

Connecting you to God's never-changing truth in ever-changing times

the Connection

magazine with Skip Heitzig



Skip Heitzig
Wanted: Godly Parents

Alexander Whyte
On Friendship

Raul Ries
Raising a Godly Family

Lenya Heitzig
Preventing Forest Fires

real
Relationships

Spring 2009

The Biography of God is a
14-part series by Pastor Skip
Heitzig, recorded live at
Calvary of Albuquerque.

the
biography
of **GOD**
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Skip's Note

Welcome to our Spring edition of *The Connection* magazine! As the sun shines and the days become longer, we'll devote our time to a heartwarming topic—relationships! In this issue, our theme revolves around “real relationships,” those we have with God, family, neighbors, and strangers.

In our first article, I hope to help equip you to defend your family against the powerful cultural forces working against them. We'll look at the biblical model for families—and how we can continue to protect this ideal.

Second, the Dead Pastors' Society features an article by Alexander Whyte, a Scottish pastor and theologian. His commentary, entitled “The Master and His Friends,” is an outstanding look at the intimate friendship between Jesus Christ and His beloved disciple, John.

In the third article, my friend Raul Ries writes on “Raising a Godly Family in an Ungodly World.” He reminds us that our choice for our household must be as Joshua's was: “To serve the Lord.”

Fourth, *Off the Cuff* showcases memorable time that I spent with Dr. Kevin Leman, a psychologist, Christian author, and fantastic media personality.

In this issue's Truth Connect, our study will bring us through the book of Ephesians.

Following the study, my wife Lenya has contributed a wonderful piece of writing entitled “Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires.” In it, she points to the undeniable ability of the tongue to either help or hinder communication—and what can happen when we permit an untamed tongue to rule a relationship.

In *From the Blog*, I answer a very significant and often asked question concerning the Christian's true relationship with the Holy Spirit.

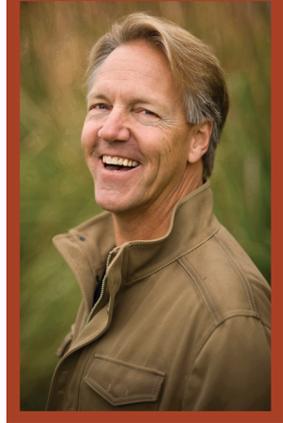
And in *Hot Spots*, I'll explain exactly what Paul meant in Ephesians when he admonished a father to not provoke his children to wrath.

We sincerely hope you enjoy the resources found in *The Connection* magazine. And when you've finished with your copy, please pass it on to a neighbor or friend—or someone you haven't even met yet.

In His Strong Love,



SKIP HEITZIG



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Publisher

Skip Heitzig,
SkipHeitzig.com

Director

Chip Lusko

Editor-In-Chief

Brian Nixon

**Managing
Editors**

Penny Rose,
Jerry Rood, and
Joan Polito

Copy Editor

Rebekah Hanson

Contributors

Alexander Whyte,
Raul Ries, Lenya Heitzig,
Penny Rose and
Dr. Kevin Leman

**Art & Design
Director**

Brandi Sea Heft

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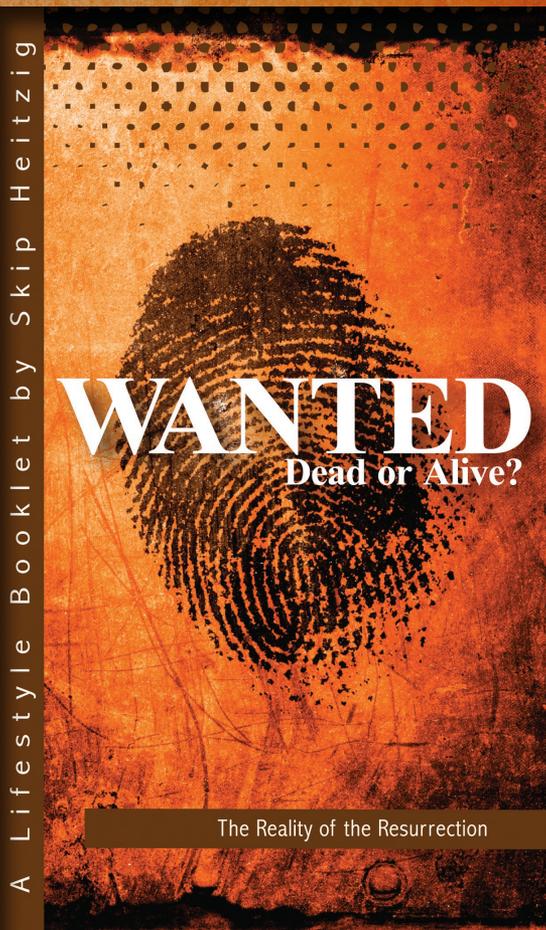
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WANTED: Perfect Parents Godly

The family is the basic core unit of any society. History has proven that as the family goes, so goes the society. And today, there are powerful cultural forces working against our families. These same forces fight against the very biblical model of a family.

Question: What is Family?

For some time, your family has been under attack. Social scientist James Wilson said, "We are witnessing a profound, worldwide, long-term change in the family that's likely to continue for a long time." He said, "The scale of marital breakdown in the West since the 1960s has no historical precedent." Do you understand what that means? He "can't find any other period of time in history that parallels the kind of time we're seeing in the West in terms of the marriage and family breakdown. None."

