

ABOVE RUBIES

www.aboverubies.org

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It's always exciting to be printing another issue of *Above Rubies*. When preparing this magazine I had enough material for two magazines, so I hope it won't be long before we can afford to send the next one to you.

If you are familiar with our ministry, you will know that I have always had a burden to encourage families to sit together for their evening meals and enjoy Family Devotions together. You may have already read my manual, *The Family Meal Table and Hospitality*, or you may have watched the DVD, *The Family Meal Table in Action*. You can order these from the Book/CD Store on the webpage.

This has become an increasing bur-

den to Colin and me. The most important need of this hour is for marriages and families to strengthen and solidify. This doesn't automatically happen. Husbands and wives have to work at strengthening their family. One of the greatest ways we strengthen family ties is to eat together, rather than each member of the family doing their own thing and going their own way.

Even greater than this is the need for families to read the Word and pray together. How can families stay strong and stand against the deception and attacks of the enemy without praying together? How can we expect God to move in our nation if we do not pray? And if families don't

pray, who will? The church consists of families. If we don't have praying families, we won't have a praying church, and we won't have a godly nation.

I was very challenged recently when I read Jeremiah 10:25, "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name." Did you notice that this verse is talking about families? It puts families who do not call upon the Lord in the same position as the heathen!

How many families

truly call upon the name of the Lord together each morning and evening? How many families intercede for their nation each day? To call upon the Lord does not mean a little "bless me" prayer. It means "to cry out loudly, to summon God's aid." We as God's families should be known as "the people who call upon the name of the Lord." Is this our testimony before our neighbors and the people who know us?

I believe it is time for families to get back to their godly foundations, to the principles which keep marriages and families together—coming together daily to read God's Word, pray and cry out to God for the needs around them and for the nation. It takes both the father and



Grand-daughter, Meadow Barrett and Jessica Robertson (*Above Rubies* helper from Australia) filming the *Rubies* Movie, *The Great Rebellion*. You can download this movie from the website. It is filmed in and around our home and includes about 20 of the grandchildren. Many folks would love to visit us at our home—here's your opportunity!

mother, working together, to make this happen. I have printed "The Wife's Part" on pages 16-18 of this magazine and husbands can go to www.aboverubies.org and search for "The Husband's Part".

Can you imagine what could happen if all the God-believing families began to live what they believe? What if they put aside some of the material pursuits that take up so much of their lives and get back to making time each day to read God's Word and pray together as a family? Marriages would be cemented. Families would be united. And you can



Noble Barrett (in the red shirt) decided to have a Chess Competition for his 8th birthday. The grandchildren play a lot of chess, tutored by their Uncle Rocky (on the right) who is a chess fanatic. His boys, Joshua (9) and Harry (5) enjoy weekend chess competitions. A good part of their homeschooling is learning chess as it is so good for the brain. Above: Harry shakes hands with Cedar after winning his game.



Our oldest grand-daughter, Chanel and her sister Grace.



Colin was telling the story of how his grandmother (who he never met) made his mother and her sister sit at the table with a book on their heads and a stick between their shoulders in order to train them to have good posture. The girls had fun trying. Mercy actually managed to get the spoon to her mouth, but they couldn't imagine eating a whole meal that way!



Our youngest daughter, Mercy holding Breeze. Mercy and Breeze are special friends.



Our daughters, Evangeline with Saber Truth, Pearl and Serene with Ember Breeze.



Our twins, Evangeline and Stephen, 45 years.

believe the impact upon the nation.

We have much information on this important subject on the webpage. Check out the articles listed under "The Family Meal Table", "Prayer in the Home" and "Bible in the Home."

My husband has also written an article on marriage in this issue. A strong and stable marriage also takes effort. It takes laying down our lives for one another. Does this sound too hard to do? Many react against such a principle, but to their detriment. To live our own life and demand our own way only wrecks havoc to ourselves, our husband and our family. To serve your husband and give up your own "rights" may seem ridiculous, but it actually reaps a harvest of freedom, joy and harmony that blesses not only your own relationship but your family too.

Of course, you are not going to be perfect all the time. It's easy to blow it. It's easy to get into the flesh. I am always encouraged by Proverbs 24:16 which says, "The just man falls seven times, and rises

up again." Although I am sure we've all fallen more than seven times. I certainly have in our 47 years of marriage! Yet, it doesn't matter how many times we fall; we can get up again in the strength of the Lord. All we have to do is forgive, say sorry, never go to bed angry and keep a soft and tender heart. Pretty simple, isn't it?

I have shared the burden of my heart with you. Now I will share our daily life through the pictures of some of our 34 grandchildren. When folks ask me how many grandchildren we have, I love to reply, "Thirty-four and hoping for more!"

Colin and I have just returned home this evening from taking our grandsons, Zadok and Sharar out for supper, to say goodbye to them as they set off next week for five weeks of gold-dredging in Alaska. It should be an exciting time for them.

One more thing: I am daily inundated with enquiries as to when Serene and Pearl's new health book will be available. I am sorry to say that it is not ready yet. They nearly completed it last summer but then had to get back to schooling their children. The plan is to complete it this summer. It is certainly going to be worth waiting for. I believe it will be the most cutting edge health book available on the market as they share practical answers for every aspect of health for mothers, including hormones. And, of course, loads of healthy recipes that will be within your budget range.

Pray for strength for them as they work on this book and care for their families. They are, at the same time, recording their new album, *Serene and Pearl Sing the Old Hymns*. You are going to love this one.

NANCY CAMPBELL
 Founder and Editress of *Above Rubies*
 Primm Springs, Tennessee, USA

ABOVE RUBIES

PO BOX 681687

FRANKLIN, TN 37068-1687 USA

Ph: (877) 729-9861 (9am - 4pm Mon-Fri)

Web site: www.aboverubies.org

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."

EDITRESS: Nancy Campbell

GRAPHICS: Duane Dominy, Dominy & Associates, duanead2@yahoo.com

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grandchildren: Dan Klepper Photography • www.danklepper.com

Dan Klepper • dan@danklepper.com

Beauty for Ashes

I grew up in an average household in rural England. I had my own pony and enjoyed being a member of The Pony Club which kept me pretty busy in the holidays and on the weekends and kept me away from boys (my father's intention in getting me my own pony!). From the age of 10, I can remember being con-



Steve and Wendy's children are Hayley (19), Mark (16), Joshua (10), Joy (6) and Benjamin (1).

scious of my figure in a very negative way. I used to watch *Dallas*, *Dynasty* and *Knots Landing*, American dramas full of very glamorous women who left me feeling very dissatisfied with my appearance.

I left school at 16 and worked at a local riding school. In return for working hard, I received tuition towards becoming a riding instructress. I passed all my exams and became a newly qualified British Horse Society Assistant Instructor. Unfortunately, all the hard work and stodgy food caused me to put on weight, so, much as I loved this line of work, I left the riding school and went to secretarial college. I figured that I would be able to lose weight and keep thin if I was an attractive secretary.

During one lunch hour at this college, a seed was planted which would grow and bear the fruit of unhappiness, deceit and guilt. About six of us sat at a table discussing our various diets. One girl said very matter-of-factly that she put her fingers down her throat and made herself sick after her meals, that way deceiving her family into thinking that she was eating normally. We were all "grossed out" by her statement and let her know, but the seed was sown and within a

week or two I was feeling very smug in the knowledge that I was losing weight "the easy way." I had purposely avoided cigarettes, drugs and alcohol growing up, as I didn't want anything to ever get control of my life. Ironically, here I was, a slave to bingeing and vomiting!

I served this secret addiction for 11 years. After about six years, I realised that my life was completely out of control and sought the help of a psychiatrist. He informed me that I was 50% healed as I had admitted the addic-

tion and all I had to do was avoid my "trigger foods." What help was that? Everything was a trigger food! Should I not eat forever more? With that very unhelpful advice, I battled on for another five years before life hit rock bottom. I kept believing that if I could just find happiness, I would stop being sick. As a result, I changed career or man every few years in my exhausting search.

I had not been brought up to go to church. Though I attended a few times in school years, I found it all thoroughly boring and irrelevant. Usually I had to go out, as I used to faint if I stood up for long periods, which suited me fine! Curiously, during some of my really dark periods, I remember thinking that I should read the Bible. I never got round to doing so, but one Sunday morning, with my two young children in tow, I wandered into the church which stood on the corner of my street. I was just ending yet another relationship and knew that if I didn't get help, my children would live with no stability or security whatsoever. Worse still, what I was doing was so damaging to my mind and body that I possibly wouldn't live long enough to see them grow up. I knew I couldn't help myself. I knew man couldn't help me. There was one option open to me. God! If there was

a God, I was determined to find Him—only He could heal me.

The church I wandered into was a small traditional church. I understood none of the songs and found it as irrelevant and boring as I had when I was a schoolgirl. However, the vicar and his wife were both in their early thirties and they bounded up to me at the end of the service. I was the youngest there by about 40 years!

The vicar explained that they were just about to hold their first Alpha Course (an introduction to the Christian faith) and invited me to come along. I had nothing to lose, so I went to the vicarage, enjoyed a good meal and settled down to listen to the talk, "Who was Jesus?" What a revelation! The next week was, "Why did Jesus die?" I believed it! But surely it was too good to be true! Jesus taking on my sins? This was incredible! I couldn't wait for week four, "How do I pray?" As soon as I grasped this, I prayed. I invited Jesus into my life and said, "If you are real, you will heal my bulimia." He did! I remember going into the fridge looking for food to binge on and thinking to myself, "I'm not hungry," then closing the fridge door! Wow! When Jesus sets you free, you are free indeed!

As you can imagine, being set free from an 11-year addiction, was a miracle which caused me to tell anyone and everyone! Anyone who came within hearing distance of me was "bashed" with my testimony of the power and love of Jesus. Unfortunately, I knew none of the Bible and was pretty ineffective, as my life was still so full of sin that I must have been a terrible witness! Still, I loved Jesus and in time, grew to love and depend upon His Word.

Within three years of being a Christian, I married a lovely man who was "Daddy" to my children from our wedding day. We felt the Lord calling us to take our children out of primary school and school them at home. We did this in obedience and He has blessed us mightily. These two children are now 15 and 19 and walking with the Lord with godly character.

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People often ask how we provide for our ten children, wondering how we give them everything they need. Someone told me once that having a big family "isn't fair" to our children because they don't get to have as much as other children. Trust me; our children have more than they could ever need.

Our children do not deserve everything. In fact, children that are given everything tend to be selfish and greedy. Giving in to our children's every desire and want will not produce a person of great character. Take a look at our culture. It is truly the "ME" generation, the product of overindulged children who were raised to believe that they deserve it all.

Children do not need their own rooms (after all, we share our room with someone). They do not need their own iPods, televisions and cell phones. They don't need the latest and greatest gadget or toy either. Children need love, guidance and protection. They need structure, boundaries, creative outlets and exercise. What happened to imaginative play? My brother and I used to spend hours creating made-up games. We didn't need anything electronic, just our creative little heads. My fondest childhood memories involve our make believe games.

Now don't get me wrong. There is nothing wrong with giving our children things. There is nothing wrong with material possessions. It is fun to bless our children and I love to see the expression in my children's eyes when I am able to give them something they really wanted.

It's also good for children to learn the word No. It is good for them to learn they cannot always have what they want. No is not a bad word and using it does not mean you are depriving your child. In fact saying No from time to time is actually good for them, because, as you and I know, we cannot always get what we want.

I am always amazed when I am at Wal-Mart at how many children cry and whine for things and the parents give in. The child is screaming his head off and still gets what he wants! That is not to say that my children don't whine. They do at times, but, they know that if they do, the answer will always be No. In fact, I will never buy our children anything if they whine for it.

Whining aside, just because your

Try Saying NO.



child wants something, and just because you may have the means to get it, does not mean you have to get it for them. It really is okay to say No, if for no other reason than to teach your child that sometimes you just can't have what you want. They don't always need candy at the checkout. They don't always need a new toy and teaching them to understand that now will save them from a lifetime of disappointment.

It also helps them better understand God their Father. God does not give us everything we want. Our children need to understand from a very young age, that it is out of love for them that we sometimes say No. In turn, this will shape their relationship with their heavenly Father as they learn to trust Him, even when He says No.

If you are having a hard time with this, practice it. Seriously, practice saying No. Tell your child No upon occasion, just because you can and because they will be better people for it. Sure, they may pitch a fit at first. They might carry on. But, they will get used to it.

We don't buy our children things too often. They get birthday and Christmas gifts. They don't need anything and honestly, they are happier playing outside, digging in the dirt, making forts in their rooms, or painting a masterpiece, than they are playing with some plastic piece of junk that they just had to have.

Our children also know that they will

rarely get something if they ask for it. I prefer to bless my children when they have not asked for it, simply because I love them, or, because I want to reward them for something they have done. This way they learn to not expect things and are more grateful when they do get them.

Growing up in a big family means hand me downs, garage sale toys and not eating out. They may not take Karate or Gymnastics classes. They may not get the latest and greatest gadgets but I really believe they are better people for it.

When they are grown up, they won't remember the candy they got at the checkout lane or the new toy they got at Wal-Mart. They aren't going to savor those Karate lessons or the dinners out. They are going to remember each other, the ordinary days of mud pies and castles built out of couch cushions. Playing in the sprinkler on a hot summer day. Baking cookies and getting a taste of the dough. The laughter that filled their days. The best friends they made with one another.

Our children may not have everything this world has to offer, but they have everything that matters. They understand that No is sometimes the answer and that there is more to life than getting what they want.

If you want to raise great children, practice saying No—someday you will be grateful you did.

