiah 53:7, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.”

Matthew 26:62-63, “The high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace.”

Matthew 27:11-13, “When he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word.”

1 Peter 2:23, “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again...”

If we cannot give a soft answer, it is best not to even open our mouths! This takes self control, doesn’t it? But the Holy Spirit, who is self control, lives within us to help us. We need to have Proverbs 15:1 constantly in our minds and hearts, “A soft answer turns away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.”

Discipline for Peace

This doesn’t sound very peaceful, does it? We often think that if we rock the boat we won’t have peace! But the opposite is true. Discipline precedes peace! Read that again. Yes, discipline precedes peace! If your children are playing up, disobeying,

being defiant and causing havoc in the home, you won't have any peace. To get peace, you must deal with the disobedience and bad behavior.

Proverbs 29:17 says, "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul."

Do you want rest and peace in your home? Don't gloss over disobedience. Deal with the issues. Sow loving but firm discipline for disobedient behavior and you will reap a reward of rest. Many parents have no rest. Their children are a constant hassle to them because they have not been trained. They yell at them but their behavior doesn't change.

It is a joy to watch parents who live a life of rest. I think of my daughter, Evangeline, who has nine children. She and her husband, Howard have trained their children to respond with instant obedience from the time they were very little. They have never allowed disobedience or defiant behavior. They dealt with it immediately and have reaped a wonderful reward of rest. Their children, aged from 15 years to 16 months are extraordinarily behaved. They give delight to their parents and everyone who is around them. They can take them anywhere and trust their behavior. Evangeline lives a life of a queen for her children give her no bother.

Hebrews 12:11 reiterates this, "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

I was quite taken aback when reading Romans 16:20 recently, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." You would think that when it speaks of God defeating the devil that He would be referred to as the God of War or the Lord of Hosts (which is the Lord of the Armies of Heaven). It will not be a peaceful task to conquer Satan. It will be war and blood and tears. But, no. It is the God of peace who will bruise Satan. I am sure this is because there can never be true peace while evil reigns and therefore it is the God of peace who wages war to bring peace.

If you have to have a little war before you have peace, don't be afraid. Covering over things will not bring peace. It is like a festering sore that will not heal until it is totally cleansed.

Watch Your Priorities

Remember that mothering is your first and highest calling. You are a mother before you are a homeschooler. You are a mother before every other project or outside activity that pulls on your time. When you make mothering your priority and forget the guilt of having to accomplish other demands, you will have rest.

When you feel overwhelmed and tension is overtaking, stop and think. Are you involved in unnecessary outside activities? Are you running around in the car more than being at home? You are meant to mother in the home, not the car! You don't have to have your children involved in every sport and every extra curricular activity. It is the ploy of the enemy to bring tension to your soul and distract you from the power of your home.

Don't let good things rob you of the best! Proverbs 24:15 says, "Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous, spoil not his resting place."

Seek Reconciliation

You cannot have peace if you have estranged relationships. To enjoy peace you must seek healing and restoration. Sow seeds of reconciliation. You won't have peace until you do. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

Forget Your Worries

Philippians 4:6-7 says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." In other words, don't worry about anything! Easier said than done! But if you want peace, it is a habit you must practice.

Each time you face a problem, instead of worrying, turn it over the Lord. Look to the Lord rather than your circumstances. It takes a while to get into this habit, but it will change your life. You will walk in peace even in the midst of the storm.

My favorite Scripture, a special one for mothers, is found in Isaiah 26:34, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace,

whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusts in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." When we sow the habit of bringing our thought life to the Lord, we will have peace. Not only peace, but perfect peace. It is actually a double word in the Hebrew meaning, peace, peace!

Husband/Wife Unity

Sow unity in your marriage relationship. If you don't have unity together, you won't have peace in your heart, nor will your children know peace. When there is estrangement between you and your husband, the children will feel the brunt of it. Once again, you have to sow the seeds. It won't just happen. Realize the truth that God has made you one—not two, but one! Sow seeds to make this oneness a reality. Say Sorry. Forgive. Swallow your pride. Humble yourself. Shut your mouth. Speak soft words. Submit for your own blessing.

Love the Word

We sow peace into our home when we love the Word and make it part of our family life. Our children should see that we teach them the Word, not because it is what we should do, but because we love it.

Psalms 119:165 says, "Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing causes them to stumble."

Isaiah 48:18 says, "Oh, that you had heeded my commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea."

It is not always easy to obey God's Word. It is usually the opposite of the way we feel, but obedience brings peace.

Love Righteousness

Psalms 85:10 says, "Righteousness and peace have kissed each other." You can't have peace without righteousness. They are inseparable. But righteousness is more than turning away from evil. It is doing righteous deeds. Righteousness is not passive, but alive. It is revealed in your facial features as you smile at your family and speak positive things; it comes out your fingertips as you work and toil for the blessing of your family or hug and embrace your children; it shows itself as

you walk to do good deeds for your family and others.

We see this in Isaiah 32:17, "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." Do you notice that righteousness is a work? And do you notice the cause and effect? The effect is peace!

This following verse says, "And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." If we want peace in our home we must sow seeds of righteousness. That will mean saying No to certain TV programs, DVDs and websites. It will mean taking a stand against the spirit of the world entering your home. Peace does not come by compromise or even by feeling good. Sometimes people equate peace with calm. Anyone can have peace when everything is going perfect. True peace rests on a foundation of righteousness. (Hosea 10:12)

Order Your home

It is difficult to have peace when you live in a mess. 1 Timothy 5:14 tells us that the young women are to "guide the house." This phrase is translated from the Greek word, *oikodespoteo*, coming from two words: *oikos*—home, and *despotace*—master. God has given you the responsibility to manage your home—to keep it in order and running smoothly. Don't forget the principle of cause and effect. If you want peace, do things that will bring order and peace.

Declutter Your home

If your dishes and laundry are piling up and your home is cluttered, you will not be able to think straight. Order brings serenity. Evangeline says, "Clutter is worse than dust!" If you have loads of junk it can be daunting to start on this venture. Take one room at a time. Be ruthless. Get rid of everything you don't need. Purge. The more you eradicate, the more serenity will come to your soul.

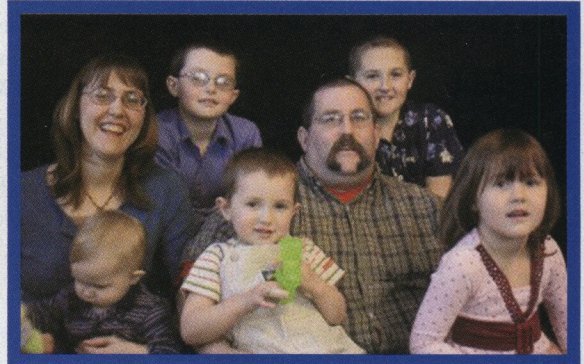
Will you become a peace-sower? The more seeds you sow, the greater harvest you will reap.

NANCY CAMPBELL

Peace verbs: Isaiah 66:12; Hebrews 12:14; Zechariah 8:19; Isaiah 27:5; Isaiah 26:12; Acts 10:36; Isaiah 52:7; Nahum 1:15; Psalm 34:14; 1 Peter 3:11; Esther 10:3; Psalm 85:8.

Preparing Sons to be Godly Husbands

I have such a strong desire to teach my four sons (so far) the intricacies of being a godly husband. I want them to know what that looks like. The following are the principles I have impressed upon them that will hopefully help them remember how to treat their wives.



1. They are never too young to know that they are to NEVER hit girls. My son came to me the other day and said that a girl walked up to him, smiled and punched him in the face! He was so angry. He told me, "Mom, I wanted to hit her back so bad, but I felt God telling me not to." I replied, "I know it was tempting to hit her back, you want to defend yourself when someone hits you. But, you are stronger than she is. You could hurt her. She is weaker than you. You just CAN'T do that!" I was so proud of him that he listened to God's voice. He knew the rule and chose not to break it.
2. I teach my sons to open the door for their mother, sister and any other lady that might be walking through the door. This shows common courtesy and respect for the female gender.
3. I want my sons to talk respectfully to their mother. A good rule of thumb is a man will talk to his wife the same way he talks to his mother. Start teaching them young!
4. I am teaching my sons that they need to work hard so they will be able to provide a decent income for their families. I want them to not expect their wife to work, enabling her to stay home and take care of their children. I am teaching them to manage their money so they will know how to work on sticking to a budget.
5. I want my sons to know that they need to compliment their wives. I teach them by encouraging them to compliment their mother and other women in their lives. They are great at giving me compliments now!
6. I am teaching them how to cook and clean up after themselves, so if their wife is sick she will have a husband that can help her out with the cooking and cleaning. They will know how to do laundry, too. They each want 10 children or so, so laundry will definitely be an issue!
7. I tell them over and over that they need to make sure they are the spiritual leaders of their home. They need to teach their wives and children the Word.
8. I talk to them about finding a woman who believes in submitting to her husband. They need to know what kind of woman to be looking for. We have read through Proverbs 31 together and talked about the virtues of a godly woman. They now know they are looking for someone who will work hard, be nicely dressed, but modestly, who will laugh when life gets hard, who will diligently look after her household, who will teach her children about God, love God with all her heart and care about the poor and needy.