See if you agree with this statement: "When I was a kid, everybody knew the definition of a family." We did, right? It was a husband and a wife with or without children. Today, it's not so easy to identify the family. Politicians can't even

Gallup polled a thousand teenagers and learned during the 24-hour test period, 42% of them had not received words of praise. Half of them had not received a hug or a kiss and 44% never heard the words, "I love you." Our families need to be buttressed, built up, and fortified in that love.

While proximity without intimacy was the first cause of a family dysfunction, there is another factor.

His Great Mercy

The family also had dissension without resolution. An example of this truth is found in an unresolved, long-time rift between David and his son, Absalom. Absalom killed his brother, set a field ablaze, and started a coup (2 Samuel 13-15). All of this just to get his father's attention!

Well, what eventually happened? Historically, we know Absalom was successful in his subversion and managed to split the nation. In fact, Absalom inaugurated himself as the king and rallied a large group of people against David (2 Samuel 15-18). He managed to kick King David out of Jerusalem—his father had to flee like a refugee. All of it amounted to a colossal family feud!

Finally, David's army was about to face Absalom in battle. During the briefing before the battle, Scripture says that King David commanded his three generals to: "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." (2 Samuel 18:5). *David was only thinking about his son.* Then, during the battle, Absalom was killed and a runner brought the news that David and his army had won the war. The king didn't care that they had won! He asked: "Is the young man Absalom safe?" (2 Samuel 18:29). He wasn't focused on the battle or thinking, "I hope I get to Jerusalem by the end of the month. I hope I get my throne

back." King David's mind was focused on his son.

Now, some of you are probably thinking of your own parents and saying, "My dad doesn't care about me. My mom never even thinks about me." Believe me, they're thinking about you right now. And you may argue, "Then why don't they ever call me?" For three years, Absalom was in Jerusalem, yet his father David never went to him. Why didn't he do it? I don't know.

But if you're a mother or father and there is a division in your family, please do whatever it takes to reach out and heal it – to close the rift. Or, if you've been hurt by your parents, don't sit there and say, "Well I'm just going to wait for them to call." Instead, *call them first.* And tell them that you love them.

Why? Why should you reach out, even if the separation is no fault of yours? Because of His great mercy. Did you forget? Jesus Christ has forgiven you and God has given you His unconditional love. Don't you think that people who have received unconditional love should give unconditional love? In fact, *the only ones equipped to show unconditional love are those who have received unconditional love.* As a Christian, you must mend your relationships.

In 2 Samuel 18:33, we read of King David weeping. "And as he went he said thus: 'O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place!'" Sadly, David's reaction is too little too late. Two years earlier, his son was in Jerusalem. Now, there is only the death of his son—there isn't any resolution.

Filtered Through Failure

In emergency rooms and hospitals, I've seen so many reruns of the biblical story of David and Absalom played out in families. In

fact, I watched it happen in my own family. My father was very aloof and very proud. And my older brother had a longstanding disagreement with him—neither one of them would budge. I even watched them have a fistfight in our own home. And this rift grew and grew—until the night my father called me on the phone. I had never heard such grief in a voice until he said, “Your brother’s been killed in a motorcycle accident.”

Of course, our whole family grieved and was torn apart by my brother’s death. But it absolutely crippled my father. For the rest of his life, my father filtered everything through their failure to reconcile.

That Same Something

But there are ways to secure your families and your relationships. The first principle is communication. As a family, learn to communicate. The church has many resources to help you do that. Because how you communicate with your children will set

So, play with your child and pray with your child.

the pattern for how they will communicate with their children and grandchildren.

The second principle is to humble yourself. Bring your family together and begin with these sentences: “I’m sorry for...” Don’t use something like: “I have a few things I want to point out to you.” Instead begin with “I’m sorry for...” or “Forgive me for...” As you use these words, you’re setting up the ability for your children to use humility in their future.

While there are no perfect parents or perfect families or perfect home, you can have and should have a secure home.

I received a note from a little girl who wrote, “My dad says I’m enormously gorgeous. I wonder if I really am. To be enormously gorgeous, Sarah says you need to have beautiful, long, curly hair like she has. I don’t. To be enormously gorgeous, Samantha says you need to come from a perfect family, and I don’t. But every night at bedtime my dad gives me a big hug and says, ‘You are enormously gorgeous and I love you.’ Hmm, my dad must know something my friends don’t.”

I hope that you know that same something that nobody else knows. When your babies wake you up at 1 a.m., then 3 a.m., and again at 5 a.m.—those moments are gifts. They’re all gifts. Your children don’t yet have the equipment to deal with life like you do. We don’t have to be perfect or flawless or never make mistakes. Instead, do your part as their Christian mother or father to communicate with them, humble yourself to them, and help to shape your precious children.

So, play with your child and pray with your child. Stimulate their desire to be godly. And when your little boy says, “I want to be just like Daddy when I grow up,” you can be confident that this is a good thing.



Skip Heitzig is the author of the upcoming book *Encounter: Face to Face with Jesus* and is senior pastor of Calvary of Albuquerque.



DEAD PASTORS' SOCIETY

Alexander Whyte
(1836-1921)

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.”

John 15:13-15

John has the supreme distinction, and the everlasting honour, of having been our Lord's most intimate friend on earth. And what an exalted light that casts on the character of John, on the qualities of his mind, and on the disposition of his heart! Yet, who are Jesus' friends?