COURTNEY GIRDWOOD

Spartanburg, South Carolina, USA
campgirdwood@yahoo.com

Brian and Courtney are parents to 10 children, 6 through birth and 4 through adoption—Olivia (14), Galya (13), Micah (11), Abigail (11), Madelyn (9), Aiden (7), Jameson (4), Leah (4), Asher (1) and Malakai (6 months). Their blog is www.storinguptreasures.com

P.S. Our daughter, Evangeline, who also has 10 children, said to me at Christmas that children who belong to big families are spoiled! When each of them gives a gift to each other at Christmas, it ends up being 120 gifts! And that's only with one present each! Presents fill their home. Of course, these are not the expensive plastic toys from the shop. The children save their money through hard work and find their bargains at garage sales. Nancy



My

I worried for my newborn baby's lungs and had read to get low to the ground where smoke is concerned. Consequently, I lay with my baby on the kitchen floor and had the children open all doors and windows. It was below freezing outside. My newborn began to cry and I could hardly nurse her through the myriad of clothing layers. I didn't try to be a big coping girl anymore. I joined her in the chorus and had a good cry myself,

teardrops fogging up my Florida vacation goggles.

A droning ring added a clashing harmony to our choir of sobs and I crawled under the smoke clouds to the phone. "Hello," I said in my most positive "Nancy Campbell" tone (if you haven't heard that one yet, you are in for a treat). It was an old family friend calling from Ireland and I could hardly hear him because of a bad connection. I told him I had to get off the phone as our wood stove was smoking us out. He then began a lecture about creosote and cancer and advised me to get the children out of the home immediately. If I wasn't already a worry wart, I was just promoted to General of all worry mothers in the world.

I marched my troop of children out into the numbing cold and we did laps around our house to keep warm. It was somewhere during these laps that I decided I wasn't having any fun at all. The children were having a blast! How exciting to be outside playing with mum. She's all dressed up funny and weird, a mammoth

A quarter mile of pipe ran down the steep, icy, hill behind our home which is frozen solid most of the winter. The ground was too rocky to bury the pipes by hand and too dangerous to run a machine on such an incline. We had wrapped them with insulation but the biting wind got the upper hand again. This meant no flushing toilets, baths or showers, no water to wash dishes, clothes or dirty hands—or even cook.

Of course, "where there is a will there is a way" and my young tribe of eight children kept the place running happily (maybe not smoothly) by breaking the top of the icy tank outside and hauling water all day long. When the tank was empty, it was an adventure to the bottom of the hill to the source of the spring and up again with five-gallon buckets in tow.

We love and enjoy our life here in the Allison home and we managed to see the funny side of it all. But I have to confess, some days I had to do mental gymnastics to stay that way. The washing was piled to the ceiling and the house was freezing. It

was heated by a wood stove that worked great when my husband was home. The silly thing had taken a personal dislike to me and went out every time I looked at it.

I actually do have sweet and warm memories of this past winter—all of us, too cold for much else, cuddling on the couch under all the blankets, reading horse adventure stories and sipping hot chocolate. I forgot to tell you that under the thick blankets we each had on three pairs of socks, our winter coats and two or three beanies.

There was one day, however, when we wore one more additional fashion statement. The wood stove, that hated me, decided to pitch a fit and smoked billowing plumes from hell all day. The children couldn't open their eyes without smarting pain so up to the storage loft we went and unpacked our summer box of swimming goggles. We ran around with neons and "fun in the sun" goggles to match the camouflage beanies on our heads. It was quite funny in retrospect, but my positive persona was having a bit of engine trouble.

Beauty for Ashes continued

God blessed us with three more lovely children and we served the Lord for a short period on the foreign mission field. We've had our highs and lows. Periods of non-conception followed by miscarriages have been hard to bear, but our Lord is a great comforter through the storms. Life has been anything but dull and we live in

gratitude for all we have experienced so far.

Before knowing Jesus and living with the power of the Holy Spirit and God's love in my life, I didn't know how to be a good mother. I worked full-time and used to say that I could never be fulfilled being at home with children. My, the Lord has a sense of humour. Here I am now, at home 24/7 with my children and I love it!

Don't get me wrong, I have bad days like everyone else, but thankfully not too many and always, by prayer and petition, the grace to get through!

As a new Christian, I read Titus 2:4-5 and asked God continually, "Where are these older women who are to teach me to love my husband and my children?" I never met one, but, praise God, a friend put an *Above Rubies* into my hands about

Inanimate Filter

moving ball of clothes.

I gave up the happy mommy face and put on the grumpiest, frazzled, loathing in self-pity woe-is-me sack-cloth and ashes mommy face I could muster. I put all my energy into whining and muttering. Soon my happy, marching band was all singing the blues, forlorn and bedraggled. I had popped their bubble with my tirade of negativity.

I felt a wave of sadness as I scanned their pitiful faces. Naturally, they are happy and take life as it comes. They are incredibly flexible, willing to look at the glass half-full instead of half-empty; that the cherries are super sweet and they don't even notice the pips. What was I teaching them? They were following my example of throwing a poor-me fit and groaning about all the wrongs that weren't right. I saw how powerful the attitude of a mother has over the atmosphere of her home and the spirit of her children.

My husband came home and saved the day. I was sitting by a warm fire in a cozy chair with a hot cup of tea and I felt the comfort of the Holy Spirit quiet my soul. An idea from heaven dropped in my mind which I have now used successfully when things seem out of control and make me feel like having a good scream. It is called the INANIMATE FILTER. Here is how it works.

If all hell breaks loose and the toddler

poops on the top stair and comes to get his hiney wiped by sliding his bottom down every step, your favorite coffee mug gets broken, or you forgot you were filling the bathtub and the water is pouring down the corridor, STOP. Before you scream, put your inanimate filter in place. Is the thing you are about to get upset about inanimate? Is it just a thing with no soul or spirit? Is it just dust without a heart? Can you take it to heaven with you? If the answer is NO, then don't waste any of your feelings on it, not one! Don't waste good energy or destroy the things that really count.



Cherish and Breeze

The things that really count are the people in your life that are reading you like a book. Your children are life, eternal life; they are not inanimate.

To think I was having a freak out over frozen pipes and a smoky house and disturbing the peace of my children's hearts! I am seeking and praying for God to rearrange my brain and help me to realize the frivolous futility of obsessing or wasting energy on inanimate things. It only wrecks havoc in my life and the lives of those around me.

I told my children about my lesson learned and sought their forgiveness. I also told them about my inanimate filter idea. One day I was about to throw a fit over the washing machine flooding my bathroom for the third time in a week, and

Chalice, my sweet nine-year old-girl said to me, "Don't worry, mommy, it's just inanimate."

P.S. Recently, in the devastating Tennessee flash floods, the first floor of our home flooded. I successfully used my inanimate filter while bailing out the water from our lovely hardwood floors. Three days later, I arrived downstairs to our living room to see our couches up in the air like sea saws. The floor had buckled in perfect large waves. The children couldn't be happier! We now had a rolling skating rink. This was their sweet cherries! How could I complain about the pips?

We basically lived outside for the next month until we could pull up the floor boards and move upstairs where we are now contained. While eating our meals under the hot Tennessee sun with all the ticks, chiggers and flies that come with our horses and hobby farm, don't doubt the big fit I wanted to throw. Praise the Lord, my inanimate filter held fast! I have plenty of opportunities to practice. How could I complain when others lost their entire homes and loved ones? It's all relative in the end. When we start looking at other people's problems instead of dwelling on our own, we will see how blessed we really are.

SERENE ALLISON

Primm Springs, Tennessee, USA

Serene is Nancy Campbell's daughter. Sam and Serene's blessings are Arden (12), Chalice (10), Cherish (10), Cedar (7), Engedi (6), Vision (5), Shepherd (3) and Breeze (8 months).

three years ago and, although it was later than I would have liked, it was a lovely answer to prayer! I love getting encouragement from other wives and mothers in our high calling under God.

We must encourage one another as we raise godly offspring for our wonderful Lord. Our children must be taught to love Him and know Him. How can anything be education if it leaves out God? How

can our children be taught science, math and English with no reference to the Creator of it all? All these things will pass away, but the Word of the Lord will last forever. (Matthew 24:35)

I have been walking with the Lord now for 14 years. I remember my vicar saying that he loved new Christians, (talking about me) as they were so enthusiastic. I'm as enthusiastic as ever. How can I be

anything else? I have been given beauty for ashes—what an exchange! My name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life! I am forgiven and restored! I am no longer a slave to sin, but a slave to righteousness! (Romans 6:18)

WENDY ALLEN

Shropshire, England

theallen7@btinternet.com

In *Above Rubies* # 77, I wrote an article called, *Preserved through Motherhood* about the physical, emotional and spiritual benefits of motherhood. Even science now reveals that embracing childbearing protects our bodies physically. The following are a few testimonies from women who responded to this article.

Healed through Pregnancy!

My husband and I came to the Lord and received His salvation early in our marriage. Along with many changes this new life brought, we chose to yield our childbearing to our all-wise God, believing that children are indeed a blessing.

I must admit that my visions for a large family were quite idealistic. With five children under the age of seven, I found I was expecting another. We were temporarily living in Birmingham, Alabama, 1100 miles from our home while I received treatment for a medical condition. At nine weeks, I began spotting, followed shortly after by very heavy cramping and bleeding. In the middle of the night, not knowing how much bleeding was too much, my husband called 911 for an ambulance to take me to the hospital and an ultrasound showed an empty uterus.

All was not well. I continued to cramp and bleed for weeks. I felt physically ill, and not only did I still have my family to care for, but we were getting ready to move back North, which involved sorting and packing. God gave me the strength, somehow, to get it all done, but as I drove our mini-van out of Birmingham, a wave of extreme panic hit me. Suddenly my arms and legs turned to spaghetti.

Thankfully, my father had come down to help us move, and he was able to drive the van the rest of the way. I spent the remainder of the trip totally ill and overwhelmed with panic, lying on the back seat of the van. I had no appetite and did not know what was wrong with me!

My husband, a driver for Federal Express, had to report for work in a couple of days at his new post in Keene, New Hampshire. However, since we had not yet found suitable housing, our family stayed with my mother in Connecticut. George worked in New Hampshire and drove down to spend the weekends with us. This lasted for six weeks. I was very ill. I still had no appetite, and hardly any strength to care for my children. Just lifting my head off the pillow in the morning sent my heart rate to 170 BPM.

The bleeding from the miscarriage never really ended. Two months later, when I visited my doctor, he said, "We

really have to stop this bleeding," and recommended that we do a D&C. I told him I would rather wait it out another month to see what would happen. I went home to my mother's place and literally cried my heart out to God. "Dear God," I cried. "You know we have gladly received any children that you wanted to send us. But look at me, God! I'm sick. I can't even take care of the children I have very well right now. What should we do? Perhaps we should 'use something' until my body



gains strength? Please show us your will! In Jesus' Name. Amen."

After six weeks of staying with my mother, we found a large house in the woods of New Hampshire that would accommodate our family. We were all alone with no friends in the area. We lived at the end of a half-mile long dirt road, and the winters in New Hampshire are long!

I awaited my next period which would have been due the end of the month. It never came. "My body is REALLY out of whack now," I thought! I felt somewhat better, and my appetite returned, although I was still very tired. Another month passed without a period and I decided to take a pregnancy test. Sure enough, it was positive!

There were still some problems. The nearest obstetrician was in Keene, which was a 25-minute drive from our house in the woods. I was still very far from being able to drive a car due to my recurrent panic-attacks. My husband was not able to drive me there during office hours. What would we do?

I cautiously looked into the possibility of having my baby at home with a mid-

wife, but never pictured myself actually doing it. We found a sweet midwife with a ton of experience who was willing to see me in the evenings, when it was convenient for my husband to drive me to her office. During my first visit, she discovered I was not eight weeks pregnant as I had thought, but was actually twelve! What a delight! I calculated that I was already pregnant when I had visited my doctor with the bleeding. Actually, I was already pregnant when I was crying out to God for wisdom! The Lord had answered.

I continually gained strength that winter and my appetite became ravenous. By the time spring came to the mountains of southern New Hampshire I was full of energy and optimism. On the first day of summer, Father's Day that year, we welcomed a perfect baby girl into our home! All the other children got to enjoy her immediately since we were at home. What a blessing!

We moved back to Connecticut for a short time, and then to Pennsylvania where we have now been for 15 years. The Lord has given us eight more children since Elizabeth Grace, who is now a sweet, talented seventeen year-old. I often think of what we would have missed if we had cut off our childbearing years after the first five, as many had suggested.

As best as I can discern, I think I must have gone through some kind of post-traumatic stress disorder after that miscarriage as my whole nervous system was affected. I have never met anyone since who has experienced anything similar.

I love to tell the story of our faithful God who answered my prayer, and whose ways are FAR above our ways. He used Elizabeth's pregnancy to not only restore my health, but to solidify our faith in the matter of childbearing.

LISA KEYES

Lancaster, Pennsylvania, USA
keyes.ann@gmail.com

George and Lisa are blessed with Lauren—married to John Kanagy and blessed with twins, December 2009, Ann (26), David (24), Andrew (21), Eric (20), Elizabeth (17), Matthew (15), Aaron (13), Esther (12), Leah (10), Jennifer (8), Emily (6), Nathaniel (5) and Jason (2).

Protect yourself through Mothering

No More Migraines!

My husband and I married October 2008 and I had our first baby girl July 5th 2009. It started out as an easy pregnancy but turned high risk after discovering that my cervix was starting to efface at 22 weeks. I was put on bed rest and prayer lists. After another ultrasound a month later, we found that the bed rest and prayer had done its job and, praise the Lord, my cervix had actually lengthened! I was still on bed rest, but could resume simple tasks.