It is never too early to prepare them for their spouse. I trust my daughters-in-law will thank me for it later!

STACIE BROWN

The Dalles, Oregon, USA
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Steve and Stacie's children are Joshua (9), Marcus (7), Jessica (5), Andrew (3), Jacob (1) and another on the way!

Candle Light Wedding

My husband and I were married in a cold December in 2000. Everything was planned and ready. However, two days before the wedding the photographer called to say he was bitten by a spider and could not do the pictures. We scrambled to find another photographer. The florist got my bouquet all wrong—it was terrible. To top it all off, Texas had a bad ice storm and the power was out for days!

Planning an evening wedding, many told us to reschedule but this was not an option for us. No heat made the wedding so cold that my flower girl informed me that it wasn't fair that the men got to wear jackets. However, the Lord had everything under control. When we rented the decorations,

we thought we rented way too many candle holders, but the Lord knew. With all the extra candles we had the most beautifully romantic wedding by candlelight! It reminded us that we can get so caught up in the "extras" of a wedding, but the most important

thing is the vows we make to each other and before God.

We look back and laugh now and wouldn't change one thing about our wedding day!

MELISA SCHULTZ

Minden, Texas, USA
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John and Melissa are blessed with Christopher (5), Lily (20 months) and a new baby due February 2009.

Love and Respect to Parents

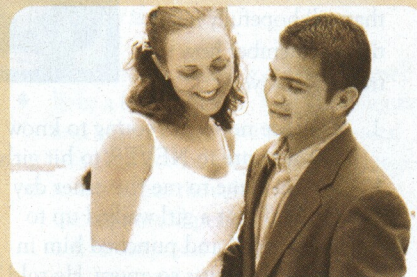
My husband and I married on the island of Guam. We focused on saving rather than spending! We bought my dress on EBay, went barefoot, ordered flowers in season, bought a suit on sale my husband could reuse later and borrowed tables, chairs and tents from the village mayor's office, and didn't need to rent a hall for the reception.

We also wanted to focus on our family and show our parents that we loved and respected them. We found a flower chart with the meanings next to the names where we learned that the red rose symbolized love and the sunflower symbolized respect.

Needless to say, we handed one rose and one sunflower to each of our parents, to symbolize that we love and respect them.

We held our ceremony outdoors, overlooking the Pacific Ocean and needed no decorations as the Lord provided them naturally. We invited as many people as possible and wove the Gospel into our wedding ceremony. We wanted those who did not know the Lord to hear about His wonderful gift of forgiveness and salvation.

After the wedding ceremony we had a big BBQ. Our families pitched in and made all the food. We handed out bubbles every-



one could blow and enjoyed being with family and friends.

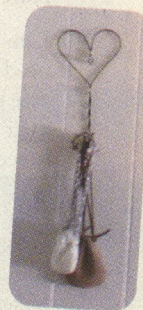
We have now been married five years and are glad we had a simple wedding that focused on the people rather than ourselves! We do not have to buy into the world's philosophy that a wedding has to cost lots of money.

LAURON MURPHY

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Warren and Lauron are blessed with Athena (4) and Keona (10 months).

Salt Covenant Ceremony

At my husband's suggestion, we had a salt covenant ceremony at our wedding, December 2000. He had heard of it as an ancient Jewish tradition for making promises. Salt was valuable in ancient times and people would carry bags of salt. When making a lasting agreement, they would exchange pinches of salt. To break the agreement, a person would have to get all of his or her own grains of salt from the other person's pouch—an impossibility! I sewed a salt bag for myself from the same white satin as my gown and David's father, a leatherwork-



er, made his bag. We exchanged salt after our vows and the bags hang on our wall on a heart-shaped hook to remind us of our unbreakable commitment to each other.

Also, in the middle of the ceremony, my husband's father, who was his best man, stepped out of place to get a chair. Some of us were concerned for him, as he had had a heart attack a couple of years before we married. The chair was not for him, though, it was for me! My husband washed my feet as a total surprise to me in the middle of our wedding ceremony. He had a pitcher, basin, and towel prepared and had learned that pantyhose dry quickly! Each time I think of it, I am reminded of my husband's desire to be a servant leader.

BECKIE GREGORY

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beckieruth@gmail.com
David and Beckie's blessings are Richard (2 1/2) and Rachel (7 months).

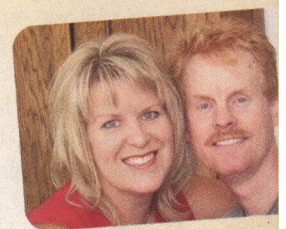
Rehearsal Dessert

Planning our wedding and desiring the details to be as nice as possible, yet not too expensive, we arranged a Rehearsal Dessert instead of Rehearsal Dinner. My parents offered the use of their lovely home the evening before the wedding. We prepared a beautiful spread of incredibly tasty desserts, slicing and serving them up in small portions so we could each taste as many of them as possible! We loved the atmosphere of being able to mingle and visit during the evening with everyone who attended.

The day of the wedding, our little country church pews, plus all additional folding chairs that could be found, filled the sanctuary to the brim. The remaining guests who still needed chairs? Well, they got front row seats and saw the wedding up close as they sat in the choir loft facing the congregation and directly in front of us while we said our vows.

EVY DE LANO

Ephrata, Washington, USA
delanos5@yahoo.com
Daniel (best husband in the whole world for 17 years) and Evy's children are Michelle (15), Monica (14) and Zachary (12).



Wedding Celebrations

With a Difference!



The road leading up to the city walls is "Hebron" and the gate that it leads to is "Jaffa gate".

Picnic Baskets

My husband and I married in a big garden under a beautiful summer sky. The garden was a circle and the wedding party walked down either the left or the right side of the garden in front of the guests. I included many children from my Sunday school class I taught and had many bridesmaids in our wedding party. They all wore sundresses with butterflies on them and butterflies were embroidered onto my dress. My father walked me to my groom to Cindy Morgan's song, "Make Us One" from Michael W. Smith's *Exodus* CD. I still get goose bumps every time I hear the song.

We lit the unity candle with our mothers and the candle stayed lit throughout the entire outdoor ceremony!

Everyone had a picnic basket filled with their lunch for right after their ceremony. There was only one negative—my shoulders burned because no one thought of sunscreen!

For our 5th anniversary my husband gave me a painting by Bill Bartelt of the park where we were married! It hangs in our bedroom.

KIMBERLEE PATTON

Joliet, Illinois, USA

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Chris and Kimberlee's children are Bailey (7) and Fiona (3).

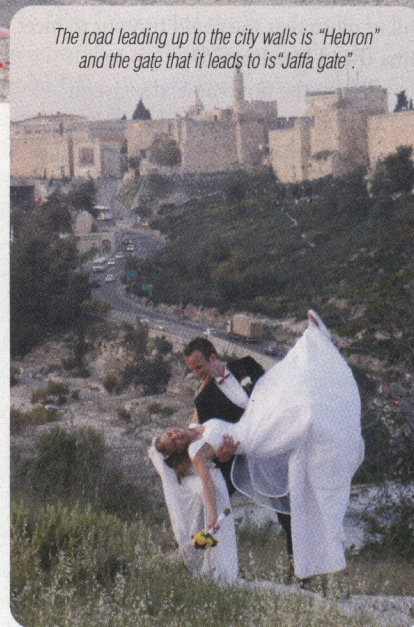
Married in Jerusalem

My husband and I were married on April 19, 2006 in Jerusalem, Israel during the Jewish feast of Passover. It wasn't even close to the small, family wedding in the woods that I had always dreamed about, but it was the dream of the Lord's heart.

My husband, while serving the Lord in Jerusalem, pursued my heart by an email. We had been friends for years, but he felt the Lord had asked him to wait until the right time. Two and a half years went by before the release came. During this time, we were living on different continents. I responded to him and our friendship blossomed into romance over eight months of long distance emailing.