In Likeness

A whole multitude of disciples followed Him about. But both the needs of His heart and the nature of His work led our Lord to make a selection, and to choose an inner circle of more special friends out of that large and loose multitude. And after

The Master and His

much close observation of the conduct and the character of twelve men out of that multitude, and after much prayer, our Lord at last chose those twelve men to have them always with Him. But as time went on, both the drawing of His own heart, and the deeper discovery that the Twelve made of their capacities and their characters, led their Master to make yet another selection of still more special friends, inside the circle even of the Twelve. And then, even of the select three, John more and more stands out as the loved disciple—the special, and peculiar, and by far the most intimate friend of his Master.

The foundation of all friendship is always laid in likeness—in likeness of nature; in likeness of character; in likeness of mind and of judgment; in likeness of tastes, pursuits, and occupations. What a certification, then, that is concerning John's mind and character and tastes and pursuits—to be told that, out of all the men that our Lord met with on earth, John was the man He best loved and made His closest friend!

Friendship

Friendship has had a rich literature all to itself in all ages of the world. But, than Lord Bacon's Twenty-Seventh Essay there has never been anything better written on this fruitful subject of Friendship. Beginning with the famous passage on Solitude, Bacon goes on with all his superb strength of understanding, and with all his overflowing wealth of illustration, to descant on the two great

aster his Friends

offices and fruits of Friendship—in relieving the overburdened heart of man; and in clearing up and correcting his confused understanding.

And our own Edward Irving adds, "as every man hath these four attributes—infirmity of judgment, selfishness of disposition, inactivity and inertness of nature, and adversity of fortunes—so every man needs the help of a friend, and should do his endeavor to obtain one."

Sphere after Sphere

God, our best Friend, has appointed us sphere after sphere, and opportunity after opportunity, in which to form friendships and in which to become the friends of other men. And it is in family life, it is at home and among our own kindred and blood relations, that our first friendships are formed, and our hearts first exercised in those duties and affections in which the life of true friendship consists. And since, ultimately, all true friendship has its

roots in likeness, the original and primary friendships of the family are laid by nature herself in a deep and essential likeness, out of which the whole rich and various life of human and divine, earthly and heavenly, friendships is intended to spring up.

Kith and Kin

And then, out of this sweet and fruitful likeness and consequent friendship of husband and wife, there spring by God's appointment all the other likenesses and friendships of parent and child, brother and sister, and all our other kith and kin. To honour and obey our parents is the first way, and the best way, to honour and to obey God; and to love, and serve, and give way to, our brothers and our sisters is the divinely appointed path toward loving, and assisting, and acting along with all men as our brethren.

Rooted and Grounded

When we are still young and inexperienced and warm-hearted, we think that the life of affection has only to have free scope and full opportunity allowed it in order to turn earth into heaven. Love fills our future ideal home, and friendship fills our future ideal world. But unless we are better taught than that dream, we are doomed to bitter disappointment. Love, real and true love; and friendship, real and true friendship—if they are to become our life companions, and are to abide and be at home with us, must be "rooted and grounded" in us as all our other virtues and graces are rooted and grounded. That is to say, they must be practiced and acted

"...who are Jesus' friends?"

on—on principle, and indeed by rule. True love, true friendship, is a habit of mind and heart and will; and like all our other habits of mind and heart and will, our love and our friendship must be built up, drawn out, developed and perfected by constant and studious exercise. A man who would have friends must show himself friendly. He must not take it for granted that his lovers and his friends will stick to him whatever he does to them. He must study the arts and he must live the life of a friend. He must show forethought and take trouble. He must weed out of his heart all those tempers and passions that injure friendship; and he must plant and water all those acts and habits that support and perpetuate friendship.

Out of Doors

But, not seldom, after all that our homes can give us, we have not seldom to go outside of our own homes for the full satisfaction of our hearts, and for the full assistance and enjoyment of friendship. It was so with our Lord. He had to leave—all unwillingly, we may be quite sure—James and Joses and Simon and Judas behind Him in His mother's house, and go outside to seek His best friends: till, happy for them, He found His best friends in Peter and James and John. Those three happy men afforded our Lord that likeness of mind and heart, that sympathy and that support and that love which His heart craved for, and which His life and His lifework demanded. And so it is sometimes with ourselves. It will sometimes happen that we shall get a sympathy, a support, an encouragement, an affection, out of doors, that neither father nor mother, nor sister nor brother, nor wife nor child, can give us.