At 34 weeks, the baby's head dropped and I was once again put on complete bed rest. My husband works on a ranch and we live at least an hour from the nearest hospital (two hours from the larger hospital with a large NICU). I started to have episodes of pre-labor with regular contractions for several hours at a time and was dilating a little more each time so we decided that I stay in town with my midwife while my husband went back home to the ranch until 36 1/2 weeks when we would be pretty much out of the woods.

I made it to 36 1/2 weeks and was allowed to return home, (even though I

was dilated to a 5). I enjoyed about a week and a half of walking around and finally preparing for our little girl. She was safely born at 4:03 am after laboring all night



long with fireworks going off in the neighborhood the whole time! Joy and peace came that morning with little Cheyenna Faith.

One wonderful thing about my pregnancy is that I was spared from migraines. I've had terrible migraines with vomiting and sickness ever since I was 11 years old. They would "strike" every other month

around my monthly cycle, which lead me to believe they were hormonal. I went to chiropractors, tried different preventions and remedies, but nothing helped. All I could do was pray for complete healing!

I suspected that, since they seemed to be mostly hormonal, they would lessen or disappear during and after pregnancy. It seems I was right. During my whole pregnancy I only had one serious, vomiting migraine (it was in the first trimester after drinking of a cup of regular coffee that I don't normally drink).

As my monthly cycle has regulated more after childbirth, I have headaches around my menstrual cycle. However, I have not had to deal with one debilitating migraine and it's now one year since my little angel was born. I'm so thankful that our bodies are truly saved in childbearing.

ASHLEY PLOURD

Hobson, Montana, USA

breakawaycowgirl@aol.com

Stephen and Ashley are blessed with one daughter so far, Cheyenna (1). Every day Ashley says to her little angel, "I just can't wait to have a whole house full of little people like you."

Never had more Energy!

I thought I'd exclusively breastfed my first three children. I didn't realize the truth until I picked up a copy of *Breastfeeding and Fertility** by Jenny Silliman at an *Above Rubies* Family Camp. My little fella was only 10 weeks old, and I immediately began to follow the guidelines of responsive breastfeeding. With my other children, my fertility came back almost immediately and I have a history of anemia (especially during menses) and post-partum hemorrhaging.

My midwife gave me further information on how women who practice responsive breastfeeding or ecological breastfeeding typically have better iron stores due to

the break from menses, providing a true rest for her body.

My baby boy is now 18 months and my cycles have not returned. I have not taken iron tablets in at least eight months and I feel great! I recently shared with a friend how active I've been with my children and



that I cannot remember a time when I've had this energy.

Responsive breastfeeding makes this toddler time easier on both of us. I used to think the extra patience I felt toward my nurslings and the distinct difference once they weaned was in my head but now I know better. During times of frustration, nursing calms my baby and me.

ELIZABETH BOJIE

Centerton, Arkansas, USA

elenajmorgan@yahoo.com

Andrew and Elizabeth's blessings are Morgan (8), Jared (6), Elena (4) and Camden (18 months).

**Available on www.aboverubies.org*



The Children Saved our Marriage!

After years of major struggle in our marriage, we have been asked countless times how we made it to this point in our lives. We have also been asked many times how we managed to have eleven children in the process! In the midst of marital issues, people often wonder how to trust the Lord with childbearing. It seems that this would be the most unwise thing a couple could possibly do. Yet, I can honestly tell you, that not only my spiritual life, but also my marriage, was saved through childbearing. Babies can do wonderful things; they save you from yourself, and from making selfish choices.

When pregnant with my firstborn, I was fully prepared to abort the pregnancy. I found it extremely inconvenient and was not at all interested in changing any of my well laid out plans for my future. I was happily on my way to law school, and I was not interested in sustaining anything long term with the father of the pregnancy. Miraculously, and only by the hand of God, I kept the baby.

My son's arrival ushered in several significant changes in my life, the spiritual change being the most dramatic. The Lord used my first baby to draw me to Himself, and for the very first time in my life, I started attending church and worshipping God without being coerced by someone. I was in love with the Lord and

"One vibrant, pulsating and faithful family altar home will stir a whole community for God! And not only a community, but the whole world."

Norman V. Williams

sought to live according to His ways for the first time in my adult life.

Although I now walked in faith it did not mean everything was wonderful. We did manage to get married, but those early years...well, let's just say that my marriage was a huge shambles. After all, this was not a marriage made in heaven, or so I thought at the time. This was a marriage of doing the proper thing, as we were the parents of this beautiful child. At least, that is how I saw it in the beginning. Not an ideal start. Many folks wondered how we could even have one child, let alone more children, in such an ugly relationship. What on earth were we thinking? Why were we staying together? I'll tell you.

First of all, without the children, it would have been far too easy to walk away from the marriage. What we as a couple really needed desperately was some time to grow, change and learn. Without the children acting as our glue, we would not have had the stamina to persevere through those hard years. And the hard years were hard! The Lord knew that we would come out in love in the end though, and so He blessed us with children along the way.

Contrary to what society may say, the children did not create more chaos; they prevented more chaos from happening. We had to focus on their needs, and let go of our selfish desires to have our own way. Many times we had to get along for the sake of the children. Without them, why would we bother? It would have been so simple to walk away, like so many do in our culture. I had no time to do this, because if I wasn't nursing, I was pregnant. This occupied so much of my time, that life managed to move forward, and we as a couple moved forward also. Thank God for the children as it would have been so easy to walk away if they hadn't kept coming. And why did they keep coming? I'll tell you that too!

Thankfully for us, when it came to childbearing, we honestly both felt that we were incompetent to decide when, or if it was "the right time", to have a child or not. Neither of us wanted that responsibility on our heads. The Lord makes it very clear that He opens and closes the womb, and that we as humans have hearts that are deceitful beyond description. So

we left it in God's hands.

Now, when I look at each of our children, I can honestly say that God timed them, not us, and that He made them according to His plan with no "help" from our feeble hands. His timing is always perfect and it gives indescribable peace. We are very thankful that we trusted God for now that we are getting older we are quite shocked to think that our fertile days are actually numbered.

We both know that I was spiritually preserved and that also our marriage was preserved through childbearing. The most amazing part, as if the side benefits weren't enough, is that God created these children for His glory and we get to watch His plan unfold. We are humbled to partake in this great adventure and to have the love of a large family.

The wisdom of God seems like foolishness to the world. The world may think it is crazy, irresponsible, even downright stupid to not use any form of birth control, but we know better. Where would we be now if we had not let God have control? We shudder to think! We rest knowing that our most trustworthy Father reigned and created our family as He saw fit. And He kept us together through it all!

MICHELLE KAUFHOFEN

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
reachaboverubies@gmail.com

Cam and Michelle are blessed parents of 11 children—Bryson (18), Jacinda (17), Dalton (16), Brielle (13), Logan (11), Havenne (10), Gideon (8), Jilissa (6), Tressa Leigh (4), Drayden (3), Solana (6 months) and four babies lost along the way.

Michelle is the
Above Rubies Director in Canada.
Donations and all Canadian orders can
now be processed at www.aboverubies.ca

Ph: 204-355-7682.

Michelle is also the director for the
Above Rubies International Facebook
and the Canadian Facebook.
Sign up to receive the inspiration,
encouragement and fellowship
they offer.

Healed from Depression!

I have lived with anxiety and depression at some level for my entire life. I put this down to a childhood fraught with trauma, abuse and neglect. Thankfully though, God's hand has always been evident in my life and amongst all the negative experiences there were people who showed me love and security and taught me about God's plan and will for me life. In particular, He blessed me with a wonderful godly mother figure in my Aunt Anthea.

For as long as I can remember I yearned to someday have a husband and children of my own. My wise aunt had often encouraged me to pray for a godly husband. Just before I turned 18 I realised the man I had been hoping and praying for had been right in front of me for 10 years. I was only eight when we met! Through prayer and the wise advice of godly mentors, Jeremy and I married in July 2005.

The first year of marriage was difficult as I continued to struggle under the cloud of depression and anxiety. In June 2006 we were blessed with Jonathan Wesley, our first son and I felt the cloud lift a little. Fourteen months later in August 2007, along came our second son, Oscar Malcolm and I never felt better! I was living the dream. For about eight months or so life was wonderful and I experienced peace and joy at levels I had never before known.

When I began to struggle again in late 2007 I was referred to a psychologist by my GP. She was a lovely Christian woman, who taught me valuable skills for combating daily anxiety but failed to recognise the need for healing at a soul level. After seeing her for a couple of months she left work on maternity leave. During a visit to my Uncle and Aunt's farm over Christmas 2007 and some counseling from my aunt, it became clear that God had some healing to do in my life. I needed to work through the deep scars of my childhood. While I waited for my psychologist to come back from maternity leave, things rapidly went downhill. By March 2008 the anxiety attacks became worse and more frequent. I was desperate.

I continued to deteriorate and was admitted to the psychiatric ward in our nearest hospital. Though this was an extremely difficult and lonely time God made me aware that He was very near and very much in control. The ward psychiatrist blamed my breakdown on having children

too young and too close together. I took offense to this as I know that God knows my children and they were born according to His plan and there was no mistake! She advised that it would be catastrophic for us to have any more children and that we should go on contraception until I was able to care for myself as well as the children I already had. My husband thought this wise advice and I sadly had an etonogestrel (Implanon) inserted.

I was desperate for healing, freedom and hope and to get back to being the wife and mother I so longed to be. Toward the end of my time on the ward the psychiatrist told me that while I may improve I would never fully recover from this breakdown. I knew that God had given me a high calling to be a wife and a mother and that there were things He was calling us to in our future, which would only be possible if I was able to function a lot better than I was. I believed that somehow God would work it out.

My husband took time off work while I was in the psychiatric ward and following my release he took a leave of absence to care for the children and me. We took a family trip to my uncle and aunt's farm shortly after I arrived home, to aid in my recovery. While we were there my aunt sent off some forms for an *Above Rubies* retreat she and two of my cousins would soon be attending in Victor Harbor. I decided to send off a form too!

I shared with my husband when we returned home that I felt I was not trusting God's wisdom in using contraception but trusting in man's wisdom. He replied that if I felt it was wrong, I should have it removed. I was relieved but also scared. I feared having another child at this time, but trusted God would keep me from falling pregnant until I was well. I very quickly found myself to be pregnant. I was worried but held on to that thread of hope that God knows best.

Shortly after discovering that I was pregnant it came time for the *Above Rubies* retreat. While there I caught up with my aunt and cousins and told them that I was 'expecting'. They reacted with excitement. She told me that Val Stares (Australian *Above Rubies* Director) had told her that this baby would be my healing. I took this to mean I would be healed once the baby



was born, but almost immediately I slowly lifted out of the rut. It wasn't an instant fix but a slow and gradual lifting.

Soon after this, I found a brilliant Christian psychologist. She immediately saw the need to work through my past and she, like me, had hope in complete healing, something I had not found elsewhere, even in other Christians. We began working slowly through each painful memory and speaking God's truth and love into my damaged heart and mind. God steadily brought me comfort, healing and HOPE! I began to see the light at the end of the tunnel and looked forward to the arrival of our baby.

I improved so much that my husband returned to work, first working from home then eventually full time in the office. I kept seeing the psychologist regularly, only taking a few weeks break after the birth of our third son, Ashton James in June 2009. A month or so after his birth people started noticing a difference in me, a 'sparkle in my eye', a positive attitude, and hope.

Since then I have come to know a quality of life that I have never known before. I experience joy, peace and hope in ways I never knew possible. It is still hard for me to comprehend that this is real, that it is possible for anyone, let alone me, to feel this good on a regular basis. Even though life still has its difficulties, I face it all with a new strength and confidence that comes only from God and what He has done for me. I'm so glad I was able to trust Him, even in my darkest hour, so that He could bring me to where I am now; healed from my past, absolutely loving life with my wonderful husband and my three little treasures who bring me so much joy each day. I feel so much love I could burst. I definitely would not be without my Ashton. To think I could have so easily missed out on him had I continued to trust man's wisdom over God's.

JESS HANCOCK

Adelaide, Australia

jh4jh4@bigpond.com

Jeremy and Jess's children are Jonathan (4),

Oscar (2 1/2) and Ashton (1).

Healed from Chronic Pain!



For many months I had been suffering from mysterious abdominal pain, and I do mean suffering! In so much pain I couldn't think anymore, I became very sleep-deprived because of the unrelenting pain. Worst of all, my husband had to be always looking after a sick and cranky wife. We had only just been married, after two years spent on opposite sides of the globe. My family and friends were all in Canada. There were so many things we had looked forward to doing together, but I was not in any shape to do much at all.

I have always been very physically active, and the forced inactivity was extremely depressing. I wasn't able to walk for any distance, my lower back became very weak and old injuries came back to haunt me. I would alternately push myself to accomplish a bit of work, and then spend days afterwards in misery, barely able to do anything. I fainted when the pain was at its worst and a few times ended up in hospital.

This went on for months and months, the cause of the pain a mystery. Finally, I had exploratory surgery, and was told it appeared as though I'd had an infection in my appendix, which had caused a lot of scarring. The first surgeon felt unequal to the delicate task of snipping my innards free

from abdominal muscle, where the scar tissue had pinned them. The second felt that I did not need surgery, but should be put on painkillers for the rest of my life, in spite of being allergic to them. The third doctor feared the infection might have caused an abscess, which would not have been visible during surgery.

It was at this point, caught between differences among medical professionals, I found myself pregnant! The ultrasound showed a healthy little eight-week-old baby. Off the record, one of the surgeons explained to me that many women who had pain from abdominal adhesions and became pregnant found the pain disappeared or dissipated after the baby was born. The hormone, oxytocin begins to take effect around mid-pregnancy, causing connective tissues in the body to become soft and stretchy. Scar tissue softens and very gently stretches over several months, no longer pulling on sensitive nerve endings.