Finally, we were together and he asked me to marry him. Of course, I said "YES." Excitedly, I bought a Bride's magazine at the airport the next day with great anticipation of choosing a gown, wedding colors, bridesmaids, music, the works! But, soon after, the Lord asked me if I would give the wedding over to Him. That meant He would have first choice of the location, the colors, the flowers, everything. At first it was hard to let go of this dream wedding, but I said, "Lord, if you want my wedding you can have it."

The first thing we felt the Lord showed us was to have our wedding in Jerusalem. We had no idea how this would completely change us down to the core of our beings.



However, for us to say "yes" to this invitation, we would first have to be married legally in the states. This led us into the ancient Jewish custom of "Betrothal".

In the traditional betrothal ceremony, the groom is presented with a cup of wine from the father of the bride. The groom takes the cup signifying his willingness to lay his life down for the bride and then he offers the cup to the bride. If she takes the cup, it signifies her willingness to receive his life laid down and offer him her life as well. This reminds us of the words of Jesus, "Father, take this cup from me, nevertheless, not my will, but yours."

During the ceremony a legal document was signed which would require a divorce in order to be annulled, (e.g. Mary and Joseph). It was amazing to learn the connec-

tions of this ancient custom with the words and actions of Jesus while He was on the earth. We set up our ceremony the same way and it was truly a beautiful, memorable night. Signing the legal document before taking our vows helped our hearts make the transition into married life a little slower than usual. I had the last name of my soon-to-be-husband, but was still living in my father's house.

In the ancient custom, the groom would then go away to prepare a place for the bride and the bride would prepare for his return. She did not know the day or the hour of his return, but when he came she had to be ready to go with him to the wedding. She often slept in her wedding garment in case he came at night (as he often did) and she would have to have her lamp full of oil so that she could run out to meet him. (Read Matthew 25)

When the time came, the groom would send his friend ahead of him to blow the shofar. This would awaken the townspeople for the wedding and alarm the bride that the groom was on his way. It's interesting how Jesus kind of signed a marriage document when he shed His blood and promised to come back for us. Now, we as His bride are preparing ourselves for Him and waiting expectantly for His return.

We planned our wedding at a certain location in Jerusalem until two weeks before the wedding when it was clear it would not work out. After telling the taxi driver our dilemma, he drove us to a garden on the Mt. of Olives and said, "You can use this garden free of charge." It was stunning and had an amazing view of Jerusalem. We accepted the offer.

Finally the big day arrived. We set up the ceremony like a cross made of red and white fabric signifying the blood of Jesus that makes us pure. We took our vows in the center of the cross formation. A groomsman began the ceremony with the blowing of the shofar and the bridesmaids came in carrying lanterns and wearing purple shawls, signifying the royalty that we receive through Jesus and the importance of keeping our lamps full of oil until He returns.

I was standing at the edge of the garden with my father about to walk down the long pathway to Jonathan. Many Arab children had come to their usual playground to play and ended up showing up for a wedding. Muslim women were throwing rose petals with their starry eyed little girls. The

Muslim call to prayer began to sound and a herd of goats led by some small boys wandered through the crowd. A Muslim man came in with a stick and started telling my father and me stories about the garden. The one that I will never forget was, "This garden is called, 'the prayer garden' because people come here from all over the world to pray for the return of Jesus."

He eventually walked away, chasing some of the boys with the stick to keep them in line. I stood there in shock for those last few moments before I walked down the aisle. The Lord wanted to make a statement that would forever be imprinted on our hearts—that He Himself is a Bridegroom longing for a bride made ready. There will be a day when He will return to Jerusalem as King of the Nations. He will have a queen, a beautiful church who loves Him and knows His love. That day as I walked down the pathway with a necklace engraved with the Hebrew words, "Chosen, Beautiful, Loved" I was more aware than ever before that the Lord is longing for us to know we are the bride of His heart. Truly, we are chosen, beautiful and loved in His eyes.

Today, my husband and I live in Jerusalem. We look out on Mt. Zion every day and are reminded that what we live for is truly greater than anything else in this world. One day He will come and He is worth all that we have to give. There is a God who loves us with an everlasting, unconditional love that will never fail.

SARA LEPAGE

Jerusalem, Israel
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Jonathan and Sara have a one year old son, Micah Isaiah, and are expecting a new baby April 2009.

Blessed Budget Wedding

My husband and I were both college students. How could we afford the wedding?

I was blessed to find a beautifully elegant wedding dress in perfect condition and already dry cleaned, that fit without any modifications for only \$50.00 at a Rummage Sale. I borrowed my sister-in-law's veil and bought a beautiful pair of white dress shoes at the thrift store for \$2.00. Though a professional did my hair for about \$35.00, I did my own makeup. My husband's mom bought him a new suit to wear. He was going to rent a tux, but

decided for the same price he could buy a suit that he could wear over and over again. My bridesmaids wore dresses they already owned and the groomsmen wore suits they already owned. I bought a handheld bouquet of fresh flowers and a boutonniere for my husband for around \$30.00.

Our pastor offered to hold the ceremony for us for free at his small, white country church. His wife played the music for our ceremony and made bulletins for us to hand out. We invited about 50 of our close family members and closest friends.

My family and my husband's family made lots of food for the reception that we enjoyed in the church's basement afterwards. It was really great to have our moms and a few other family members prepare so many different dishes. My dad cooked a ham for ham sandwiches. Our wedding cake was donated to us by a church member who had a cake decorating business! I had always dreamed of having a big buffet style meal so it was wonderful to have all home-cooked food!

My mom and I decorated simply for the reception. We bought tablecloths at the dollar store to cover the tables. We also bought several candle holders that we filled with colored rocks and floating candles.



Decorations cost us less than \$20.00.

For photography, my brother and my dad took pictures and lots of them as they both enjoy photography. We had our pictures developed at Wal-Mart, which also saved us a lot of money. We took one of the nicest pictures and had it enlarged to an 8 X 10, which we now have hanging on our living room wall. We also gave 8 x 10 copies to our parents and grandparents.

With the gifts of money that we received we were able to pay off our wedding rings right away, so we have no debt for our beautiful rings. This was a blessing, as my husband and I like to avoid debt.

Many wedding planning experts say

that the average wedding costs somewhere around \$10,000, but my husband and I found out that this doesn't have to be the case. We truly enjoyed our beautiful, simple country wedding. And we didn't have to wait years to have an expensive wedding.

AMY WENDT

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Harland and Amy's blessings are Katelyn (2) and Ruby (6 months).

We Included the Children

In our wonderful wedding on June 10, 2006, we included seven children in our wedding party. We wanted to make the statement that we love children since children are often not allowed to come to weddings now. In the wedding program above their names we wrote the Scripture, "Children are a blessing from the Lord."

The flower girls skipped joyfully around, throwing petals in the air. The ring bearers were also banner runners announcing the coming of the bride in great fanfare.

We arranged our outdoor wedding with the seating in a circle with the altar in the middle so the 180 guests all had a good view.

I pretended I fainted after the kiss and everyone started laughing. After we were introduced as Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Aaron Nuckols we danced out of the ceremony to James Taylor's "How Sweet it is to be Loved by You." The wedding party danced out after us two by two and then my husband's brothers danced out with our moms. Everyone clapped to the beat. It was a true celebration!

COURTNEY NUCKOLS

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Joshua and Courtney have a honeymoon baby, Pierce Elijah (16 months)

We Lost the Rings

My husband works as a general contractor on people's homes. One day he worked on a house whose backyard was on the perimeter of the park where we were married. He mentioned this to the homeowner.

"Oh, we go to all the weddings here," the lady chimed. "When was yours?"

"We were married July 3rd, 1999."



This didn't seem to strike any memory until my husband began to describe our wedding.

I was at my sister's apartment, down the street from the park, getting ready for the wedding. I waited for the phone call to come, as our wedding was to take place soon. The time came and went and still I waited.

At the park, my husband's sister-in-law, Michelle, was in charge of the ring bearer's pillow. She tied the rings loosely on the pillow; thinking our golden wedding bands were the cheapie, fake rings that go on the ring pillow. She gave the pillow to my four-year-old nephew, Ian, the ring bearer a good twenty minutes before the wedding was to start.

Ian got bored. He started throwing the pillow as high as he could. Ian's daddy, Daryle, realized the loosely-tied rings were, in fact, real gold wedding bands! He noticed this a bit too late as the rings flew off the pillow during a particularly high throw, landing somewhere in the grass of this good-sized park.

Once everyone heard that the real gold wedding bands were missing, they started a mass enterprise, walking slowly around the park looking in the grass for two small rings reflecting the sunlight through the gathering clouds. As my groom watched and saw the time was getting late, he looked up at the sky and cried, "What next?" The response was a loud thunderclap!