He Has

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Has this Man, then, laid down His life for you? He has, if you have ever asked Him to do it. He has, if you have ever accepted Him as doing it for you. Well, then, has He? Do you think He has? Have you any hope that He has? Did you ever ask Him to do it? Did it ever come to this pass with you—either your life or His? And, at that terrible moment, did He say—“I am the sinner's surety: take Me and let him go his way”? And ever since that night of substitution and purchase, have you gone your way a redeemed man? When did that transaction between

Greater love hath no man

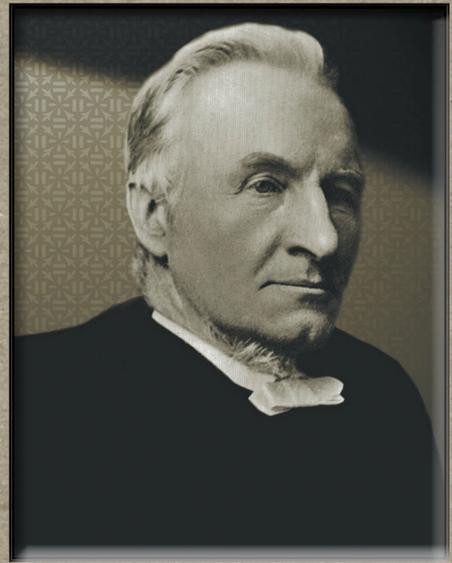
Him and you take place? Where did it take place? Could you show me the spot? How long is it ago? And what manner of man have you been ever since? And, as often as your life has been again and again forfeited, has He interposed again, and again laid down His life for you? Then, you are His friend. If all that is so, you are His friend, and He is your Friend. And greater love hath no man for any of his friends than this Man hath for you.

Tell Him

And then, as the dearest friends ought to do—sometimes, and indeed often, tell your Friend how much you love Him, for all this as well as for Himself. Though your unkindness and unfaithfulness have been such that it stabs you to the heart to speak

about your love to Him alongside of it, yet do it. Trample upon your pride and do it; trample upon your shame and do it. Whatever it costs you to do it, do it. Tell Him boldly how much you love Him. "Thou knowest that I love Thee!" retorted Peter, driven half mad with love and with misery, and with his Master's importunity. And still, his Master would have Peter say it, and say it again, and say it again. Nothing would satisfy Peter's Master that day on the sands of the Sea of Galilee but that Peter must say it again and again and again, how much he loved his Master. Commentators and preachers who have no heart in them labour to discover why it was that Jesus asked Peter three times that sweet question. But no man who ever brought his heart with him to that fine chapter ever felt any difficulty with our Lord's hunger for Peter's love, and for the over and over again confession of Peter's love.

"Margaret, never was woman loved so tenderly as thou hast been loved," said a silent husband to his dying wife. "I knew it," was her answer, "I knew it; but I could not die happy till I had heard thee say it. Ah! how I have pined for that sweet word! I had to die to get it, but I do not grudge the price." Say it then to your Friend, say it to your Husband. And when you have once summoned up strength of heart to say how much you have always loved Him, say it, like Peter, three times. You feel it, and He knows that you feel it; then say it. And He will not grudge the price. **D**



Alexander Whyte
(1836-1921)

Alexander Whyte was a Scottish theologian. Educated at the New College, Edinburgh and the University of Aberdeen, he then entered the ministry. Renowned for his great imagination and word pictures, his sermons were able to reach scores of both children and adults. Whyte held in high esteem the greatness of the pulpit and advised those preparing for the ministry to never neglect the preparation of their sermons.

The Dead Pastors' Society is a class Skip Heitzig teaches at the School of Ministry in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In this seminar, he introduces students to preachers of yesteryear.



GUEST:

Raul Ries

Raising a
Godly fam
in an
UN-godly



ily
world

God is not neutral.

In Joshua 24:15 we are told, "... choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve..."

The beginning of wisdom is establishing Jesus Christ as the Lord of your home.

In Chapter 24 of the book of Joshua, we find that Joshua is now old and ready to die. His days on earth are winding down, so he gathers all of the people of his family together and exhorts them to serve the Lord. Many in the world were following false gods. Many of God's people had turned their backs on the ways of the Lord and had gone back to a carnal life. It is in this setting that Joshua boldly declares, "... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

As a pastor, I see this even today. Many parents have turned their backs on the Lord and are serving their own interests and selfish desires. Because of this, they do not want to take responsibility for their own children. Instead, many parents would love to blame

the Sunday school or public education for the way their kids have turned out as adults. However, the Bible never instructed the church or government to raise, protect or train children. No, God has specifically given *parents* the responsibility to nurture, guide, teach, train and discipline their children. The Lord has also given guidelines and insight as to how children are to be raised.

I like this quote from V. Raymond Edman, "I am persuaded that if mothers and fathers would earnestly seek to know the meaning of full consecration in God's service, they would have clear guidance in the rearing of their children."

As a parent, you need to determine that your "house" will serve the Lord.

We live in an ungodly world. The values that rule our society are not the same values that rule God's people. At one time, the gap between the two was not so wide. There was an era, especially in America, when the values that ruled God's people were the same values that ruled our schools and justice system. However, that has changed. We are witnessing, in our world, what took place in the days of the book of Judges (in the Old Testament). "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6).

That is the philosophy of today, "I'm going to do my own thing."

It seems that this philosophy has really affected the home. It has affected husbands, wives, single parents and those that are not married. Worst of all, it has spi-

raled down to affect the children of this generation. In Judges 2:10 we read, "When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel."

Do as

The parents in the second generation did not acknowledge the Lord as the ruler of their lives. Instead, they did what was right in their own eyes—they did their own thing. Turning their backs on God's Lordship in their lives resulted in children who knew nothing of God or His work. These children ended up doing evil in His sight, as well.

I say,

I believe we have the same problem today. Parents may declare they are Christians, but they do not submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, so their homes are filled with confusion and disorder.

not as

God's design for your home is one of order. As a parent, you are responsible for your children because they were given to you by God to be brought up in the ways of the Lord.

I do.