We were very glad to be expecting a baby, and also very glad to hear that not only would the baby be alright, but might actually provide a cure for this pain I'd had for so long!

All through that very long pregnancy I kept reminding myself that all would be

well with this child. I had 24/7 sickness, and it lasted until two weeks after the birth. I was so sick, I felt like I was pregnant for years. In retrospect, I think my thyroid was low. My back went to pieces and I spent the last four months of the pregnancy with two joints in my spine out of place. I suffered from symphysis pubis dysfunction (when the pelvic joints get too loose) but I didn't mind because I knew that oxytocin was doing its work on those adhesions as well as on my joints.

Through all that trying time, my little mystery baby thrived in spite of my poor health. Friends speculated that I was carrying a future England football star, as the little person made his or her presence known with unusually vigorous acrobatics.

A little grey-eyed girl was born into water, after a three-day labour, one Sunday morning in spring. We named her Rose because she was pink and perfect and all furled up, just like a rosebud.

It took time to heal after a difficult pregnancy and birth, but as my body healed, the pain gradually faded away. I can't describe how it feels to be free of pain! Pain in a limb, or from bone and muscle, does not compare to the grinding, draining pain that comes from an internal source. It is a joy to wake up feeling good!

Our beautiful little Rose is now a year and a half now, exceptionally strong and active and a constant joy. I am so thankful for the simple pleasure of being able to move freely and enjoy an active life.

MARY LYNNE MOUNTJOY
Ashmansworthy, Devonshire, UK
mleivey@gmail.com

Goodbye to Nosebleeds and Migraines!

As a very small child I developed nosebleeds, which came if I exerted myself or when we had a very hot day. At the age of 17 I started to get migraine headaches. At 24 I had my first baby and from that day to this (I am now 67) I have not had a nosebleed or a migraine. God's ways are marvelous.

ANTHEA BOLTON
New South Wales, Australia
billybolthead@idl.net.au

The wisdom God gave me, along with the gift of eight children, has preserved my youth for 15 years. I know that youthful appearance will eventually fade and because of that, I feel more importantly that God preserved my "way" rather than just my youth. Proverbs 2:8 says, "He preserveth the way of His saints."

When our sixth child was born, I felt God had given me more than I could handle. I had trusted Him with the size of our family and now I didn't see how God was doing what was best for us. I had four children to home school, a baby girl to play with, lots of laundry, too much housework, and now I was nursing another baby! I was also sick and tired of people feeling sorry for me and asking me if I knew what caused all these children. I wanted to do other things with my life, like teach aerobics, coach a basketball team, do scrapbook parties and work with my husband, etc.

But as God's goodness softened my heart, I listened to His voice. He gave me a desire to have our seventh, and then a few years later our eighth. But God had preserved me, my health, my body, my strength—and I knew it. I didn't know until recently about the anti-aging hormone that had been in my body continually for thirteen years because of nine pregnancies.

During those baby years God showed me things like how to eat healthy, how not to buy foods that would make me gain too much weight (we only bought junk food for birthday parties), simple exercises that would help me stay strong (tightening my stomach muscles while driving in the car instead of slouching), and other little nuggets like getting rid of the TV.

I didn't have internet until my seventh baby was born—using the internet late at night makes a mommy too tired for the next busy day. The Lord showed me after my first child the importance of resting for about nine days after the birth instead of getting up and working right away. I just stacked laundry, let dishes sit and cleaning had to wait. Instead, I let my mom, mother-in-law and husband help for about a week and a half.

The Lord also gave me wisdom to not over-exercise when I was tired in the last trimester and then for about four months after my birth. When your body is tired, exercise doesn't help you lose weight or build muscle. Walking was all I needed to stay fit. Pregnancy itself is like running a



Children Preserved my Youth!



Joanna with youngest son, Mathan

marathon to your body and you need lots of rest if you're going to keep having lots of children. God taught me that He would keep me in shape even through so many years of not being about to work out like I used to at high school.

One piece of wisdom is to teach our daughters to exercise before they marry. Keeping in shape in my teens really helped me when I got married to stay in shape and not be lazy. Our bodies respond to months of no muscle training. I found that our bodies can remember all the muscles that we had for a long period of time, and can actually regain that strength very quickly.

I became very strong in my arms carrying babies around and nursing while standing up. I never used a sling. I used to work out before having babies but the muscles I developed from carrying babies were different muscles from what I had ever exercised before. The Lord showed me that when I didn't have time to work out aerobically or with weights, I could clean house, rake leaves or hoe the garden and that gave parts of my body an intense work-out. Sweating is

so good for you.

Now that my baby is two years old and I'm not pregnant (amazingly), the Lord is preserving me through the love I receive every day from our children. I get so many kisses, hugs, notes, and drawings from my children that the joy keeps me smiling a lot!

A book I've been reading about facial massage techniques explains, "Scientists believe that the muscles of the face and neck are unique because of their involuntary link to your emotional processes." Being joyful is a natural face-lift. There are many celebrities who seem very beautiful and young looking, but that beauty cost them a great deal of money, exercise time, and concentration on what foods to eat, etc. Since 1995 when my first child was conceived, I've tried to eat right, but lacked the money to buy health food or a gym membership. God still blessed my efforts and His wisdom gave me a wonderful life! Ecclesiastes 7:12 says, "Wisdom giveth life to them that have it."

Nearing our fifteenth anniversary at thirty-seven years old, I have a similar body to when I was twenty, only my husband thinks its better. I also have more joy, more love and most importantly, I have a testimony to share about God's goodness. I thank God for our eight children who have given me the desire to draw near to God. Without them I may have never experienced true salvation, freedom from selfishness, patience, or the ability to love like I do. I definitely wouldn't have gotten that free anti-aging hormone n abundance!

JOANNA SHEPHERD

Tawakoni, Texas, USA
 josarahshepherd@gmail.com
 Andy and Joanna's blesses are Susanna (14),
 Laura (12), Andy Jr. (11), James (10), Ruth
 Anne (8), William (5), Joseph (3) and Matthan (2).

Genetically Modified Foods

Children are a gift of God and the fruit of the womb is his reward. If we want our children's children to receive the gift of new life we must pay careful attention to how we feed our children today. We must educate ourselves about our food and where it comes from. If we want to perpetuate the future generations, an important subject to study is Genetically Modified foods.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) and Genetically Engineered (GE) foods are dangerous and put the future fertility of our children at risk. Studies using hamsters show that second-generation GMO fed hamsters had a five-fold higher infant mortality rate, compared to the five percent normal death rate that was happening in the controls. Not only that but nearly all of the third-generation GMO babies were sterile!

Avoid Bad Foods

As mothers we need to feed our children whole foods, making meals from scratch, avoiding the common bad foods such as white flour, white sugar, preservatives, food colorings, monosodium glutamate, and processed packaged junk.

We go to the grocery and fill our carts with delicious grains, fruits and vegetables among other items, take them home and lovingly prepare meals for our family. Yet in America grocery shopping is deceptive as manufacturers are not required to label products with Genetically Modified ingredients.

Watch out for GMOs

Our government should be protecting the public, or at least, informing the people.



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Since they aren't, we must learn to avoid GMO foods. You will succeed if you know what to look for. Genetically modified food crops are: soy, corn, cottonseed (especially found in vegetable oil), canola (for Canola oil), sugar from sugar beets, Hawaiian papaya, some varieties of zucchini, and crookneck squash.

Anything containing corn should be avoided, especially high fructose corn syrup. You must check labels, because it is in so many products. One way to put a stop to GMO foods in the grocery is to continually avoid GMO food products. In 1999 European consumers' shopping habits caused companies to stop using GMO ingredients.

Go to www.NonGMOshoppingGuide.com to download a free booklet that you can carry with you to help you identify GMO foods.

Educate Yourself

There are close to a thousand GE applications that have been submitted to the USDA, but because of conflict of interests, these government agencies refuse to acknowledge the results of research which proves how harmful Genetically Modified foods are.

For further reading check out Jeffrey Smith's books, *Seeds of Deception*, and *Genetic Roulette*. Also, go to the website www.responsibletechnology.org for the *Institute for Responsible Technology* and sign up to be a part of their grassroots campaign to get the United States government to label food products that are Genetically Modified.

I am looking forward to being a grandmother some day, a great grandmother even! If I want to see my dreams of a full and growing family tree, I have to nourish my children properly as early as possible; ideally, before conception and throughout pregnancy, as well as throughout childhood.

REBECCA HUFF

Crossville, Tennessee USA

rebecca.huff@gmail.com

Shaune and Rebecca's blessings are Macey (18), Haley (14), Benton (13), Ivy (11), Marmon (4) and Shawna (2). Macey is one of our current Above Rubies helpers.

THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION OF YOUR LIFE

"Choose you this day whom you will serve; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."
(Joshua 24:15).

Have you made this most important choice in your life?

So many marriages and homes are falling apart. It is only the lives and homes that are built on the foundation of Jesus Christ and His commandments that will stand.

How can you get your life on a right foundation and receive God's salvation?

1. **ACKNOWLEDGE** that you are a sinner. It is your sin that separates you from fellowship with God. (Luke 18:13; Romans 3:21)
2. **REPENT** of your sin and turn away from it. (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38,39; 3:19)
3. **CONFESS** your sin to God and He will cleanse you and forgive you. His forgiveness is complete. When He forgives, He forgets! (Psalm 32:2; 1 John 1:7,9; Romans 10:9,10)
4. **FORSAKE** your own way and determine to follow God's ways. (Isaiah 48:18; 55:7; Mark 8:24-38)
5. **BELIEVE** that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the Son of God. He is the One who has borne the punishment of your sin. (John 3:16; Mark 16:16)
6. **RECEIVE** His great salvation that He has purchased on your behalf. (John 1:12)
7. **BE BAPTIZED.** (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:38)
8. **THANK** Him for His great salvation and His blood that He shed for you. Receive Him gladly and ask Him to take control of your life.
9. **DETERMINE** that you and your household will all serve the Lord.

ABOVE RUBIES July 2010, No.79

"I think we should adopt one day," my husband told me. It was something he wanted to do after coming to know that we, as believers in God's Son, Jesus Christ, are adopted into the family of God. I thought, "Yeah, one day... after we're done having our own children." I wasn't ready at that time, nor did I understand God's love for orphans. Psalm 68:5-6 says, "A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families." God had given us a growing love for children: We had five of them, all about two years apart. We were open to and hoping for more, but I still didn't have a heart to adopt.

When we moved across country to South Dakota, we met a family at church who ministered to children by being foster parents. When they were asked if they'd adopt a two year-old boy with severe physical and cognitive deficits, we were touched by their faith and willingness to welcome this precious and needy boy into their home in Jesus' Name. Furthermore, we were amazed as we saw the great changes that began to take place. When he first came to them, he had seizures every few minutes and was not interactive. Several months later he was free of seizures and giggled when his Daddy tickled him!

John and I began talking about adoption, this time, about special needs adoption. Having therapy backgrounds (John working as a PT, and I had worked as an Occupational Therapist before our children were born), we had thought of the idea before but dismissed it, again thinking "when we're done having children" and "there are lots of orphans without disabilities." But the love of this family really challenged us—and taught us about God's love. We further realized that all of us are "disabled" in God's sight and He welcomes us into his family.

As we began to research about special needs adoption, a friend of ours told us about a ministry called *Reeces Rainbow*, which is dedicated to finding forever families for special needs orphans with Down syndrome (and other disabilities) from other countries. We learned that these children are routinely abandoned at orphanages at birth due to social stigma, poor finances, and lack of resources. If they are not adopted by four, they are routinely transferred to institutions (asylums) where they may face very poor conditions, neglect

Hope to the Hopeless



or abuse with no schooling or therapy.

The disabled ones often do not survive. When we learned of their plight and saw pictures of so many without the love of a family, our entire family was grieved and had a growing burden to help. We signed up to be prayer warriors for a few of the children. As we earnestly prayed and researched more about adopting a child, our children begged us to adopt a three year-old boy with Down syndrome named Slava.

One of our biggest obstacles was finances. It would cost about \$24,000, which was huge in our eyes! Yet God reminded us that He is our provider! A homeschool mom we didn't even know called us and said she was organizing a fundraiser for Slava—and she already had gotten donations for a reception hall, catered food and prizes to raffle. Other ways He provided included the sale of our home (for which we'd waited a long time), a no-interest loan from a Christian organization named LifeSong (which we were able to pay off before we left), a grant from *Shohannah's Hope*, extra work hours, yard sales and gifts from people.

After months of appointments and paperwork, we flew to the Ukraine in May 2009 to adopt our son, whom we named Sean. Our three oldest children went with us and had an amazing learning experience they will never forget. Leaving our two youngest behind with my parents was extremely difficult but God gave us all grace and took care of them and us. Our adventure stretched our faith and was a reminder to us of the much greater cost and sacrifice God made for our adoption.

Now we are home, God continues to teach us more about His love through our special little boy. When we first met him, we had a twinge of fear. "What are we doing?" and "Will we be able to meet his needs, and those of our other children?"

But just as He called us to adopt, He is leading us each step. We quickly learned that Sean needs constant supervision as he is very active and has no fear.

God showed me early on that ALL of our family can minister to his needs. Our children are growing in compassion and love for those who need help or a little more patience. Sean came with some orphanage behaviors that can be irritating—until God reminds us of WHY he developed them... like rocking himself to sleep because he didn't have a mommy to rock and sing to him, or pushing and biting, because he grew up with 20+ children all fighting for attention, and he was one of the "least of these." (Thankfully the biting disappeared quickly).