Meanwhile, I still waited for my phone call to go get married. The time had well passed and I was worried. My brother-in-law called with urgency in his voice, "Shannon, you need to get here now. The rings are lost, it's about to rain, and your soon-to-be husband isn't doing so well."

"It isn't funny to play jokes on the bride right before her wedding, Daryle.

Michelle has the rings, it has been record breaking temperatures in a drought, and what is wrong with my groom?"

"I'm not joking." With that, my side of the wedding party made a mad dash for the park. All I could think was, "I hope my groom is fine, still wanting to marry me, and that the rings would be found." Rain didn't bother me—it would cool off the overheated guests whom I hadn't realized spent a fair amount of time walking the park.

By the time we got there, everyone was seated. My uncle and another guest, the heroes of the day, found the gold bands in the grassy park. The clouds gathered, the thunder was far and the rain was light. Willy and I were at peace as Grandpa (a pastor for over 50 years) began the ceremony.

"Oh," exclaimed the homeowner, "I do remember all those people walking around. We thought it was some sort of religious thing."

SHANNON HOSKOVEC

Edgewood, New Mexico, USA
isaiah431819@higherspeed.net (This was the Hoskovec's wedding Scripture).
Will and Shannon, who have been happily married since that day, have four blessings, Mar'lyna (15), Khyren (7), Liam (3), and Culbert (4 months).

Three Bouquets

The person who was to do my real flower bouquets for my bridesmaids and I, and corsages for the parents of the bride and groom, disappeared 10 days before my wedding after I had paid the total amount for the flowers with cash. I wasn't sure what I was going to do.

Two days before my wedding, my mother's best friend offered to let me use the fake flower bouquets she used when she and her husband renewed their vows. I didn't even want to look at them. Since I was about 14 years old I had always wanted real roses and lilies in my bouquet.

The day before our wedding, I woke up content to use the fake flowers. That night at the rehearsal, my mother said a florist designer called her that morning who said she wanted to do something for me because she felt it was wrong for me to walk down the aisle without the flowers I wanted. She planned to make the bouquets with real flowers for a very reasonable price and my aunt would pick them up on her

way to the wedding.

Next, my mother-in-law said that she couldn't see me walking down the aisle without the flowers I wanted so she had ordered a real bouquet with roses and lilies. When I arrived to the church on Friday, to get ready for my wedding, I found out that the original girl who was supposed to do my flowers had dropped them off after all! I had three bouquets of flowers to choose from!

MARLENA ROSS

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Nathan and Marlena have a little son named Ezekiel (2).

All Pulled Together

In our *Above Rubies* study group recently, we discussed wedding celebrations, because it was the current subject in *The Family Meal Table* manual. We had a lovely discussion about the important issues of a wedding, our own weddings, and how sadly distorted some weddings have become with lavishly expensive receptions, couples living together because "they cannot afford to get married", and impersonal gift giving.

John and I have been married nearly 27 years, and I am continually thankful for my wonderful husband. We married in Sussex, England, 12,000 miles from my home town of Auckland, New Zealand. No family was near to help, and we had no

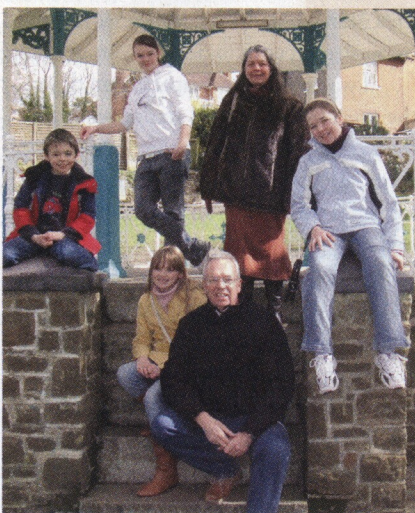
money, but the church family we were part of became our wedding planners. My bridesmaid sewed all the dresses and another friend made the three-tiered wedding cake. When my parents arrived from New Zealand, my mother iced the cake.

A florist friend in the church did wonderful flowers for us, the wedding chapel and the reception room. Others decorated the reception room, organised the tables and chairs, cooked and served the food, and one lady spent many hours making a fresh floral arch over the door of the chapel. Our wedding car was borrowed and chauff-

tucked in the back of our wedding album. Our wedding ceremony was full of praise to Jesus, commitment to each other and prayer and expectation for the future as well as dancing and celebration.

ALICE GURR

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John and Alice's children are Naomi (16), Hannah (14), Rachel (13) and David (7). Alice is the Director for Above Rubies in the United Kingdom and Europe.



feured by another friend from church who worked at a local car showroom!

We still have our wedding vows on the original pieces of paper we read from,

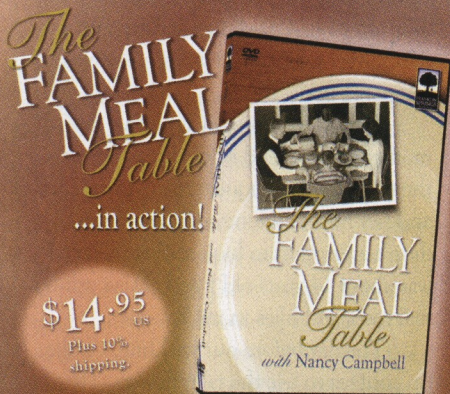
Exchanged Purity Rings

When Jon and I began courting, we both were very quick to let each other know of the commitment we had each made to stay pure till marriage. My parents had given me a purity ring and Jon had purchased his own years before we met each other.

During our wedding ceremony, our Pastor shared our story of waiting. We exchanged our rings, symbolizing giving our purity as a gift to one another. It was an amazing moment. We were happy to share with friends and family that we had waited and kept pure until marriage.

BRANDI FUGATE

South Carolina, USA
fugatefamily4@yahoo.com
Jon and Brandi are blessed with Leilani (4), Dawson (2) and Moses Shepherd (7 months).



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Questions, please email:

Jillian Fourman at LtStoneyus@yahoo.com



Kristi Whitek

Let Girls BE GIRLS

"Girls, let's pray before we eat," I said with a smile. Seven heads of curls, buns and half-up-half-downs, in shades of brown, blonde and brunette bow as I blessed our meal. After offering a short prayer of thanks, the girls begin to fix their plates. We quickly snuggle up on the big bed and continue to watch the on-going drama of *Anne of Green Gables*. Only in a room full of girls could you ever experience the delightful oohhs and aahs as the story unfolds. Cheers and clapping accompanied by sighs ring out as Gilbert comes on the screen. Peals of laughter break out when Anne finds "Dolly" in Mrs. Lynde's cabbage patch again, and attended by Diana, tries in vain to chase the rebellious cow out of the field in the mud! I look at the faces around me, all radiant with smiles and giggles. This is what girls are made of. The unique scene I just described to you is a glimpse of Kamp Kristi.

I am the firstborn and only girl in my family and have three wonderful younger brothers. Sports and legos were much more fun with my brothers than playing dolls and dress-up by myself. As I have grown older I have become an elder sister to many younger girls. I call them my "adopted younger sisters," or "my girls."

I created Kamp Kristi from the idea of a sleep-over, where my girls could enjoy styling hair, painting nails, watching all six hours of *Anne of Green Gables* and take pleasure in being with each other. However, I also had another secret motive behind Kamp Kristi! I thought of it as an opportuni-

ty to be an example of a godly young woman and to give each girl a chance to feel cherished and treasured. I desired to be a lady-in-waiting and serve each "princess" in any way I could.

While thinking of ideas for Kamp Kristi, I felt the Lord telling me that He wanted this sleep-over to be something different, to be "set-apart" from the world's idea of a girlfriend-sleep over. Instead of devoting all our time to idle gossip of subjects which can cause heart ache later, (e.g. boys... need I say more?) and spending hours watching things which only arouse a desire for something which is not meant to be awakened yet, I knew that our time should be occupied with things that would be in accordance with Philippians 4:8, "Finally brothers (sisters) whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think on such things."

With this in mind I planned card making and styling hair to keep our hands busy while watching fun-loving *Anne of Green Gables*. After a "decent" night's sleep, we wake up early to make breakfast and then finish watching the conclusion of Anne's story. Then the sponge curlers come out and up-dos, buns, and curls begin. Roger and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* plays in the background and we talk about dresses, balls, and dancing.

Once every girl's hair has been "bobby pinned to perfection" they all don their most elegant tea party dresses. The room is filled with lace, ruffles, full skirts, gloves, and hats. We walk outside and the procession of pink, purple, white and maroon dresses stroll down to the creek on our property. There on the "walk bridge" these innocent, beautiful young girls pose for pictures for nearly two hours! Their eyes sparkle with the delights of simply being a girl. I am sure the Lord was smiling down on each of us.