Only when you make Jesus Christ Lord of your lives and your home will you be a godly parent, raising godly children. God gives parents a promise. "Train up a child in the way he should

go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

“Do as I say, not as I do.” How many times have we heard that growing up? Maybe you never heard that as a child—but chances are you did. Perhaps you have found yourself echoing those same words. The Bible teaches that we are to be examples, in everything we do. As Christians, we are to emulate Christ in our lives, so as to bring the ungodly to repentance. In our employment, we should be an example of diligence, perseverance, hard work, and the list goes on.

Yet, many times, as parents, we fail to recognize the obvious. We need to practice what we preach and be an example to our children.

Children mimic what they hear and see. How many times does a child repeat a phrase that they have heard from their parents? Many times, our children take on mannerisms and bad habits that we ourselves display to them.

How can you tell your child not to lie, when you lie? How can you tell your child not to take drugs, when you take drugs? How can you tell your child not to drink, when you drink? The list is endless, and I am sure you get my point.

When we do not live by example, we bring great inconsistency into our homes. As a parent, your actions must back up your words. Not only will your children take on your bad attitudes, actions and habits, but they will have a poor example of Christianity. Do you realize that when you live contrary to Christ’s teachings, you are misrepresenting God before your children? How can you teach your children in God’s

ways, and then live contrary to them?

Stephen Green writes, “Only as genuine Christian holiness and Christlike love are expressed in the life of a parent, can the child have the opportunity to inherit the flame and not the ashes.”

As parents, you are representatives of God. You have a great responsibility, before God and your children, to be obedient to the Word of the Lord. Yes, as parents, we need to be living examples of Christ. Now, that is not always easy because parents are not super humans, and we struggle daily with our flesh, sin and the devil. That is why it is so important to walk closely with the Lord by being in His Word on a daily basis.

Parents are not perfect. When you do make a mistake, when you misrepresent God, when you are a bad example, confess it to the Lord and to your children. Let your children see a right example of confession of sin and repentance. This can help them understand God’s grace in their own lives and go far to nurture an atmosphere of respect.

What kind of example are you to your children? Does your walk match your talk? Keep in mind, as we go through the remaining responsibilities of parenthood, that you need to be a godly example in each aspect of parenting duties. **G**

Pastor Raul Ries is the senior pastor at Calvary Chapel Golden Springs in Diamond Bar, California.

**Excerpt from Raising a Godly Family in an Un-Godly World.*

Off the Cuff



Dr. Kevin Leman



Skip Heitzig had the privilege of talking with Dr. Kevin Leman, internationally known Christian psychologist, award-winning author, radio and television personality, and speaker.

As the father of five, Kevin brings practical and down-to-earth principles into his parenting advice with a biblical perspective.

Skip: Kevin, why do you say “know your children”? I mean, don’t parents know their children from living with them?

Dr. Kevin Leman: No, they don’t know their children. Most kids today come home from school and they do what? Do they hang around the kitchen? Say, “Hey listen, Mom, let me tell you about what happened today in school?” What happens is, most kids come in and the parents start the investigation: “Honey, what’d you do in school today?” “Uh, nothing.” “Where you been?” “Out.” “What’d you do?” “Nothing.” Don’t ask your kid questions. Now the people are saying, Leman—you’re out of your head. If I don’t ask them a question, he’s not gonna tell me anything. *Wrong*. If you shut your mouth, don’t ask him any questions, believe it or not, it’s absolutely true: your son, your daughter will begin to slowly share with you what’s really going on in their life. What I’m saying, Skip, is that most kids come home and after that interrogation, they go to their room and they close their door. And they get on the computer, or they get on the phone. The point is that you have an opportunity to have a relationship with this son or this daughter. And what you have to understand as a parent is—your

kid needs you. And he *wants* to have a relationship with you. But if all you’re doing is hammering him all the time, I got news for you—he’s gonna avoid you. And quite frankly, if I was the kid, I’d avoid you too.

Skip: Talk a little bit about time. Parents are going to think, “How much time is this going to require of me at the end of my day to integrate with them?”

Dr. Kevin Leman: Here’s the thing with kids, they all come in your bedroom at quarter to eleven at night and they’re supposed to be in bed at ten. And they’ve already been in bed, but all of a sudden they want to talk. This is what I’ve learned in rearing five kids. When they want to talk, you better be ready. Those kids are gonna open up at the weirdest times. They’re raccoon-like, ok? They like the late hours. And if your kid starts to open up, all I’m saying is you better sit there on the bed and talk with them. And you take advantage; you slip them a “commercial announcement.” Whatever your values are, whatever you hold dearest to heart, you gotta impart them to your children. But you don’t do it like some goofball dictator. You have to use your head. For example, I’m driving my

daughter to school. She's fifteen at the time. I looked over and I said, "You know, Hannah, I gotta tell you something. You always look nice. You're always dressed nice." And she says, "Thanks, Dad." Well, what have I just said to her? I've said, "Your old senile father has recognized that you take pride in how you look." Catch your kids doing some things that are socially appropriate, socially well-accepted. Things that you want to see in your kid, and just simply comment on them. That's slipping them a "commercial announcement."

Skip: Kevin, give us an example of a typical mom raising several young children who's frustrated while trying to be a good parent.

Dr. Kevin Leman: That's an easy one, to tell you the truth.