Sean is learning to be in a family, to hug and kiss, obey Mommy and Daddy and to come to us with his boo boos. It's a joy to see his new experiences, like taking a bath (in the orphanage they'd spray them with cold water), swimming in a pool, learning to communicate with sign language, playing in a sandbox, praying and singing to God, rocking a baby doll, and holding a baby brother. We thank God that we were able to rescue Sean and give him hope. We, too, are so blessed by him.

While overseas, we also tried to adopt a little girl named Lacie (through *Reeces Rainbow*) with Down syndrome but her paperwork was not ready. At the time we thought it would be very unlikely we would be able to come back. I was pregnant so we'd have a new baby, have to raise another \$24,000 and we couldn't imagine going through that ordeal again. We continued to pray, and our children—who already thought of her as their sister—pleaded with us to adopt her. How precious that the only thing the older children wanted for Christmas was a commitment to Lacie! As this verse states, we just could not forget

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Family Devotions

The Wife's Part!

Our family evening meal, followed by Family Devotions, is the crowning moment of my day. When we culminate the meal with the reading of the Word, prayer and singing praises it makes all the effort of preparing a meal and gathering the family together worthwhile.

Family Devotions does not happen easily. You have to make it happen. Although it is wonderful when the husband, the priest of the home, takes his responsibility and leads his family in this daily habit, it does not totally rely on the husband. Many wives complain to me that their husband doesn't take the lead in this area, but I want to let you in on a secret. A lot depends on the wife too! In fact, it hinges on us!

The following are ten points for your consideration as we contemplate how to make this "blessing" happen in our home.

1. Ask your Husband.

Are you are waiting for your husband to get the idea? I am sorry to inform you that you may wait until the Lord comes. He may never think about it! I don't believe you have to wait until your husband gets the idea, but when you get the vision, you can share it with him.

God gave to the woman the task of managing her home and watching over the needs of her household. God put home in the heart of the woman and He wants home to be in her heart. The picture of the family that is blessed by the Lord is of the wife in the very heart of her home, with all the children sitting around the table. (Psalm 128:3) Because her heart is wrapped up in her home, she is always thinking about how she can make the atmosphere in her home better; how she can make her home run more efficiently and how she can make her

home a place where her husband and children feel the presence of God.

The father of the home wants this too, but he doesn't spend the same amount of time thinking about it. He usually goes out of the home to fulfill his job and works hard to provide for his family. He often has much on his mind relating to his business and is not thinking about the little day-to-day things of running the home. It is not his job; it belongs to the wife. (Proverbs 31:27 and 1 Timothy 5:14)

Therefore, you are going to be thinking about these things more than your husband. There are many things we do in our home because I thought of them. When I feel strongly about something we should do that would bless the family, I share it with my husband. Most times, he is happy for us to go along with it. He is happy for anything that will bless our home and build up the spiritual lives of our children.

You can freely go to your husband and say something like, "Darling, I have been thinking it would be such a blessing to have Family Devotions together as a family after our evening meal. Would you be happy for us to do this?"

"Yeah, but how would we do it?" he may reply.

Now it's no use coming up with an idea unless you know how you are going to go about it. Here is an answer for you, although God may give you your own idea that will be special for your family. In our home we use *THE DAILY LIGHT* for our devotion time. It has selected Bible readings on a specific theme for every morning and every evening. We find it a great blessing.

For husbands who have never conducted Family Devotions, who feel inadequate, or don't know what to do, *THE DAILY LIGHT* is the perfect answer. It takes all the sweat out of wondering how to go about it. All the husband has to do is pick up the

book and read the Scriptures.¹

If you would like to do this, you could say, "I've found a really neat book that makes it so easy. It has all the Scriptures selected and all we have to do is read it!"

2. Set the stage.

To enjoy Family Devotions at your evening meal, you have to prepare the evening meal. This is a basic responsibility of every wife—to prepare a nutritious and inviting meal for her husband and family (of course, her children will help her with this as they grow older). Do more than cook the meal. Make the table attractive and use a table cloth.

"Help," you may cry out as a mother with little ones, "I haven't got time to wash tablecloths every day." I know you haven't. However, you can purchase some clear plastic and place a pretty tablecloth underneath which you can change from time to time. All you have to do is wipe the plastic that covers the tablecloth. I don't do this now, but have at different times in my life. You can also use candles or add a centerpiece.²

Some young mothers have told me to me they feel so overwhelmed they have regressed to using paper plates. I hate paper plates myself and love to use matching china to help make the table attractive. However, my children have now grown! Life consists of seasons and there are some seasons (especially when you have lots of little children) where paper plates are the only way to survive! Just don't use them for the rest of your life!

Another important point to remember is to have the meal ready for the time when your husband gets home. If you postpone preparing the meal too long and it is not ready when he gets home, he is liable to go to the TV. A man feels like relaxing when he comes home from working hard and many men use this as their relaxation. Unfortunately, it can then be hard to get him to the table once he is seated in front of the TV. The secret is to have the meal ready when he comes in the door.

As you and your children greet your husband with excitement you'll be able to say, "Honey, the meal is ready. You'll just have time to wash while I put it on the table." Your husband can come straight to the table, drawn by the wonderful smells that waft from the food you have prepared.

Eating produces oxytocin, which calms us. This is why eating and fellowshiping together is the greatest way to relax, better preparing us to listen to the Word of God being read after the meal.

3. Clean up before Supper.

It's hard to enjoy a meal in the midst of shambles. How disappointing for a father to come home to a mess and junk everywhere. Set a time to clean up, including all your children (young and old) before your husband comes home. It is impossible to keep a home perfect during the day with homeschooling and the activities of younger and older children. You have to live and be able to do things, which often entail making a mess, but you have to clean up, too.

About half an hour before the evening meal, I would say, "Okay, children, let's have a 1, 2, 3." Everyone rushed around putting everything away. It is good if you can put everything in its proper place (that's the plan!) but if you are particularly busy, have a place where you can throw everything out of sight so it looks clean and wonderful when your husband walks in! This helps to make everyone feel more excited about sitting down to dinner and enjoying Family Devotions together. And it makes your husband want to come home!

4. Make it a Priority.

Don't allow other things, even legitimate and good ones, to cheat you of this most important duty of all. Sadly, most sports and extra-curricular activities are held at the same time as the daily evening meal. Many families miss out on eating together, and having Family Devotions, because they are not even home! They are fighting the traffic or still on the sports field.

When raising our children I decided that we would not get involved with activities that coincided with our evening meal. Of course, there were often special events from time to time that we would be part of, but I would not let a regular activity, though healthy and good, to rob us of the best and most important!

5. Turn off the TV.

Make sure the TV is turned off before your husband arrives home; hopefully it hasn't been turned on at all. We don't have TV as I think it spoils the atmosphere of a home. (We do have lots of wholesome DVDs which the girls play on the weekends.) Turn on some peaceful music. Good music changes the atmosphere as you prepare the meal and it gives an ambience of peace and joy when your husband walks in.³

6. Pass the Bible.

Here is another secret role for you as a wife. After enjoying the meal and fellowshiping together, place the Bible, THE DAILY LIGHT or the devotional you have chosen to use, beside your husband's plate. You don't have to remind him; without saying a word this will give him the cue to pick it up and begin to read. Without your doing this, he may forget and you will feel disappointed in him. Please understand that your husband may have his mind on other things and may not be thinking about it like you are. You, as his helpmeet, can jog his memory without even nagging!

I did this in our home for years, and still often do, even though Family Devotions is now a burning conviction in my husband's heart too.

After the reading of the Word, we all pray together and also sing a hymn.⁴ Psalm 92:1-2 says, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and sing praises unto Thy name, O might High. To show forth Thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night."

7. Include the Young Children.

When do you commence devotions with your children at the table? I suggest you start while they are in the womb, and unless your baby or little ones have fallen asleep and have already been put to bed, don't exclude them from this time. It is important

for them to hear the Word from the earliest age. Of course, it is hard for very little ones to keep sitting straight in the chair but you can put a toddler on your knee and cuddle and rock him while the Word is read. Your husband can also have another little one on his knee while the older ones, by this time, are learning to sit still and listen.

This is marvelous training. Children should be taught to listen from an early age, yet too many children today are distracted easily, never having learned to sit still and listen. That's why most children cannot even sit in a church service—they have never learned to sit through a mealtime and devotions. I know it's not easy. This is training time and some meal times will be hair-raising! I know because I've experienced it! But don't give in; keep training while they are very young and you will reap amazing benefits.

The testimony of Timothy was "that from childhood you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 3:15) The earlier children hear the Scriptures the sooner they will come to salvation. I love what Norman Williams says in his book, *How to Have a Family Altar*.⁵ "It is your duty to exhort your child daily with the blessed Word of God. If you do that, you will be amazed to see what the Holy Spirit will do in that little heart... Before the child is three and one-half, he should be saved and know that Christ made him and loves him. The child should learn to lovingly speak the name of Jesus right along with the name of Daddy and Mother."

8. Wait to Clear the Table.

Don't clear the table before you have devotions. I have found through experience that the moment everyone gets up and takes plates and dishes to the counter that it cuts the atmosphere making it nearly impossible to get everyone back to the table again. I pass THE DAILY LIGHT to my husband as the meal is coming to a close before anyone gets up from the table.

Isn't that nice? You don't have to be Martha yet. You have a little more time to be Mary and "sit at Jesus' feet, and hear His

Word." Jesus said that this is the "good part" and we must not let it be taken away from us. (Luke 10:38-42)

9.

Husband's Absence.

What if your husband doesn't get home in time for the evening meal? You can lead the family in devotions in his absence, or, if you have older children, your oldest son can lead. What a wonderful opportunity for him to learn how to lead his future family.

10.

Morning Devotions.

In our home we adhere to the Morning and Evening principle, which God has established in His Word.⁶ To have devotions together as a family in the morning, you also have to make it happen. Everybody in the home must be up in time. I don't allow anyone to sleep in (except on weekends).

In our home, breakfast is between 7.30 am and 8.00 am. Everyone must finish breakfast by 8.00 am and be ready for our morning devotions. Once again, you have seasons in your life and breakfast and devotions will be at different times according to your season, the age of your children and your husband's work pattern. If your husband has to leave for work early, you may need to lead the children in morning devotions.

This is also good training time. I believe in the old adage, "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." I believe children should be trained to get up at a certain hour. I certainly don't believe in teenagers sleeping in (except on a weekend day of rest). They need to establish healthy habits and learn that the day is for living, working and learning. Having morning devotions together as a family helps train your family to be organized and ready for the day.

May God lead you and direct you as you seek to do your part to make the Family Altar a priority in your home.

NANCY CAMPBELL

To be further challenged and inspired by this nation-changing principle, go to

www.aboverubies.org and click on the following headings, FAMILY MEAL TABLE, BIBLE IN THE HOME and PRAYER IN THE HOME where you can read over 50 more articles to encourage you in this important habit.

For the greatest success, this God-given principle requires the husband and wife to work together. Husbands can go to the webpage and search for THE HUSBAND'S ROLE, written by Colin Campbell.

You can also go to the *Above Rubies* YouTube to watch the Campbell Family enjoying their Family Devotions.

1. Go to www.aboverubies.org and click on HOW DO WE USE THE DAILY LIGHT? This will give you ideas of how to get the children involved and keep them interested.
2. To receive inspiration and find out more practical ideas about your family meal table, purchase the 200-plus page manual, THE FAMILY MEAL TABLE AND HOSPITALITY. You will also be inspired by the DVD, THE FAMILY MEAL TABLE IN ACTION as Nancy gives Biblical inspiration on this subject, plus watch families in action at their table. Go to the Book Store.
3. Serene and Pearl's beautiful harmonies and anointed songs for mothers and wives will bless you when you feel overwhelmed at this hectic time of the day. Many mothers say that they cannot get through this time without putting on one of their CDs. Go to www.aboverubies.org and click on Music Store to order.
4. To read more about the power of praying together as a family go to www.aboverubies.org and search for ENEMY CHASERS. You will actually find this under PRAYER IN THE HOME which includes many other inspiring articles about prayer.
5. You can order this delightful and inspiring book, *How to have a Family Altar* from amazon.com or the whole book is available online at <http://www.baptist-biblebelievers.com/Books/HowtoHaveAFamilyAltarbyNormanVWilliams/tabid/198/Default.aspx>
6. To find out about the Scriptural basis for the Morning and Evening principle, go to www.aboverubies.org, click on BIBLE IN THE HOME and then THE MORNING AND EVENING PRINCIPLE.

Hope continued

her. "Once our eyes are opened, we can't pretend we don't know what to do. God, who weighs our hearts and keeps our souls, knows that we know, and holds us responsible to ACT." (Proverbs 24:12) My husband gave the children the good news Christmas morning—we're adopting Lacie!

Our dossier has been submitted in the Ukraine and we are waiting to hear of our travel date any day. We found out that our USCIS approval expires in August which means we will need to complete the adoption quicker than we'd thought. Again, we prayed for God's will and His provisions knowing that we ourselves could never raise the funds needed in time. It has been amazing to see how God has worked to provide. Our children have been busy helping with yard sales, doing extra jobs and making beautiful beaded bracelets to help raise money. In addition to our own fundraising efforts, God led a writer of our local paper to write an article about our adoption. God further put it on the heart of a family in Ames, Iowa to fundraise and organize a benefit concert for a *Reeces Rainbow* family. Because of the urgency of our situation, we were selected. We have one more fundraiser event this weekend and it is looking like we will be able to adopt Lacie and another child we've been praying about, a little boy named Taras with an 18th chromosome abnormality!

Not everyone is called to adopt, but all believers are commanded to help orphans. "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to care for the orphans and widows in their trouble." (James 1:27) There are many ways to look after orphans including praying, spreading the word, giving money to help families adopt, visiting orphanages and, of course, giving a precious child the gift of a family. I highly recommend you check out www.reecesrainbow.com but be prepared; you may never be the same!