After picture posing, we go back inside to make ice-cream sundaes and sip lemonade for our summer tea party. Then off with the lace and ruffles and on with kitchen clothes for Kamp Kristi closes with a dinner prepared for the families by the girls. We sing along with great enthusiasm to *The Sound of Music* soundtrack as we work together.

What a refreshing picture. Girls are so special and to see them excited about doing what they do best is an experience only the



Kristi in the center with her "adopted sisters", Meredith and Hannah Murray and Kristin, Rebecca and Heather Roy.



Marni Smith, Dana Ruark, Meredith and Hannah Murray help prepare a meal for their families.

Lord could create! In the classic book, *Little Women*, Marmee tells Meg, "I would have my girls be girls as long as they can." Marmee was wise. Their innocence is a precious thing and the temptations of the world to snatch it away will come soon enough.

Girl time is something that is a must for everyone, even mothers and elderly women. My mother and I often go shopping and for lunch to have an opportunity to be together and have a heart-to-heart talk. It is important to take little breaks in a busy life in order to have that innocent young girl-feeling again. It need not be extravagant! Something as simple as baking cookies and listening to fun music that you can sing to brings a smile! I have made a list of several ideas that are time efficient and cost effective:

- ◆ Go for a nature walk! Wear big, funny hats you would not wear elsewhere and big skirts or dresses. Bring your sketchbook and drawing pencils and draw together.
- ◆ Have a picnic! Whether it is in the woods, at a park or in your back yard, a picnic is a lovely thing! Have each girl bring their favorite storybook from when they were young and take turns reading them aloud.
- ◆ Go thrift shopping! You will feel so good when you come home with bags of things that cost only \$10! If you don't find anything practical, try on
- ◆ some bride's maids or evening dresses!
- ◆ Bake a lovely dessert! Take a few hours and bake a cake or something special and elegant that you have always longed to make, but thought only Betty Crocker could perform! Your family will be surprised and you will feel like you have made a great accomplishment... because you have!
- ◆ Have a tea party! This is something even my brothers like to do. We always try to make something special about the tea such as candies or cookies. Sometimes, if we are extra hungry, we will make little chicken or tuna salad sandwiches, or even cheese with crackers make a good snack. Even the smallest touch can make tea time into something extra special!
- ◆ Watch a girl movie! GIRLS ONLY! Borrow a movie from the library. Grab some blankets and snuggle up! Or, you can be extravagant and make ice cream sundaes, do hair, etc. Here are some lovely girl movies which are very clean: All ages:
 "Sound of Music"
 "Anne of Green Gables"
 "Anne of Avonlea" (The sequel)
 "Black Beauty"
 "Ever After"
 "Little Women"
 Older girls, 15 and up:
 "Sense and Sensibility"
 "Pride and Prejudice"
- ◆ Dress up! Moms, you can too! Find

your old prom dresses or even clothes you got from Grandma and dress up. For a special touch, put on makeup. Wear big necklaces and high heel shoes! Take pictures!

These ideas are just the beginning of lovely memories you can create by taking a little time out of your schedule! In a world where girlish hopes and dreams are often dashed by un-daunting evil, time together with your daughter, mother, sister or friend can make her feel like a priceless treasure ... because she is!

My very favorite author, Louisa May Alcott wrote, "Have regular hours for work and play; make each day both useful and pleasant, and prove that you understand the worth of time by employing it well. Then youth will be delightful, old age will bring few regrets, and life will become a beautiful success."

So let girls be girls and take advantage of this lovely gift the Lord has given to each and every woman He has created! Have fun!

KRISTI WITEK

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P.S. I am 18 years old and have been home schooled all my life by my dearly loved parents. Homeschooling is wonderful because it has allowed me to expand my learning in areas I excel. In free time, I enjoy playing piano, singing, drama, historical re-enacting, horse back riding, square dancing, scrapbooking, card making, sign language, writing, and reading anything that has to do with American history! I am an active patriot and encourage others to do their duties as American citizens. During the summer I work at the KOA Campground, (which is my parents' family business), as a manager and secretary. One of my goals in life is to become a historical re-enactor, to portray godly women in history, although my ultimate goal in life is to inspire others to a closer relationship with Jesus, and to encourage the young to a life of sweetness and purity.

Mom's Treasure

About a year ago I was going through our school cabinet looking for magazines to make a collage when I stumbled upon an *Above Rubies* magazine. I ask my mom if I could use it.

"No!" she yelled. "No!" she said again. "*Above Rubies* is

my favorite magazine. It's my treasure!"

She encouraged me to read it. She got me hooked. I now love and look forward to each and every new issue of *Above Rubies* and I read the old ones again and again.

CLAUDIA TIGNOR (11 years)

Frozen Meals

Food can be a real challenge during pregnancy. Over the years I've come up with a list of ideas that have made this task easier for me.

1. **Prepare frozen meals** before you feel sick, for eating at a later time. A good stash of 10-20 meals (at least) can be invaluable for you and your family. Your hard work beforehand can insure less work in the kitchen later on. When you do not have the energy, ability or the stomach to handle prepping meals, this pre-planning can go along way.

If you did not do this previously and you are already past the point of being able to go into the kitchen without gagging...

- a) When friends ask what they can do for you, ask them to bring freezer meals.
 - b) Purchase frozen meals from the store.
2. **Crock pot meals.** If your mornings are usually not the best time to prepare food you can prep and start late afternoon, or before you go to bed. If the smell emanating from the crock pot is hazardous for you, plug it in outside or somewhere else out of your nose's "smell zone".
 3. **Packaged foods.** There are now more healthy alternatives, even organic choices.
 4. **Keep menus simple.** We have successfully planned breakfast, lunch and dinner for one week, and then duplicated that week throughout the month, e.g. every Tuesday breakfast is always oatmeal.

WENDY SHAW

Oakhurst, near south gate of Yosemite National Park, California, USA
wendy@mymorningsickness.com
Kevin and Wendy's blessings are Chase (14), Holly (12), Macy (10), Justus (7), Elley (5), Amy (3), Lilly (17 months) and expecting new baby April 2009.

Wendy has written a booklet for moms specifically on

"How to take care of your Family when you have Morning Sickness."

If you would like to purchase this booklet, please contact Wendy at her email address or go to:
www.mymorningsickness.com

PREGNANCY Limitations

I am sure pregnant mothers will find many good ideas from the following letters. I received hundreds of replies, too many to print in this magazine. The most common recommendation mothers shared was to **drink Red Raspberry Leaf Tea** regularly during pregnancy and to **eat plenty of protein.** Read on for more ideas. Nancy.

Acid Reflux

During the last two months of pregnancy I suffer from terrible acid reflux during the night. However, if I eat a quarter to half of a green apple, within ten minutes the acid is eliminated.

STEPHANIE LOPINTO

St. Petersburg, Florida, USA
steveandsteph@prodigy.net
Steve and Stephanie's little lambs are Josiah (2 1/2) and new baby Brandon (4 weeks).

Playing Doctor

When I felt ill with my second pregnancy, my two-year-old son and I developed a routine of playing doctor. While I rested, he treated me for various injuries and illnesses. He would bring me ice packs, ginger snaps, and prop pillows behind me, etc. just like doctors and nurses at the hospital. While he did this we would talk about the bones in the body, the size of the baby and stage of development. It was a rich time for both of us.

JEN PHILLIPS

McKinney, Texas, USA
mrs.jlphillips@yahoo.com
John and Jen's children are Clark (5) and Claire Anne (2).

Rest in the Bathroom

To take a rest, I would run a bubble bath and find new toys for the children to play

& Morning & Sickness

with in the tub while I rested. I would bring a few pillows into the bathroom and recline with a book while the toddlers played in the tub. This allowed for a good 20-30 minutes of rest time for me.

KECIA KLAUSE

Frisco, Texas, USA
mrs.klause@hotmail.com
Aaron and Kecia's children are Bailey (6), Hope who went to be with Jesus in October 2003, Kennedy (3) and Addison (2).

Coconut Water

I found coconut water (the liquid inside the coconut) wonderful. When the local market ran out of coconuts, canned coconut milk was nearly as good (dilute a little and perhaps add honey). I wish I knew this when I was really sick with one pregnancy and couldn't even keep water down. Electrolyte solution from the doctor helped but maybe coconut water would have been even better.

Supplements (such as vitamin B, C, Blackstrap molasses and iron) and a better diet may have also helped because my next pregnancy was much better. Prayer helped too, of course. I think the coconut is worth a try, being so high in nutrients. It tastes so much better than water, too.