They are hedonistic and there is something to "training up a child." There is something in taking the time to train. The problem is that most parents today want "happy, happy, happy" children. If you only remember one thing from this whole interview, remember this: *an unhappy child is a healthy child.*

Our goal is not to create a happy child. Our goal is to create a *responsible* child. So parents, are you rearing your kids in a home or a hotel? There's a tremendous difference in those two concepts. And if you're rearing your kids in a hotel, you do far too many things for them they can do for themselves. You snowplow the roads of life for them. You give them room service, food service, etc. If you're rearing your kids in a home—everybody gives back to the family.

Skip: How do you raise a Christian family in a culture like ours today? How do you

raise strong Christian families with the opposition we have?

Dr. Kevin Leman: Well, I'm going to say something straight out: you don't hide your kid under the bushel. I know that temptation. Good old St. Paul said something in the book of Romans—being in the world but not of the world. The world we live in is not a great place. And kids are going to hear things today, when they're 5, 6, 7 years of age, that maybe you and I didn't hear until we were 15, 16, 17 years of age. They're going to see things that we never saw as a kid growing up. With one touch of a finger on the computer you can see an image that will

**remember this:
an unhappy child
is a healthy child.**

be imprinted on a kid's brain for the rest of his life. The world has changed. You have to use common sense. Where is the computer? Is it in

their room? It shouldn't be. It ought to be in a central place. *You've got to be street smart.* There's a history button on it—hit it, see where your kid has visited. Be a hip parent. Go on My-Space. You'll find me—I'm on there. I want to be a member because I want to know what the kids are saying to each other. So what I'm saying is, you can't hide your kid out, but you've got to be a street smart parent and find out what the heck your kid's doing. You gotta partner with them—let them know you're in this thing together. 

For the complete interview with Pastor Skip Heitzig and Dr. Kevin Leman, go to www.connectionradio.org and click the First Friday segment on the content bar.

SKIP HEITZIG

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The Great Chicago Fire began on October 8, 1871 at 8:30 pm. The fire cost 100,000 people their homes. 17,500 buildings were destroyed, 300 people died, and it cost the city 400 million dollars to recover. You've probably heard that

Mrs. O'Leary's cow, Daisy, kicked over a lantern in the barn and

can prevent forest fires

started the fire. But it was never proven that the cow was to blame. The Chicago tragedy burned Mrs. O'Leary's reputation beyond belief. Her life was in ruins despite any proof that she had a hand in the fire. Chicago Tribune reporter Michael Ahern later retracted the story, but it was too late to save O'Leary's reputation. Her story is proof that the tongue can either be a fire igniter or a fire extinguisher. The book of James warns us of this, and Scripture teaches us how to prevent fires caused by words blazing out of control.

Fire Safety

The King James translation of James 3:1 says: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." "Master" literally means instructor or teacher. Let's ask ourselves the ancient question, "Art thou the master of the unspoken word, or is the spoken word the master of you?" Truly, the tongue can spark scandals or save reputations.

In the forest world, the forest ranger is the "master" of his domain, sitting in his tower watching for fires. In dry seasons, the rangers are especially vigilant. When they detect smoke, they summon firefighters who try to stop the fire before it gets out of hand. They also determine which trees, because of disease or decaying, need to be cut down. In addition, they diagnose how to save nearby healthy trees.

In the church, there are pastors and teachers who vigilantly guard the church. They are much like the forest ranger, watching vigilantly for danger and disease, and diagnosing trouble within the church. As James warns, it's crucial that the right

person is in the pulpit.

The teacher or master must be called or gifted by the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:11-12 tells us, "He [the Holy Spirit] Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." The passage is clear that *not everyone* is a teacher. It is a spiritual gift given by God to help believers understand Christian truths more clearly. In this way the church is kept safe from spiritual harm.

Fire Containment

One of the objectives in fire safety is to contain fires within a small area. This protects both lives and property. James 3:2 reminds us that this principle works concerning the words we speak, as well. As believers, we must restrain or set a guard over our tongues: "For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body."

However, James admits that "no man can tame the tongue" (James 3:8). So what's

the point? I believe that James is directing us to the One who can tame the tongue. We can't contain our words on our own. The psalmist prayed, "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3). Maybe it would be helpful for us to ask God, "Please, seal my lips that I may not sin against You or others."

Controlled Burns

It may seem paradoxical, but sometimes firefighters set a small fire to prevent a larger one. It is believed that controlled burning stimulates germination and forestation renewal. One force is used to overcome another. Likewise, James reminds us that "we put bits in horses' mouths" (James 3:3) and use small rudders to turn a ship "wherever the pilot desires" (James 3:4). Bits and rudders must overcome contrary forces—a bit overcomes the wild nature of a horse and a rudder overcomes wind, currents, and other forces that could take a ship off course. Our human tongue must overcome the opposing force of the flesh and our sinful nature or we will go off course.

Proverbs 15:1 gives a great example of a controlled burn, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." The next time you encounter heated words, try the counterbalance of a calming tone.

Fire Hazards

Sometimes fires are started by natural means—like a strike of lightning. But nine out of ten fires are started by human negligence. The same is true with burning words. In James 3:5 we read, "Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!"