TRACI ADAMSON

Rapid City, South Dakota, USA
sdadamsons@gmail.com

www.childrenpreciousinhissight.blogspot.com
(adoption blog)

John and Traci are blessed with Haylee (12), Naomi (10), Jonah (8), Annabelle (5), Sean (4), Elsie (3), Aidan (5 months) and Lord willing, Lily "Lacie" (2) and "Taras" (4).

Marriage! Where's the Commitment?

I write this article out of great concern over the alarming increase of marriage breakdowns and divorce, even among some of my own friends and associates. In my pastoral duties I find myself more and more deeply involved with counsel and prayer to those who are struggling with problems in their marriage.

In most cases I find that the offended give up far too easily. They do not have the spiritual revelation of how their divorce affects the heart of God. It gives a false message of Christ, the bridegroom and His commitment to the church, the bride of Christ. It also distorts the picture of the bride's commitment to her heavenly bridegroom. It greatly weakens the resolves and standards of the next generation. Nor do they have understanding on how divorce weakens the vital testimony of the church in showing the world that there is always an answer for all of life's problems, in Christ. I believe with all my heart that if the Christian church would stop divorcing, we would quickly have a national revival. People would knock down our doors to find the Christ who keeps our marriages together.

I have recently been impressed by the attitude of a good friend of mine whose wife left him in order to pursue an ungodly relationship with a married man. He has fought a valiant battle to save his marriage. He has earnestly shown her the love and forgiveness that is in Christ. He has also not failed to warn her to repent and come back to Christ. However, she continues to believe that because certain other so-called Christian celebrities have divorced and remarried, without any judgment from others, that it must be okay for her. She deludes herself by confessing that she has not left Christ and continues to go to church where nothing is said that would in any way condemn her and call what she is doing sin!

My friend is a successful business man but has been most willing to let God search his own heart for any area where he needs to repent. While battling with the divorce, set on by her, he continues to love her and believe that one day, when she repents before God, that she will come

back to him. I know there are many others in the same struggle as this man. My encouragement to you is, do not give up. Fight the good fight of faith.

One of the greatest problems that cause havoc on Christian marriage is the failure to apply the teaching of the cross of Christ to the personal life of each believer. Much of our modern day Christianity places strong emphasis on Jesus Christ being Savior, but little, if any emphasis, on Jesus Christ being Lord. Unless Jesus Christ is Lord, the cross of Christ has no effect on our having victory in the battles of life. Applying the principle of the cross of Christ will enable the Christian to confess, in whatever battle he or she faces, "Not my will, but thine be done."

Marriage is indeed a test to the self life. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7:33, "He who is married cares about... how he may please his wife." This is opposed to pleasing oneself. The cross of Christ cuts across the attitude of my space—"What about me?" "What about my rights, my will, my money and my time?" and the "I have to think about me" attitude. It is only through the cross that we can deny our own will.

What is Marriage?

Noah Webster's 1928 dictionary defines marriage as: "The legal union of a man and woman for life. Marriage is a contract both civil and religious, by which the parties engage to live together in mutual affection and fidelity, till death shall separate them. Marriage was instituted by God himself for the purpose of preventing the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, for promoting domestic felicity, and for securing the maintenance and education of children."

In most marriage ceremonies the bride and groom make vows to each other and sign a covenant, which is also signed by witnesses. In a Christian marriage, this is all done in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. When we make a covenant invoking the name of the Trinity it is serious and should not be taken lightly. This would amount to sacrilege and profanity which was Eau's sin. (*Hebrews 12:16*)

What is a Covenant?

It is a compact, a contract, a solemn agreement, a vow, a formal sealed agreement, a promise.

What is a Vow?

It is a) an earnest promise or pledge that binds one to perform a specific act or behave in a certain manner, and b) to promise or pledge solemnly. Noah Webster's 1928 dictionary states, "A solemn promise made to God, as the vows of unchangeable love and fidelity. In a moral and religious sense, vows are promises to God, as they appeal to God to witness their sincerity, and the violation of them is a most heinous offense."

It is time to seriously question the matter of divorce. What does God think about it? Numbers 30:1-2 says, "This is the thing which the Lord has commanded: if a man vows a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth."

What does God say about Divorce?

God makes it very clear what He thinks of divorce in Malachi 2:16, "For the Lord God of Israel hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence..." What right have we to think that God accepts and approves it when He plainly states that He hates it? It's time for straight talk! Let's stop making up lame excuses and say it the way the Bible says it. God has always hated divorce and He always will hate divorce. Period. Should we not hate what God hates?

It is totally wrong to excuse divorce as a fact of life. To think, that because 50 percent of all marriages end up in divorce, is no big deal, is foolishness. Matthew 7:13 says, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it." Divorcing is the broad way. We must base our opinions and judgments regarding divorce on what the Bible has to say about it. It does not matter what other

people think, say or do. The fact that celebrities who have had multiple marriages seem to be getting away with it (with most people approving) does not make it right. Some of these celebrities are professing Christians but it still doesn't make it right! It is only right if the Holy Bible says it is right. Otherwise, it is flat out wrong!

Mark 10:7-12 says, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh, so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate... Whoever divorces his wife and marries commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

What about being "Joined Together"?

When a husband and wife are united together in the bonds of holy matrimony, the Bible calls it, "What God has joined together." (Mark 10:9) God Himself is directly involved in the marriage union. As our Creator, He has His sovereign right to be the one to make the claim that He joins the couple together. Because He does the joining, woe to those who seek to undo God's work. Jesus said, "What God has joined together, let no man separate." Not even the man-made laws of the state or nation should pull apart what God has joined. God bears witness to the joining covenant. God sanctifies it and sovereignly brings the couple together to be "one flesh." (Genesis 2:24)

One of the great reasons for this injunction to not separate what God has joined is found in Malachi 2:15, "Did he not make them one...and why one?" The answer follows. Because "He seeks godly offspring." God states that divorce negatively influences the godly offspring that He wants brought up in the ways of God. Divorce is a destructive influence on the very foundations of Christian marriage and society.

God is generational in His mindset. Marriage break-up goes completely against God's spirit of love, reconciliation, forgiveness and unity. God wants His families to

be nurtured in this kind of godly environment. The opposite spirit of arguing, disagreements, hostility, unforgiveness and divorce weakens the generational chain and erodes away the foundation stones on which our Christian culture stands.

If your believing marriage partner wants to divorce you, put up every opposition you can. Try your very best, with much prayer and counsel from those who fear God, to do everything possible to stop the divorce and be reconciled. Don't give up easily.

What about Divorce before becoming a Christian?

Having said these things, I believe that if divorce took place before one became a Christian and they have remarried, they should remain in the state of marriage they are in. However, the couple should have a true repentant heart toward the offense that their sin brought about toward the heart of God (if they were to blame for their divorce before becoming a Christian.)

What about Violence?

If a couple claim to be Christians, but the husband is angry and violent with his wife to the point that her life may be threatened, she has just grounds for separation. That is, until the guilty partner, through seeking godly counsel, is set free from his anger—or God deals with him as He did with Nabal. (1 Samuel 25:38)

I do not advocate a wife to remain with a husband who physically abuses her and who would leave marks, welts or bruises on her body. This is not the right environment for her or the children. The wife, in this case, should not be hasty towards divorce, but during her separation should pray, seek spiritual help, examine her own faults (if any) and encourage counsel for her husband.

What about Cheating?

This usually happens with one partner, but sometimes with both partners. Cheating on your spouse is the sin of adultery. You should quickly repent of and confess to both God and the betrayed partner. If this

cheating is frequent or becomes a lifestyle, the Scriptures in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 give grounds for divorce. However, for the sake of the generational chain and the Christian testimony before the world, I believe that every effort possible should be made to bring about true repentance and forgiveness on the part of the guilty.

What about Pornography?

If a Christian wife finds out that her husband is watching porn, she should immediately face her husband with this sin. If he will not listen, the pastor of his church should be notified in order to commence counseling.

Porn is uncleanness and defiles the marriage. Porn eventually affects the father's godly influence on his wife and children. I do not believe that a Christian wife should have to put up with a porn-watching addict. It is spiritually equivalent to adultery and fornication. If continued, without repentance, it becomes a Scriptural ground for separation as in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. The original Greek word for "fornication" that is used in this passage is *porneia* from where we get the word pornography.

Separation will hopefully shock the porn watcher out of his complacent attitude toward watching this filth and cause him to seriously repent.

I realize that much more needs to be said on the subject of divorce but the least we can do, and the greatest thing we can do, is to repent, watch and pray. The Lord is returning for a pure bride.

COLIN CAMPBELL
Primm Springs, Tennessee, USA



"The greatest Bible institute in the world is a father reading the open Bible to his family."

Norman V. Williams

From White Coat to Granola

After graduating nursing school my husband and I wanted to start a family. Knowing I had fertility problems, off to the fertility clinic we went. Treatment resulted in a twin pregnancy, one of those nightmare pregnancies with lots of interventions and hospitalizations. I am shocked they didn't come out with extra limbs after all the high risk medication I had to take. I ended up with an emergency c-section at the end of 31 weeks, hemorrhaging, and two premature NICU babies. Everyone is fine now.

Next go around we threatened the fertility clinic not to give us another twin nightmare pregnancy. With lighter treatment we became pregnant with just one baby. Toward the end of another rough pregnancy, my doctor explained how horrible and dangerous a VBAC would be. Who in their right mind would question a highly educated doctor? So, in the interest of mom and baby, I chose the "safer" elective c-section. This "safer" choice resulted in an infected incision and surgery one year later to remove problematic scar tissue that had attached my uterus to the abdominal wall.

God has a sense of humor, because I got pregnant the next time without the highly romantic, sterile fertility clinic setting. After some wonderful Christians prayed over me, God healed me of my aggressive endometriosis and polycystic ovarian disease. My surgery and lab tests found no evidence of fertility problems and the doctors had no explanation. I do! God closes and opens the womb.

This is where my medical paradigm of childbirth shifted from white coat to granola! I moved to another state and became friends with women who practically squat in a field to birth their babies. I found out that it is possible to VBAC after two c-sections! I didn't learn that in nursing school!

I researched everything; I was on a mission. I found a nurse midwife, hospital, and doula that were on board with my plan to VBA2C. After forty-one hours of an intervention filled, medicated labor and four hours of pushing, my VBA2C was successful. I was shocked that a baby could fit out of that hole!

God blessed us with another preg-



Steve and Erin's blessings are Shannon and Brandon (10), Cameron (7), Rachel (4), Ava (3), and Judah (1) and waiting for baby #7 on Valentine's Day, 2011.

VBAC STORIES!

Vaginal Birth after c-section

nancy. We had to tell people, "Yes, we do know what birth control is. It is giving God the control over how many we birth." We would not want to ever refuse God's blessings.

I decided that birthing on land was old hat. I wanted to have a water birth this time. Every hospital midwife/doctor group adamantly refused me this option. I was upset that these health care providers based their decisions on their money potential, convenience and possible lawsuits instead of patient safety. I was going to birth this baby my way, on my terms! After much prayer and research, I ventured into the homebirth world with my granola friends' support.

On June 30 my water broke around 4:00 am. And my contractions picked up pretty quickly. My wonderful doula came over and off to my friend's house we went. When the midwife showed up, I was already seven centimeters. I was shocked that I had been able to cope with the contractions. The water in the tub helped with the pain, but only to a certain point. The heat of the water actually intensified my nausea, so I discontinued.

Towards the end I started screaming for drugs. I wanted them to take me to

the hospital but they sweetly told me how close I was to having this baby.

Convinced they were lying to me. I sat on the edge of the bed so I could leave and drive myself to the hospital. When I sat up, I had the urge to push! My husband was such a wonderful support person. He became a contortionist trying to help me pull my legs back while supporting my head too. A whopping 10 lbs. 2 oz. baby girl came out forty-nine minutes later.

I have had another VBA2C since this birth. Unfortunately, I had to return to the hospital setting due to some health problems. I had to go through four medical professionals before I found someone who would not force me down the c-section path. I found the last one just a week and a half before going into labor. God is good! He reassured me every step of the way. While preparing to go to the hospital, I decided to read my morning devotional. I was ready for a wonderfully encouraging Scripture, but instead, God gave me the verse I needed to hear. My devotional quoted Job 2:10, "Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" I understood the good was my baby, the adversity was

hard labor. God helped me to prepare mentally for the hard road.

Off to the hospital we went. After 16 hours of very hard back labor I couldn't even feel my precious baby boy come out. The un-medicated birth was on my hands and knees. The doctor and nurses had never experienced a hands and knees delivery before. One nurse even said that she wanted a birth like mine. I found out later that he came out with his shoulders in the transverse position. That position is associated with an 82% c-section rate. Praise Jesus that we did not have to go down that path. God promised me my Judah and he was finally here, weighing 8lbs. 2oz.

Each birth has definitely stretched my faith in God. I faced such huge obstacles that I felt God could never get me out of but of course He always did! Praise Jesus that we have a God who knows us intimately and loves us more than we can ever comprehend!

ERIN DENNEY

Cleveland, Ohio, USA
sedenney@cox.net

Five VBACs Without Complications!

I was one week over due with my first baby and not knowing any better I allowed them to induce me. After seven hours of induced labor I was dilated fully and pushing. The baby's heartbeat had dropped drastically and they could not get any reading so they decided to do an emergency c-section. After opening me up, they found the baby's head lodged in the birth canal. They could not get the baby out through the tummy or vaginally. Other doctors were called in to assist but nothing changed. My muscles finally relaxed and the baby's head was released and he was removed through my abdomen.