Having something pleasant to sniff (such as a grapefruit or lemon) helps to avoid throwing up. Essential oils such as lemon or tangerine help to freshen up the air.

ERIN, Auckland, New Zealand

list@gfamily.net
Vict and Erin's children are Nathan (8), Rosa (6), Maria (3) and Daniel Miguel (1).

Legumes

Eat legumes every time you feel sick. It worked better than the Phenergan the OB prescribed and is safer too!

I found the remedy on Karen Hurd's website. On www.karenhurd.com you can click on "Specific Health Concerns" and under this, scroll down to "Morning Sickness." She gives the complete biological science behind this "prescription."

LYNN WELCH

Lyme, Connecticut, USA

lwelch@snet.net

Art and Lynn are blessed with Emma (12), MacKenzie (7), Grace (5), Samantha (3) and Lisa (10 months). Art discovered that if you arrange the first letters of each of their names it spells ALLGEMS.

Isn't that nice? And they didn't plan it! This reminds me of when my husband and I were missionaries in the Philippines over 40 years ago. We lived next to a Filipino family who planned to have 12 children and they decided on the words, REFLAMED LOVE. When we lived next to them, they were up to O and called him Oliver. Nancy

Lemon Water

I recommend fresh squeezed lemon in a glass of water, which helps to eliminate toxins naturally, helping to rid the 'nauseous' feelings. It's great when you're not pregnant, too!

LAURON MURPHY

Kittery, Maine, USA

moyphys@gmail.com

Warren and Lauron are blessed with Athena (4) and Keona (1).

My Advice

1. Purchase the best quality and safest vitamins you can find.
2. Make sure you eat raw fruits and veggies.
3. Prepare easy but healthy meals for you and your family.
4. Drink a glass of Raspberry Leaf tea every day for an easy delivery.
5. Have the children help with chores and make chores simple.
6. Get plenty of rest. Drink plenty of water.
7. Ask your husband to rub your feet

every night.

8. Take several cool showers a day in the summer.
9. Soak in the tub with Epsom salts before you go to bed for a good night's sleep.
10. When you are emotional, cry out to God for his grace and mercy. Ask him to help you.

ROSEMI ANGULO

Alta Loma, California, USA

angulovrose@yahoo.com

Foot Massage

When I felt really sick during my first trimester, my husband massaged my feet. It really worked! My nausea went from an intolerable ten to a bearable three. We did not figure this wonderful cure out until my fourth pregnancy!

LAURA MERENDINO

Spring Hill, Tennessee, USA

taln94@yahoo.com

Tony and Laura are blessed with four daughters, Alyssa (10), Nicole (8), Julia and Ava (6 months).

Ginger Tea

Here is a recipe for nausea:

1 Tbs. fresh grated ginger root

4 cups boiling water

Honey to taste (optional)

Pour water over ginger root and allow to steep for five minutes. Strain. Refrigerate unused portion.

AMBER STEBBINS

Zephyr Hills, Florida, USA

candastebbins@netzero.net

Don't Eat Sugar

When you know that you are pregnant, try not to eat anything with sugar. Don't eat ice cream, baked goods or sugary cereal, etc. and make sure you eat protein.

TINA ZIMMERMAN

Newville, Pennsylvania, USA

TinaZ@hughes.net

Darren and Tina's lambs are Jessica (7), Kimberly (5) and Jeremy (2 1/2).

Books on Tape

I suffer from morning sickness with every pregnancy and find it difficult to read aloud to the children. Therefore, I go to the library and get books on tape. I can still sit and turn pages, but I don't have to talk and it's less likely that I'll get the sick feeling. They enjoy the books and hearing different voices.

As far as remedies go, I keep raisins and cashews by my bedside. There is something about the mixture of fruit and nuts that usually curbs the sick feeling when I first wake up.

HANNAH BABIAK

Pell Lake, Wisconsin, USA

rhbabiak13@charter.net

<http://bookwormbabiak.blogspot.com/>

Bob and Hannah's children are Leah (15), Kaila (14), Robert (13), Sarah (13), Michael (11), Rachel (8), Kendra (7), Jared (4) and Nathan (10 months).

Lemons

I had pregnancy sickness with all four of my sons during the first trimester. The only thing that worked for me were lemons! I love lemons anyway. If I could suck on a lemon wedge, the nausea would subside. This helped greatly when I was in church. I kept a baggie of lemon wedges in my purse and when the feeling hit me (as it always did), I quietly pulled out my baggie and stuck a lemon in my mouth! Instantly I felt better! No one seemed to notice or be bothered by my little snack either!

CHERYL NEWTON

cheryl.newton@yahoo.com

Darin and Cheryl are blessed with Zack (19), Devin (18), Cameron (16), Jacob (14) and Shannon (9).

Keep Plodding On

I've been sick with all my pregnancies. The ones I haven't been sick with, I miscarried. For me, the sickness lasts from five weeks until delivery. I spend my days trying to eat something that will stay down or choosing a good time to throw up. I think the first four months are the hardest because that's when I am extra tired on top of the nausea. After 16 weeks or so,

my energy returns and that helps some.

As for remedies, we've tried them all to no avail. To cope, I have depended on my husband. My husband is a state college campus minister and he's been able to have some flexibility. When I had older children to help, I enlisted them. I've made sure I rest and sleep a lot (sleeping 12 hours a night and naps). We simplified meals to the bare bones and our grocery budget goes out the window. There's nothing I can do about it but trust God. I let most things go around the house. Laundry is the one thing I try to stay on top of and I also clean up the kitchen once a day if I can.

I think the best thing we did when I only had young ones was to have a college student come over and help. This was a huge help. It also gave the children something to look forward to and helped my guilty feelings of not being able to do the things I wanted to do with them.

I tried to keep on doing things. Once I was over the four to five month mark, I kept up a pretty normal life, apart from throwing up all the time. Even though I hate throwing up in public places or while camping, I've done it anyway so we can go places as a family. I haven't wanted their view of mom being pregnant to mean they're bored for nine months.

As far as husband/wife relationship goes, we spent time together on the couch. "Bedroom" time was also challenging. I remember having to say, "Okay, but let me throw up first." Or, "Okay, but I don't think I'm up for much." At times we had to plan for once a week. The week went by too fast for me and too slow for my husband! But it was only for a season.

Keeping perspective is the best thing to do. I read my Bible a lot, mainly the Psalms. I've also gained a lot of compassion and empathy for people who deal with chronic illness and pain. At least I knew my sickness would go away and in its place I'd get a beautiful baby!

My oldest is now 23 and the youngest is three. None of the children have bad memories from those challenging months.

SUSI LUNDQUIST

Ellensburg, Washington, USA
radxians@elltel.net

Matt and Susi are blessed with Amanda (23), Nate (21), Kaleb (17), Katie (15), Carrie (13), Ben-adopted (12), Soren (6) and Haddon (3).

Answer for Edema

I am an apprenticing midwife in San Diego and the midwife I work with uses the water from the coconut to help treat edema in pregnancy. It is preferable to use the young coconut but the older brown coconut will do. Drink the water from one to three coconuts each day depending on the severity of the edema. You can often purchase them by the case for a discount in Asian, Middle Eastern or Latin food markets.

The water is the almost clear fluid that is inside the coconut. The coconut water has the same level of electrolytic balance as we have in our blood. The water is pure and is full of natural sugars, salts, vitamins and potassium. Once opened you must drink immediately as the water quickly loses its nutritional characteristics.

DORA RAMIREZ

El Cajon, California, USA

zerimarad@sbcglobal.net

Steven and Dora are blessed with Steven, Jr. (15) and Adriana (12). Dora is an Apprenticing Midwife, Doula, and Bradley Childbirth Instructor.

Watch the Rejuvenate with Serene DVD, or purchase her book,

Rejuvenate Your Life, Recipes for Energy to find out how to cut open the coconut.

Power Recipe

I am currently pregnant with my fourth child. As with my previous pregnancies, I dealt with morning sickness during the early months of my pregnancy. My husband asked a natural doctor friend for help and he gave us the following recipe:

Dr's Power Recipe

1 tsp. - 1 Tbs. Brewer's yeast (*saccharomyces cerevisiae*) Or Nutritional Yeast

1 tsp. - 1 Tbs. Blackstrap molasses

1 egg (raw, farm-raised)

A glass of milk

Stir together with a fork or blend in blender.

Drink twice a day until symptoms are under control and then once a day.

It worked! I was able to begin making

meals for my family almost immediately. After 20 minutes of drinking the first glass, I was up making chicken soup from scratch, which I proceeded to eat with no problem. This would have saved me a lot of trouble during the previous three pregnancies.