James explains that there are two ways the fiery tongue becomes irrepressible. The first of these is boasting: "Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things." (James 3:5). It reminds me of the boastful frog who wanted to go south with the migrating geese. The frog called out to a goose and asked him for a ride. The goose replied, "We have no idea how you could fly south with us." But the vain frog had a plan. He plucked a cattail and asked two geese to use it as a pole for him to hold onto with his mouth. A farmer looked

up and saw two geese with a frog hanging by a reed and said, "Which one of you figured that out?" The frog said, "It was I...I...I...yi...yi!" As Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Haven't you noticed that the very things you boast about lead to your downfall?

The second fire hazard is strife. The person who stirs up strife is like a person who stirs up coals to get a fire blazing. Proverbs 26:20-21 says, "Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases. As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife." I'm sure you know people who add fuel to the fire of hot situations. Please make sure you're not one of them.

Smoke Damage

If you've ever been near a campfire you know that when you come home, everything smells of smoke. In James 3:6 we learn, "The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body." Just as smoke permeates everything it comes in contact with, words can be defiling—they can stink.

Here are four symptoms to let you know you've been contaminated by tainted talking:

1. Dislike: Developing bitterness or resentment toward someone who did not directly offend you.

2. Disapproval: Maintaining a critical attitude or recruiting others to take your side in a conflict.

3. Distortion: Distorting a situation to give a bad impression of another or to make you appear more spiritual.

4. Deception: Deceiving yourself into believing that such actions are actually accomplishing God's will rather than realizing that you are acting in an unloving manner.

Let's face it, we've all been guilty of polluting the air with damaging dialogue.

Thankfully, God does not want us to remain defiled. Allow me to walk you through the three steps to decontamination.

1. Repent: Pray for God to cleanse your mind from the defilement of having spread or listening to gossip.

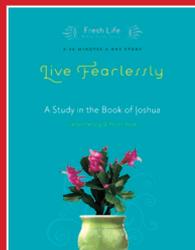
2. Restore: Pray for God to give you genuine love for each person involved in the gossip and, if you have sinned against someone, to make it right.

3. Renew: Romans 12:2 says, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." God's Word is truth and it will cleanse you. If you feel contaminated, you can rest assured that God's word will cleanse you once you confess.

In 1944 there was a fire in Capitan, New Mexico where 17,000 acres were burned. A tiny little bear cub was found hiding up in a pine tree. His little paws were singed and burned. One of the forest rangers found him and the department adopted him as Smokey the Bear. To this day, most kids can recognize the mascot Smokey the Bear and the phrase, "Only you can prevent forest fires." Let's make that our motto concerning our speech. **L**

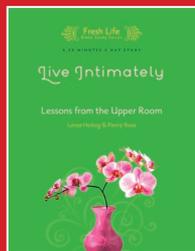
Lenya Heitzig is an award-winning author and sought-after speaker at conferences and retreats worldwide.

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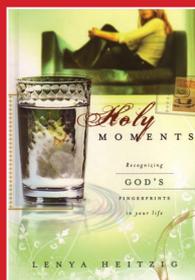
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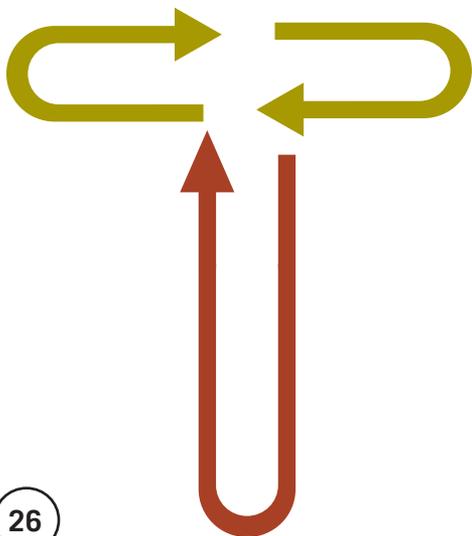
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TRUTH CONNE

Truth Connect is a road map for your spiritual journey. Each quarter we'll help you "unpack" what God has to say to you. You can use this personal Bible study in any way that meets your lifestyle.

Maybe you've always wanted to explore God's Word but just don't know where to start.

1. For instance, on Monday: Read the passage; Tuesday: Review the passage; Wednesday: Reach Up to God; Thursday: Reach Out to others; Friday: Reach In to believers; Saturday: Remember the Scripture passage.
2. Complete the study one day during the week; then take the rest of the week to memorize the Scripture and ponder the lessons learned.
3. Gather with some friends and complete the study together.



Truth Connect is divided into six simple steps:

Read: Your journey begins when you study the Scripture passage. 2 Timothy 3:16 explains that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" and is therefore worth in-depth exploration.

Review: This section offers insight into the historical context of the passage, as well as teaching you key words, concepts, or phrases that add meaning to the message.

Reach Up: At this time, you'll want to ask yourself: "How does this Scripture enhance my relationship with God? How does it cause me to reach up to Him?"

Reach In: Here, you'll see how the passage encourages you to use your gifts to "be of real help to the whole church" (1 Corinthians 14:12 NLT).

Reach Out: This section focuses on the portion of the passage that exhorts Christians to help people in need.

Remember: Here, you're encouraged to memorize a Scripture passage so that you will have it at your disposal whenever you need it.

Fast Facts: Ephesians

Author:

The apostle Paul.

Date:

Written about 60 AD from a Roman prison.

Audience:

Originally written to the church at Ephesus. Applicable for believers everywhere, at all times.