Jonathan was rushed to another hospital to be checked out. Thankfully, he was okay and breathing well. It definitely scared my husband and me and we both agreed that would be the only child. The Lord had a different plan, of course.

When I became pregnant with my second child, thankfully, my doctor said I was a good candidate to have a VBAC. I delivered our baby, Larry, successfully

with a short labor and three pushes. I have had five successful VBAC's now without any complications.

I was one month short of 49 when I had my last VBAC. I wanted to have this one at home but I could not find a midwife that would do a VBAC. We found a doctor that let us make all the choices and I delivered baby Troy naturally without any added drugs.

JULIE ANN FERREIRA

Fort Jones, California, USA
jj5ferreira@msn.com

John and Julie's blessings are Jonathon (23), Larry (20), Daniel (17), Timothy (13), Julie Carol (10), and Troy (7 months).

I Needed to Change my Thinking!

I birthed my first child 14 years ago. I was induced at almost 42 weeks and didn't know anything but blindly following what the doctor said. Although I gave birth naturally, it was a very difficult birth and I pushed for almost three hours, the maximum allowed before doing a c-section.

Shortly after this daughter was born, I was born again. What joy!



Matthew and Nanci are the parents of Gabriella (15), Madison (13), Spencer (11), Lydianna (6), Mitchell (3) and new baby due in September (and they are praying for another VBAC!)

My second child came 20 months later. This time I started contracting on my own, but after a few trips to the hospital in the middle of the night with false labor the doctor said, "We're doing a c-section." Who was I to question a Yale-educated doctor?

My third child was born two years later. We lived in a new state by this time

and I had different health providers. I saw a midwife through the hospital because I wanted a VBAC, but this was not to be. It was a difficult pregnancy. I went into early labor at 30 weeks and had four weeks of bed rest (not easy with two children under four) and medication to stop the contractions.

Ironically, at 40 weeks, the midwife said, "We can induce you if you want." I didn't know any better then, though I found out later that when you are trying for a VBAC, you do not want to induce. She induced me and gave an epidural—mistake number two. I found out later that epidurals drastically reduce the chance of successful VBACs. Ah, hindsight! So after a long day of labor, we found out my son was stuck "sunny side up". I had a c-section and delivered a 9 lb boy. Spencer (now 11) is in recovery from Asperger's (High Functioning Autism), which we recently found out was due to mercury poisoning from his vaccines.*

When I went in for follow up care, the midwife said that due to two c-sections, any other babies would have to born the same way. This terrified me as the recoveries were difficult and we had no family living anywhere close to help out. My husband did not want to see me go through that again, yet, I still longed for more babies.

Several years later, we moved across the country. I still had the desire for more children, but I couldn't get past what the midwife said. I prayed for the Lord to take the desire away for more children if it was not His will, but the desire only grew stronger.

I met a wonderful godly woman, Lillian, who became my Titus 2 Mentor Mom. One day while at her home visiting, I told her about my desire for more children, but that it could not be because I didn't want another c-section. She said words that changed my life. "Have you asked the Lord to give you a normal birth? He can do it despite what the professionals say." I was so convicted at that instant. This was the beginning of Him renewing my mind and changing my thinking that professionals have all the answers.

Soon I was pregnant again and determined to have a normal birth. My husband said he supported me if I wanted to try again for a VBAC, but it worried him.

I read all I could on VBACs and had others praying for me. The health provider doctor was not at all in agreement with me and tried to scare me from even trying.

One day, the regular doctor was out and I saw another doctor. I told him my desire for VBAC. He said "No one can force you to have a c-section". This was so encouraging to me. Even though this other doctor was not supportive of VBAC either, this was exactly what I needed to hear. At 26 weeks, I switched over to one of the midwives in the same practice, after finding one that was pro-VBAC. I had to sign scary papers that said I was taking my life in my own hands and that they would not be held responsible for any death of either the baby or me. Thankfully, I knew that the Lord held me in HIS hands, not the doctor or anyone else.

My friend, Lillian, had a daughter, Natalie, who had graduated from home-schooling and was committed to serving the Lord through her single years while waiting for courtship. She had trained as a doula (birth assistant) and agreed to be my doula for free! This was such an answer to prayer, as I had read that having a doula greatly increases the chance of VBAC. Natalie encouraged me to write helpful encouraging verses on index cards and pray through them each day.

I went into labor a few days after the midwife stripped the membranes. Since this was not full-blown induction and it was a gentle method, I was okay with it.

When we arrived at the hospital, I got the very last room because there were too many women having babies that night! Some mothers had to give birth in the doctor's lounge! I was thankful that the Lord had made a way for me as I was trying to remain calm. Natalie was so helpful, praying over me, reading the verses from the cards and singing beautiful hymns. The nurses kept coming into my room to listen to the singing and said that my room was like the "calm in the midst of the storm." The rest of the floor was crazy with so many women in labor at once. My husband also told me jokes to make me laugh and helped keep me calm. The Lord's peace was over everything.

I delivered my almost 9 lb daughter completely naturally! It was a truly beautiful experience and I finally understood

the amazingly empowering feeling of a truly natural birth. I had a second successful completely natural VBAC three years later and look forward to having another baby with natural birth.

NANCI SMITH

Graham, Washington, USA
quietwaters4@msn.com

* The symptoms of autism and mercury poisoning are remarkably similar. We are currently doing a special chelation (which means pulling out the metals slowly). Here is information on the safe, low dose chelation protocol we are using: <http://livingnetwork.co.za/chelationnetwork/> There is also a yahoo group called *Recovery from Autism* that helps parents with this protocol.

VBAC STORIES!

Vaginal Birth after c-section

I Can't Believe it went so well!

Pregnant for the sixth time, I developed an ovarian cyst that torqued (twisted round and round) and cut off circulation to my left ovary. Christmas night of 2000 I thought I was going to have a miscarriage and endured the pain as long as I could before going to the hospital. My entire left reproductive side was gangrenous, and a week later, after having a 10" long vertical incision to go around the baby, my precious son was in the arms of the Lord.

Two years later I carried a very active child in utero with an uneventful pregnancy until delivery time. The baby moved much less and the doctor convinced me to be induced after my due date passed. I spent all day in the hospital with a Pitocin drip with no luck. I begged them to let me go home and spend Thanksgiving the next day with my family. I would have had a Thanksgiving baby because I was fully dilated at 11:00 p.m., but he was stuck! After his head presented for almost three hours with no further progress I consented to an emergency c-

section.

Two years later I miscarried again. In 2006 I had surgery for an umbilical hernia and a few months later, I conceived number nine. This particular doctor was very clinically minded and I knew that his policy was "once a c-section, always a c-section." One of my daughters was in college in Florida so we began chatting about setting up a delivery date around the time of her spring break. I went into an appointment with my plans and the doctor shocked me by suggesting I try a VBAC. "You're very healthy... I think you'd be a good candidate." God was telling me, "You think YOU'RE in control of this delivery? You're not in control of anything, I am on the throne!"

He sent me to a large hospital in Maine that claimed they were the closest

one except Boston that would perform a VBAC. Once in labor I would be confined to the bed, and if they decided, they would take the baby by c-section anyway, possibly weeks early. I left feeling very discouraged.

Soon after, I developed a yeast infection and returned to the office where I met the new nurse midwife. She said that she came from a practice in Manchester, NH and that the hospital there did VBACS all the time. I called the Labor & Delivery Ward, obtained the names of several OBs and set up my appointment. After examining me the first doctor declared I was a great candidate. I was thrilled! One thing I was not pleased about was the big AMA they wrote on my chart: "Advanced Maternal Age." I was 41. Because of my age I had to go every week and have non-stress tests and ultrasounds. But it was worth it not to have to have my third abdominal surgery in six years.

Things went fine until about the last month. Everyone in my home came down with a terrible flu that lasted about 10 days. After that I developed severe itching all over my body—my palms, face, feet, everything itched so they ordered a fast-

ing blood test.

A few days later I received a call saying, "You have to come into the office today so we can talk about your options." I was told that my bile acids were high accompanying a condition called cholecystitis in pregnancy. This has little effect on the mother but a high rate of infant mortality. The physician said that a few years ago he saw a patient on a Friday and on Monday he delivered a stillborn. "If you don't deliver by Friday, then we will induce. You will be 39 weeks and the baby will be fine."

That night and the next day I walked and drank lots of raspberry tea, but no labor. Friday came and I went in a 6:45 a.m. dreading another induction after the trouble before. The OB nurses were very accommodating. They broke my water first to see if that would start labor but no luck. I wasn't surprised—my babies are always late and this was only the 39th week. Finally they started the Pitocin drip. "How much are you giving me?" I asked. "Oh, 2 mg." The nurse responded.

"What's the range?" I asked. "Oh, usually 2-4 mg is all a woman needs to start labor."

"What's the most you've given?" I persisted. "Oh, rarely more than that, although I do remember a woman who needed 20 mg!" Well, after 14 mg I started active labor and I hated it—no break in between contractions with the intensity ever increasing.

At 2:30 p.m. I was only 5 cm dilated! My husband wasn't feeling very well either so I paced the halls alone. I tried to relax in a whirlpool tub (something I'd never tried before in labor) but that was less than soothing. As I got out I said, "I'm 41 years old, what do I need to prove, I WANT AN EPIDURAL!"

"Okay," the nurse said, "Get on the bed and I'll check you." At that moment I knew it was time to push and at 3:15 p.m. Joshua entered the world! He was so quiet and just stared at all the activity around him. As a baby he would quietly sob whenever he did cry but that wasn't very often.

God knew what I would need for when Joshua was 10 days old my husband came down with an acute case of pancreatitis and was in the hospital for 17 days. In that time we had three major snowstorms, lost power and phone service and I had to get out every day to visit my husband and get the other children to various sitters. Joshua needed to be quiet in a hospital setting and I couldn't have cared for everyone if I had been recovering from a c-section.

I followed up with the Manchester OBs but several months later I returned to my regular doctor. He said, "I don't know why I ever told you to try a VBAC. I NEVER recommend that procedure. I can't believe it went so well." The Lord above must have been chuckling,

MARIA CHAMBERLAIN

Strafford, New Hampshire, USA
brimar6@metrocast.net

Brian and Marissa (23), Leigh (22), Isaiah (15), Caleb (13), Abigail (11), Elijah (6), and Joshua (2).

Meat for Men

To receive Colin Campbell's Monthly Messages to challenge men, send a blank email to:

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24

Satan Hates the Family Altar

"God didn't make the course and destiny of nations and of individuals dependent on the decisions of Congresses and Parliaments, nor did He lay this power in the hands of rulers and kings; but God placed it in the praying family! This is why the devil cannot ruin nations of men until he has destroyed the homes of prayer! That's why Satan hates the family altar."

Norman V. Williams

Inspiration for Women

To receive Nancy Campbell's inspiring devotions to women, send a blank email to subscribers-on@aboverubies.org

You will receive a confirmation letter and

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"Your encouragement is like water to one about to die of thirst."

ABOVE RUBIES July 2010, No.79



Vacationing on a Budget

Try Camping

Vacationing with a large family can be a real challenge! Eating out two or three times a day and needing more than two motel rooms just doesn't fit a growing family's budget! As our family increased, we simply stopped vacationing. That is, until we discovered camping! (Neither one of us come from a family of campers and had never camped before.)

I wasn't brave enough to jump into tent camping right away, but we purchased an old travel trailer a few years ago. Since then we have taken more trips and made more memories than we ever could have imagined! The trailer, which didn't cost us much money has paid for itself over and over. We've learned how to make it as inexpensive as possible.

We make or purchase almost all food ahead. Our trailer's fridge/freezer and cupboards are packed to the max. If we start running out, we go to the grocery store, not a restaurant.

We only stay at low-priced campgrounds. We find that State Park campgrounds are very cheap (\$15-20 a night) as well as nicely maintained. Any

campground with the word "resort" will be much more expensive, especially when they charge \$10 extra per person for more than four people.

We don't travel too far.

Because gas is one of the major expenses, we sometimes pick a campground less than an hour away.

We keep away from expensive tourist spots. We find that vacations in a natural setting, away from money-guzzling attractions, are the most relaxing, renewing and inexpensive experiences. If you do want to visit museums, zoos, amusement parks, etc., check out their membership or group rates. On several occasions we saved significantly by purchasing a membership to a museum even though we never went there again.

We plan but are open to spontaneous adventure. We plan, but stay flexible and creative. If you arrive somewhere and you find it isn't what you expected, or more expensive than you thought, move on! You'll find something better and be glad you didn't spend the extra money.

Last Christmas we took a wonderful trip to Florida and we still talk about how

little we spent for how much we did and saw. We enjoyed a State Park campground right on the ocean for \$18 a night with a family of 10! I say nothing beats camping!

MONICA BAZEN

Rockford, Michigan, USA
jabazen@gmail.com

Jim and Monica's blessings are Kristen (17), Meleah (15), Jimmy (14), Adam (11), Miriam (9), Hosanna (8), Hannah Jo (6), and Justus (2).

Learning Vacation

We are a family of eight and vacationing is becoming more and more expensive. At this point, we can no longer be in one motel room. Most motels do not have family suites so we try to stay in economical motels with rooms that are either adjoining, or side by side. The girls stay in one room and the boys in another. When looking for motels, we make sure we get one with a full continental breakfast. This saves us \$40 a day that we would spend eating out for breakfast.

When picking a vacation spot, we think about what would reinforce what

the children have been learning. We try to visit museums and historical sites in which the children are interested. WWII and Civil War reenactments are awesome too. They hold them all over the country. If you mention you are homeschoolers, you can often get discounts.

Packing lunches saves money! We try to eat out only once a day when on vacation.