NICHOLA FILES

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Carbon, Texas, USA

David and Nichola's treasures are Keilah (6), Jakin (4), Sarah (3) and another blessing due November 2008.

Slow Down and Enjoy

Having two toddlers and being pregnant with a third was very exhausting. Being on complete bed rest from week 20 on was downright stressful! I could sit or stand for no longer than 10 minutes at a time or I would start having contractions.

My mother was very ill at the time and my dear sweet husband was working very hard to provide for us. I did not have any help until he came home at night from work. The medication that I had to take to stop/slow the contractions made me very sick and weak which made it even more difficult to care for my two little boys.

Each morning, I fixed a simple breakfast and moved everyone to the living room to eat. I put up the baby gates so they had to stay where I could see them. I then spent the whole morning lying on my side on the sofa reading to them, playing games (as best I could), and being Mommy to my boys. I had plenty of toys, games, and activities to keep the boys busy. We moved the toy box into this room so they would have all their favorite things close at hand. For naptime we all got comfy on the sofa or the floor beside the sofa and I read to them until they fell asleep.

Conner was two years old when I was pregnant with my youngest and he was a huge blessing to me. He fetched diapers, drinks, snacks (that I had made up ahead of time), or anything else that I might need. I was amazed at how helpful a two-year-old can be, and how much they can understand.

To make things easier on all of us I measured out snacks in little plastic baggies, and used little water bottles to hold drinks. Plastic baggies of snacks kept them happy between meals and when I did have

to be up on my feet I re-stocked my supplies as quickly as I could.

Simple meals saved me from being on my feet for too long. I had prepared frozen meals to pop into the oven for after the baby's arrival, but ended up using those for dinner while I was on bed rest. We did simple things for breakfast and lunch like smoothies, oatmeal, almond butter and jelly sandwiches, etc. For dinner we usually ate something that cooked all day in the crock-pot, or a simple soup that simmered in the pot and did not need me to stand over it for a long time.

God gave us a third healthy baby and I was able to spend several months really getting to know my first two children. They loved having a Mommy who spent the whole day playing with them and not worrying if the house was spotless. God has a way of showing us what is really important in life and I am glad He blessed me with a reason to slow down and enjoy my children.

SHANAN STRODE

Charleston, Illinois, USA
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Bill and Shanana have three sons, Conner (9), Kasey (7), and Cody (5).

Eat Little and Often

During my first pregnancy I was sick the entire time. I even ended up in the hospital a couple of times because, I was unable to function. During my second pregnancy a group of lovely mothers I found online blessed me with some tips that really helped me.

The first tip was to leave a small container of crackers right next to the bed. As soon as I woke up I would eat a couple of crackers and wait a few minutes before rising.

I always carried peppermint candy or lifesavers with me at all times. At the first sign of tummy upset, I popped one in my mouth. Many suggest peppermint tea but the candy is a much faster way to get some peppermint.

Lastly, many an experienced Mommy told me I should never let my stomach get too empty. They told me to eat little bits of food often. It worked! Just be careful not to go overboard or you will have too much weight gain. Every hour or two have a couple of crackers, a piece of toast, or a couple

pretzels. Dry foods like this are great but do whatever works for you.

Plan ahead so you are never caught without something to nibble on in situations like shopping, a social gathering or in church. No one is going to be upset with a pregnant lady for having a little snack to settle her stomach in these situations.

Also, drink plenty of water; it will keep your stomach acid weaker.

By following these tips I had barely any sickness during my second, third, and fourth pregnancies. I enjoyed the wonderful time of nurturing the little life God placed within me and I was more able to enjoy the other children as well.

AMANDA SEARS

Kissimmee, Florida, USA
kissismomof4@msn.com
Josh and Amanda's children are Zach (12), Easton (10), Mariah (8) and Drew (5).

Digital Camera

During a recent very difficult pregnancy, I learned to check chores by using a digital camera. When the children said they were done cleaning under their beds, I asked them to take the camera and take a picture to show me! They loved taking their own photos and I loved knowing if things were done or not!

Another benefit of my difficult pregnancy, apart from our beautiful baby, was that my children took over the cooking. They had a wonderful time learning to cook food, which I could not even smell without throwing up.

CARRI PETERSON

Burkesville, Kentucky, USA
petersonclan@momys.com
Eric and Carri's children are Angela (15), Matthew (14), Josiah (11), Anna Grace (9), Emma Joy (7), Sara Faith (5), Nathan (3), Mercy (1.5) and Bethany Hope born July 9, 2008.

Keep up the Iron

If you're like me, there's no such thing as morning sickness—it's all day sickness! I get an air bubble under my diaphragm which makes me feel nauseous and as though I need to burp all the time. I've found that keeping something in my stomach at all times really helps. Drinking water, even

when I don't want to, also helps. Be sure to keep a packet of crackers and a bottle of water in the car for those times when you need something right away.

Make sure you're getting enough iron. It makes a huge difference in your energy level. If I find it hard to get up the stairs, I know I'm not getting enough.

On the days when I don't feel like doing anything at all, I pray for strength and then push through my daily routine. I usually feel better after making myself get moving. Sometimes just getting out of the house can take my mind off not feeling good.

BRIDGET PISCOYA

Fairbanks, Alaska, USA
dietzpiscoya@yahoo.com
Lonny and Bridget have 5 blessings, Daniel (13), Nicholas (12), Matthew (9), Molly Kate (6), Ethan (9 months) and another baby on the way!

My Attitude

I thank God every day for my morning sickness, although actually I have afternoon sickness. It starts at 3:00 pm and goes all evening. I am expecting our 13th child. I had a miscarriage this past December (07) when my mother suddenly passed away from a heart attack at age 62. My husband and I thought that maybe we were done and our hearts were very sad, even though our youngest is only two. During our entire marriage, we have never had a two-year-old without a newborn.

Every month we prayed that the Lord would keep our womb open. We were overjoyed in June 08 to find that we were expecting again. My afternoon sickness is worse than ever before and with the last four babies it never went away completely. Every time I am extra sick at night my husband says, "I am so happy for you dear." I reply, "Great." We both know that is a good sign of a healthy pregnancy.

For me a lot of it has to do with attitude. If I am rejoicing over my pregnancy then I am able to handle the nausea better. I also changed my diet drastically and cut out all sugar, white flour, and caffeine from my diet. This has helped my energy level.

I plan and cook dinner around lunchtime since the worst of my sickness is in the afternoon. When I drive I chew on

continued on page 26

My husband and I have 14 children, ages 23 to 2 1/2 years old. We homeschool which contributes to a constantly busy and interesting home life.

As you can imagine, it is no small thing for our family to function on a day-to-day basis. Four of our children work to help support the family since my husband's brain injury almost eight years ago. A home business keeps me extra busy and everybody, including my husband, contributes to the daily operations. Fourteen of us live in a four-bedroom house, which we open up to others every chance we get. Our family loves to exercise the gift of hospitality. In all of this, there is a contagious joy in our home. Teenagers who work with my children wish they could be a Wexel.

A few years ago, as a 46, almost 47-year-old woman, my body began to change. I was convinced that Phoebe, our six-year-old, was to be our last. There had never been a span of over two years between children before and I was experiencing pre-menopausal signs. In fact, before I knew I was pregnant with number 14, I had skipped cycles again. It had become commonplace and I did not give it a second thought. It took me over two months to figure out I was expecting once again, even though I was experiencing some very familiar feelings.

The day I took a test and confirmed what I suspected was amazing. We were going to be blessed again with a new life in our home. You should have seen the joy that flowed from our children. You would have thought someone told our children we won the lottery!

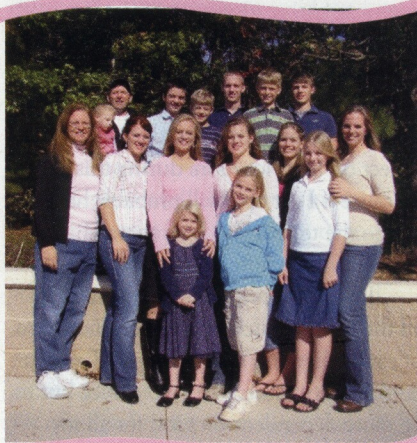
As a family, we have been through a lot in every way. My husband's brain injury put a strain on our family that would have crumpled most. However, with God, we have flourished. As I pondered in my heart the joy in our home at the news, God gave me wonderful vision concerning our last three babies.

When my husband was injured, Isaac, child number 12, was four months old. The injury was very traumatic on our whole family, and especially on me, as I lost the mate I knew and now had a very different one. It was very lonely. God, in his sovereignty, knew I would need Isaac. I had a sweet little baby to hold, cuddle and nurse when every one was in bed and I was all alone. By trusting God to plan our family, the result was having Isaac to help

God has a Bigger Plan

meet needs of mine that I had no idea were coming. This was immeasurable during a very difficult time.