STACIE BROWN

The Dalles, Oregon, USA

sbfirefighter@qnect.net

Blog: www.afirefighterswife.blogspot.com

Steve and Stacie's brood are Joshua (11), Marcus (9), Jessica (6), Andrew (4), Jacob (2) and Lily (6 months).

Couponing Vacation

"Vacation on a budget"? I never liked the sound of it as a child, and even now at 20, I wasn't so sure it was a good idea. Every year our family, along with my grandma, spends a week at a timeshare resort. I always thought that this should be a time where we could buy whatever we want and pig out for a week! However, due to tighter finances, my dad asked if we could please try to spend less money on food for this year's vacation. It didn't sound much like fun to me. Then, to make matters worse, my mom got sick and could not go with us and I was put in charge of all the food!

I started by making a menu of lunches and dinners for the trip (the children eat cereal for breakfast). For every meal I tried to pick something that we don't nor-

mally eat at home—no beans and rice or peanut butter and jelly sandwiches! I promised my siblings that we could get special ice cream products for dessert. I checked the pantry and freezer at home to see what we could bring with us and then made a list of what we needed to buy.

Next came the fun part—couponing. To coupon, all you need is a computer and the coupons from your local paper. I simply save the coupons each week (without even cutting them out) and put them in a folder labeled with the date of that week's newspaper. Then I go to one of the couponing websites (listed at the bottom of this article). I click what store I want to shop at, and I am given a list of all the sales for that store in my area, and the date of the newspaper with corresponding coupons to further lower the price.

I clipped out all of my coupons and went shopping. A few of my siblings came with me but they knew the rule. All food had to be on sale or I had to have coupons!

My dad mentioned that in the past we spent an average of \$350 on vacation food. I was thrilled (and my dad was really thrilled) when the total grocery bill came to only \$80.84! It had begun at \$155.23 but because of sales, rebates, and coupons we saved \$74.39. Now granted, we ran out of bread and a few small items during the week, but overall it was by far the least amount of money that we had spent. Some of my family members commented that it was the best vacation food they had ever had. It goes to show that you don't need to pay a high price for high quality and fun.

Overall, couponing has been a great way to get free food and household items. It is also a chance to give away what you have been given. Since I started couponing a few months ago, I have gotten a free blood glucose machine, notebooks, pens, candy, dog food, cat food, chocolate, granola, medicine, dishwasher detergent, hand soap, floss, sanitary pads, shampoo, conditioner and the like. When the coupons exceed the sale price, I end up paying nothing and sometimes get money back!

Even if you can't coupon for all of your needs, just doing one or two stores a week is great fun and will begin to make a noticeable dent in your budget. As for websites, my personal favorite is www.couponmom.com and you can also check out www.southernsavers.com. They are both free and there is also a paid subscription one at www.thegrocerygame.com.

BRITTANY GRAHAM (20)

Altamonte Springs, FL, USA

Grahamgirl7@gmail.com

Pet Friendly Hotels

Our family traveled with five children, a dog and a cat over the last two summers. We learned to look for accommodations via websites that list pet friendly hotels (bringfido.com is a good one). Any hotel that allowed animals was usually easy going about a large number of children.

I have never been able to book online. When I listed the number of children, the computer informed me that there weren't rooms for that many people. However, when I called to speak with someone in reservations (call the local number to the hotel, not the national 800 number), they were happy to work with me. They may not have beds for that many people, but they are happy to let me make a pallet for the littlest children, or bring in a pack-n-play. Many of these hotels have at least a kitchenette, if not a full kitchen, and also serve complimentary breakfast.

MELISSA SIMS

Denton, Texas, USA

simsmelissa@gmail.com

Dave and Melissa's children are Walker (10), Carter (7), Rachael (5), Molly (3) and Caroline (1).



The Graham family—Rich and Mary Lou with their children, Brittany (20), Becky (17), Katie (14), Stephanie (11), Stephen (10), John (7) and Joey (4).

ABOVE RUBIES RETREATS FOR 2010 & 2011

Check www.aboverubies.org for additional retreats or changes.

13 — 15 AUGUST, TENNESSEE

LADIES RETREAT at Garner Creek Center
700 Sam Hollow Rd * Dickson, TN 37055 * www.garnercreek.com
Contact: Shelly Cathcart * Ph: 828-586-3024 * shelly.cathcart@gmail.com
Or Katharine Collings * Ph: 828-226-8414 * mikatcoll@yahoo.com
Serene, Pearl and Evangeline will be attending this retreat.

20 — 22 AUGUST, MONTANA

LADIES RETREAT at Abba's Haven (near Billings, Montana)
Contact: Megan Kirchhevel * chriskirchhevel77@yahoo.com
Ph: 406-320-2292
Serene and Pearl will be attending this retreat.

27 — 29 AUGUST, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

FAMILY and LADIES RETREAT at Pine Valley Bible Conference Center
(45 min. east of San Diego)
Contact: Gary and Trish Evans, Ph: 951-681-4858 or Cell: 951-315-9078
Email: gtdz@empirenet.com

3 — 20 SEPTEMBER, AUSTRALIA

LADIES RETREATS in Tasmania, NSW and Queensland
Contact Val Stares for more information and further meetings.
Email: valstares@aboverubies.org.au * Ph: 07-5543-4744

7 — 25 OCTOBER, UNITED KINGDOM/EUROPE

RETREATS in South England, Czech Republic and
Scotland/North England
Contact Alice Gurr for more information and further meetings.
Email: info@aboverubies.co.uk * 020-8224-3628 * www.aboverubies.co.uk

5 — 7 NOVEMBER, OREGON

LADIES RETREAT at Aldersgate, Turner (South of Salem)
Contact: Pam Fields, Ph: 503-363-0579 * quiverfull@divix.biz
Or Terri Burkert * quiverfull@divix.biz
go to website: www.OregonRubies.com

RETREATS FOR 2011

7 — 9 JANUARY, BC, CANADA

LADIES RETREAT at Rosemary Heights Retreat Centre, Surrey
ONLY 100 Spots available so reserve your spot today!
<http://www.rosemaryheights.com>
Contact: Michelle Kauenhofen
Ph: 204-388-6015 (noon - 4 pm or after 8 pm)
Email: reachaboverubies@gmail.com

21 — 23 JANUARY, HOUSTON, TEXAS

LADIES RETREAT at Kaiserhof Retreat Center, Tomball
Contact: Kim Griffith 281-714-0171 * www.HoustonRubies.com

4 — 7 MARCH, LOUISIANA

FAMILY RETREAT at Rocky Creek Conference Center, Pineville
Contact: Angela Decoteau
Ph: 225 715 1587 * calmdec@cox.net

25 — 27 MARCH, WISCONSIN

13th ANNUAL FAMILY RETREAT at Inspiration Center, Williams Bay
Contact Roger and Jackie Thelen
Ph: 262-723-6557 * safehaven@pensys.com

29 APRIL — 1 MAY, MANITOBA, CANADA

LADIES RETREAT at Wilderness Edge Retreat Centre
Pinawa Bay, NE of Winnipeg * www.wildernessedge.com
Contact: Michelle Kauenhofen * Ph: 204-388-6015 (noon - 4 pm or after 8 pm)
Email: reachaboverubies@gmail.com
Pearl, Serene and Evangeline will be coming to this retreat

10 — 12 JUNE, ONTARIO, CANADA

FAMILY CAMP at Torrance (near Gravenhurst)
Contact: Alison Morrison * labaddde@hotmail.com * 705-458-9631



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"It will greatly comfort you if you can see God's hand in both your losses and your crosses."

~ Charles Hadden Spurgeon

NEW BOOKS AND DVDs:

BOOKS:

Love Your Husband, Love Yourself

(Embracing God's Purpose for Passion in Marriage)

by Jennifer Flanders

This vibrant mother of 12 children tells you how to take 10 years off your appearance, reduce your risk of heart disease, enjoy intimacy with your husband instead of making excuses to avoid it and divorce-proof your marriage! It's a knock out! You will be challenged and inspired.

One Hundred Days of Blessing

This book contains 100 devotionals from Nancy Campbell—devotions to strengthen you as a wife and mother. You'll want it beside your bed to read before you get up to face the day with new impetus and joy and to inspire you as you go to sleep at night. You'll enjoy reading it as your nurse and rock your baby.

Praying Through the 100 Gateway Cities of the 10/40 Window

This book gives up-to-date information on the 100 key cities in the 10/40 window, the world's least evangelized area. It is a marvelous resource to use with your family. You not only learn about new cities and countries, but give your children a burden to pray for the world.

At our evening devotions Colin reads the Scriptures from THE DAILY LIGHT after which we read about a city from *Praying Through the 100 Gateway Cities of the 10/40 Window*. It gives some history of the place and points for prayer.

It is such a powerful time as we each pray for these cities. Many of these cities are closed to the gospel, but we are not bound. Through the power of prayer we can go right into these cities and intercede for God to move and bring salvation and deliverance.

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COURTSHIP DVDs:

Pamela's Prayer

This motion picture portrays the unique story of Pamela Bucklin from her birth in 1969 to her wedding day in 1991. It is a wonderful story that shows Pamela's temptations but how in the end God enabled her to keep her first kiss for her wedding day. It is a captivating and an inspiring story. I would recommend every young person (and parents) to watch this movie.

Betrothed

This is the story of Brayden and Talitha Waller's betrothal and wedding. Do you remember reading about the Waller family in *Above Rubies* #68 and how they serve the Lord in Israel with their 11 children? Brayden is their eldest son. Brayden and Tali decided to go beyond courtship and experience a betrothal just like in Bible days. It is an incredible story. You will laugh! You will cry! Colin and I were very blessed to be part of their wedding ceremony but when I saw the movie of their whole story (and what happened behind the scenes) I was awed. You will be too.

Go to www.aboverubies.org or page 29 to place your order.

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The Power of Motherhood	\$18.00		
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Be Fruitful and Multiply	\$14.00		
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PO Box 681687, Franklin, TN 37068-1687
Nancy Campbell: aboverubies@hughes.net
Ph: 1 877 729 9861 (between 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday, Central Time)

AUSTRALIA

PO Box 5604, Manly, QLD 4179
Val Stares: admin@aboverubies.org.au
Ph:/Fax (07) 5543 4744

CANADA

Box 152, New Bothwell MB R0A 1C0
Michelle Kauenhofen: reachaboverubies@gmail.com
Ph: 204-388-6015; Cell: 204-355-7682

MALAYSIA

No 1, Jalan USJ 13/1A, UEP Subang Jaya, 47620
Petaling Jaya, Selangor
Rosalyn Khoo: aboverubiesmalaysia@gmail.com
Ph: (60) 5638 3522

NEW ZEALAND

PO Box 4232, Mount Maunganui
Heather Jones: aboverubies@extra.co.nz
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8 Burkes Road, Gowrie Junction, QLD, Australia 4352
Lisa Thorpe: lisathorpeclan@bigpond.com

SINGAPORE, SOUTH ASIA, EAST ASIA AND SOUTH EAST ASIA*

Marine Parade, PO Box 720, Singapore 914408
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SOUTH AFRICA

PO Box 3916, Durbanville 7551
Linnie and Christo Lues: linnie@aboverubies.co.za
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SOUTH PACIFIC

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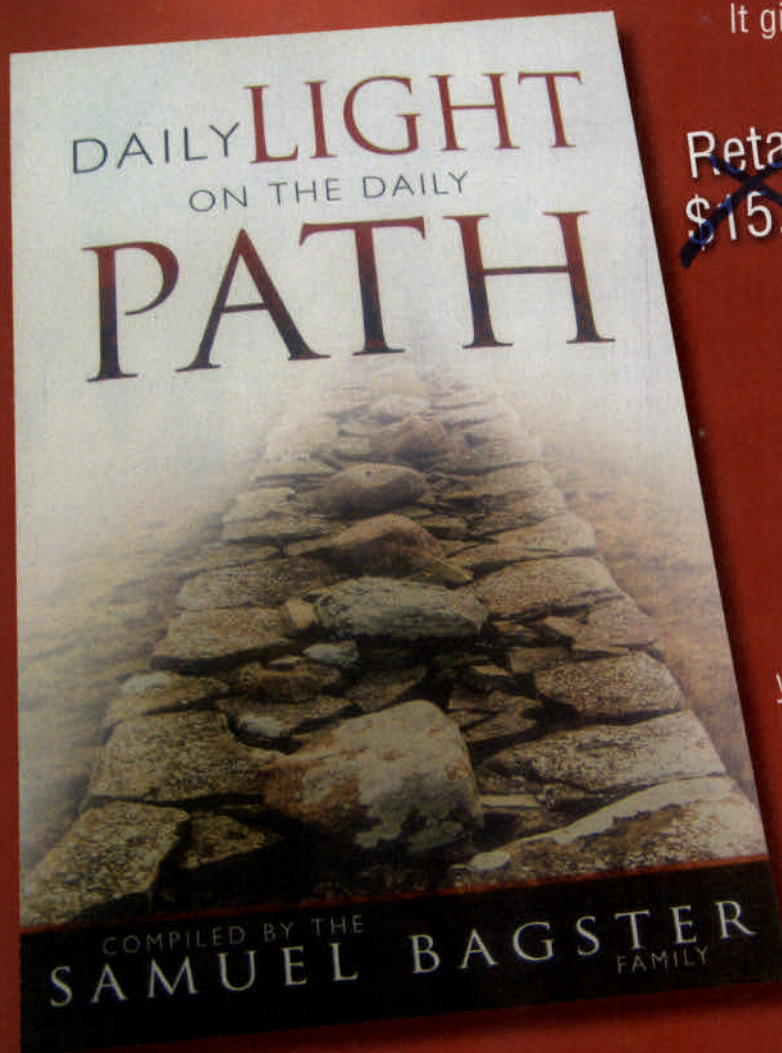
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