Eleven months into his injury, I was pregnant again. You can imagine all the comments I heard from people who do not understand that God's ways are higher than ours. Outwardly speaking, one could wonder at the wisdom in this, but God knows so much better than we can even imagine. So by faith and with joy I wel-



comed the new life growing within my womb. We named her Phoebe Hope—Phoebe means 'bright' so she is our bright hope baby.

With Isaac meeting so many needs of mine, it became apparent that God provided Phoebe for my husband. When he was injured, it was very hard for him to be around the noise and constant motion of the children. He would push himself and spend time with them, but it was not easy for him. Often he would have to retreat to a quieter place. When God brought Phoebe along, He gave us this beautiful, quiet, still little human being. Daniel, my husband, would lie on the couch and put Phoebe on his chest. You could see him melt. Phoebe was like therapy and helped him to reconnect to the children. What an awesome testimony to God's ways being higher than ours!

When we found out we were expecting number 14, as you can imagine, not all the responses were positive. There were

more than the usual unsolicited comments from people who think we are crazy... "What are you thinking, you are 46, your husband can't work", etc. As I prayed and girded up my own heart for this pregnancy, God ministered to me that this baby was for the children. Our older children have made great sacrifices and all the children go through a lot on a day-to-day basis living with a brain injured dad. The joy, excitement and anticipation of a new one coming outweighed any naysayer's reactions. Isaac, who was four years at the time, reacted in a priceless way. He clasped his face with both hands, smiled a really big smile and then clapped his hands and danced about the room.

I cannot express the joy of watching all of her siblings take delight in her every move, smile, noise and coo when Analise arrived. There is great satisfaction as mom, watching my teenage sons hold her and take care of her. Phoebe gets to be a big sister and my older children, after a hard day at work, play and hold conversations with this little person. Many times, on days off, one of the older children will make plans to do errands or something special with Analise. It is as if she is their baby. They love to snuggle and read a book to her or just laugh at her silly antics. This proud Mom's heart is full as I watch the healing this little person brings.

We trust in a very big God who sees all our needs and knows the very best way to meet them. We have certainly proved that God's ways are best and that children truly are a blessing.

LAURIE WEXEL

Lilburn, Georgia, USA

lwexel@bellsouth.net

Rachel (23), Naomi (22), Andrew (20), Lydia (19), Sarah (18), Laurel (17), Michael (16), Jacob (14), Ruth (12), Peter (11), Mary (9), Isaac (8), Phoebe (6) and Analise (2 1/2).

Some of you may remember reading Laurie's previous testimony in *Above Rubies*, # 59, "God is Bigger than Our Circumstances".

ice chips and drink fresh lemon water.

The first 8-10 weeks I use natural progesterone cream to help balance the hormones and nausea.

My children are a wonderful help. I also move the bedtime up about half an hour so I can get to bed early.

We are overjoyed that the Lord is blessing us again.

DIANA MARTENS

Santa Rosa, California, USA
trulyblessed@familink.com

Jon and Diana's children are as follows: Pam, married to Shawn with Brooklyn and Bryce, Sara married to Jason, with Whitley and expecting late march 09, Desiree (19), Jonathon (18), Joshua (16), Jeremy (14), Justin (12), Bethany (9), Jared (8), Jacob (6), Joel (4), Carolyn 2) and expecting another little one early March 09.

Plastic Plates and Utensils

Take comfort in the fact that pregnancy lasts only for a season, and once it's over you'll be able to be the wife and mother that you want to be once again. It's easy to lose sight of that, since every day seems like an eternity when one feels so miserable.

From a practical standpoint, for any future pregnancies I plan to start freezing extra meals as soon as I discover I'm pregnant. I also hope to save money ahead of time to schedule someone to clean my house every week or two, so that I won't despair about the state of our home during this time

Also, stock up on paper plates and plastic utensils so that dishes don't pile up. Try to remember that all the suffering will seem like a distant memory when you're holding your sweet new baby in your arms!

LAUREN WALKER

Lewisburg, Tennessee, USA
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Josh and Lauren's little lambs are Leah (4), Benjamin (3), Miriam (15 months), and new baby due November 2008.

My Husband's Prayers

I was terribly sick with my first pregnancy. With my second pregnancy with twins I was even worse. I required medication and frequent IV fluids to manage and was so miserable I didn't think I could do it again

with having other children to care for.

With my current pregnancy, my husband laid his hands on me, prayed for me and blessed me each morning. I did not throw up or get sick one time. I didn't think it was possible! It was such a blessing.

Another factor was the de-toxing and physical cleansing in the prior year. I added fasting, eating more whole foods, and learning more about colon cleansing and health.

AMY MANACHER

Fairhope, Alabama, USA
amymariacher@aol.com

Greg and Amy's blessings are Anna (8), Louie (4), Sophia (4) and baby boy due November 2008.

Time to Reflect

I have been very sick in the first trimesters of all five of my children. The way I cope best is to embrace the time. I sit and reflect on life a lot more during this time (because if I get up I will probably have to run to the toilet!) and I get to watch things happen from a different viewpoint.

Instead of being the one "in action" all the time, I watch my children take care of each other and study and ponder their personalities more. With no choice but to be more dependent on God for all my needs, I get to experience how He never fails to provide a meal for my family, through my hands or someone else's, even though thinking about food and even being in the kitchen makes me feel really awful.

I get to sit and be quiet in the Lord's arms for a while as He works wonders in my womb.

JACLYN STRASBURG

Appleton, Wisconsin, USA
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Lucas and Jaclyn's children are Logan (8), William (7), Michael (5), Aliya (3), and Rachel (1).

Mommy Sick Day

When I became pregnant with my third child, my oldest was just four years old and my middle child was not quite two years old. On the days I couldn't shake the queasiness, we played "Mommy Sick Day." I would lie down in the children's room with my pillow and tell them, "Mommy doesn't feel well. Can you help me to feel

better?" This gave them an opportunity to be the caregivers and do all the nice things for me that my husband and I do for them when they are ill. They covered me with their special blankets, prayed for me, sang to me, and had great fun pretending to cook me all their favorite foods. By the time the game was over, I actually felt a lot better!

GENESSA LAVINE

Murrieta, California, USA
gennysgarden@yahoo.com

Travis and Genessa have three little blessings: Gabriel (5), Amanda (3) and Molly (8 months).

Throw out the Whites

I experienced horrible morning sickness with my first two pregnancies, throwing up for the whole nine months.

My last pregnancy was much better which I attribute to a change in our diet two years before I got pregnant. We gave up white flour, breads, and pasta, etc. and began to buy whole wheat pasta and grind our own wheat to make bread, rolls, pizza crust and more. We also tried to eat more fruit and veggies.

HILLARY CRANDALL

Denver, Colorado, USA
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David and Hillary's children are Grace (6) Theo (4) and Hannah (2).

Seek the Lord

The best counsel for anyone who is ill during pregnancy is, of course, is to seek the Lord Jesus first. I knew this when I was ill with my son, but I did not understand how to do the seeking. Thankfully, our Lord is patient. I was on bed rest for a week after a frightening ER trip. My husband brought me our daughter to nurse (which certainly helped me feel better and I highly recommend tandem nursing to relieve morning sickness). Then, all I had time to do was pray! It was difficult and wonderful. In illness, the Lord will reveal what needs to be done.

I also highly recommend a whole house water filter.

ELIZABETH PHILLIPS

Lancaster, Ohio, USA
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ABOVE RUBIES

RETREATS AND SEMINARS

Family Camps are for the whole family - fathers, mothers and the children. Singles and single mothers are also welcome. The speakers are Colin and Nancy Campbell. Colin will minister to the fathers and Nancy to the mothers, unless otherwise stated. All ladies are welcome at the Ladies Retreats - wives, mothers, singles, teen daughters, and of course, we always welcome the nursing babies. Come and be encouraged, challenged, fortified, strengthened, uplifted and inspired in your divine calling of parenting.

Check www.aboverubies.org for additional retreats or changes. More retreats are currently being finalized.

-- Camps for 2008 --

7 - 9 NOVEMBER, OREGON

LADIES RETREAT, Silverton, Oregon

Contact: Pam Fields, Ph: 503-363-0579

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Email: MandyHaase@embarqmail.com

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Or Natalie Dueck, Ph: 204-388-6758 (evenings are best) • jason.dueck@3web.net

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Publications Agreement 40866061

ABOVE RUBIES October 2008, No.75

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Emma Drake in “What a Young Wife Ought to Know” Published 1908