Themes:

Paul spent more time in Ephesus (three years) than any other city during his ministry. Ephesus was the home of one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World: the temple of Diana. Paul's preaching of the gospel brought upheaval because it threatened the profitable shrine-making industry focused on the pagan goddess.

One overriding theme of Ephesians is that the relationship between the heavenly Christ and the church is to be valued more than any earthly treasures. Paul teaches us that Christ is the head of the church and we, as believers, are the body (Ephesians 1:22-23). In addition, Paul shows that as Christ's heirs, we possess amazing spiritual riches.

Paul emphasizes that our relationships on earth should mirror Christ's relationship with the church. In particular, the marriage relationship is depicted as a powerful picture of Christ's sacrificial love for the church (5:22-32). Through this epistle, Paul instructs us how to live not only more closely connected to Christ, but in peace and unity with one another through the power of the Holy Spirit (4:3).

APRIL

Week One-April 1st-11th

Read: Ephesians 1:1-14

Review: Ephesus. This city was the hub of commerce in Asia Minor. Paul visited the large seaport city on his second missionary journey, then left Aquila and Priscilla to carry on the work there. He returned to Ephesus on his third missionary journey and stayed for three years. As always, Paul taught believers the balance between what to believe and how to behave.

Reach Up: Paul opened his letter praising God for “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:3). Describe some of the spiritual blessings you have received from God. Now spend time thanking God for His amazing riches.

Reach In: In verses 7-14 we learn about some of the riches God bestows upon believers who are “in Him.” In your own words, describe what you have gained by your own status “in Christ” (1:10).

Reach Out: How could a response “to the praise of His glory” prompt others to seek “the word of truth” (1:13-14)? How will you let others know about God’s goodness?

Remember: “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (1:7).

Word Study: Riches (Ephesians 1:15): Literally, the word refers to money or possessions. Figuratively, it is defined as “abundance, wealth, or a valuable bestowment.” Here the word “riches” emphasizes God’s lavish grace in offering His forgiveness to sinners.

Week Two-April 12th – 18th

Read: Ephesians 1:15-22

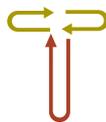
Review: Last week we discovered that we have been redeemed through Christ’s blood, rewarded with a spiritual inheritance, and renewed by the Holy Spirit’s presence. This week we read Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian church (and all believers). Most of us think of Paul as the powerful preacher or the prolific prisoner. But Paul was also a passionate prayer warrior. Corrie ten Boom said, “A man is powerful on his knees.” Let’s explore how Paul harnessed God’s power through prayer.

Reach Up: Paul was prompted to pray, because he “heard” of the Ephesians’ faith in the Lord and their love for the saints. What good things have you “heard” that encourage you to pray for your home church? Write a prayer praising God for what you have heard.

Reach In: Paul prayed that believers would be spiritually enlightened. Scan Ephesians 1:18-19 and describe the things Paul prayed we would know about Christ. Explain the type of power God exhibits “toward us who believe” (1:19).

Reach Out: Verse 22 tells us that God put “all things under His [Christ’s] feet.” How does knowing that Jesus reigns over all and is in control of everything comfort you? How will you comfort those outside the church with this consolation?

Remember: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him” (1:17).



Week Three-April 19th – 25th

Read: Ephesians 2:1-13

Review: We've all seen the "Before" and "After" pictures of people who have had makeovers. Here, Paul describes the conversion of a believer both "Before" and "After" salvation. Rather than focus on the outward change, Paul focused on the inward work God does in our lives. He proved that God is the master artist, and "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works" (2:10).

Reach Up: Two of the greatest phrases in Scripture are found in this passage: "But God" (2:4) and "But now in Christ Jesus" (2:13). How do these phrases describe what God and Christ did for you—despite what you deserve? How does this change or strengthen your feelings toward Him?

Reach In: Describe what you were before and what you are now. According to Ephesians 2:1, how is it possible to be "dead in trespasses and sin"? How have you personally experienced this? What makes you believe you have been "made alive" in Christ?

Reach Out: Paul reminded the believers that they had once been without "hope and without God in the world" (2:12). Does this describe someone you know? What hope will you offer them? Resolve to do so this week.

Remember: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (2:8-9).

Week Four-April 26th – 30th

Read: Ephesians 2:14-22

Review: Last week we saw that trusting in Christ takes us from the tomb of trespasses to God's treasure house of hope. As partakers of the "covenants of promise" we "have been brought near by the blood of Christ" (2:12-13). Now, we see how Paul used the symbolism of the temple to explain how God tore down the wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles. Remember that at Christ's crucifixion, "the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" (Matthew 27:51). This symbolically showed that everyone—regardless of age, race, or gender—has open access to make peace with God.

Reach Up: Look through verses 14-17 and underline the word "peace." Now review those key passages and explain how to find true peace. Have you met peace in this Person?

Reach In: Paul explained that believers are "fellow citizens" of the "household of God" (2:19). What do you think it means to be a citizen of heaven? (See Philippians 3:20). How do you actively participate in your church community?

Reach Out: As a church and as individuals, we are a "dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (2:22). Think of someone who seems "afar off" (2:17) and pray that God will give you an opportunity to preach the peace of Christ to them.

Remember: "And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near" (2:17).

MAY

Week One-May 1st – 9th

Read: Ephesians 3:1-13

Review: Paul's ministry was to "preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (3:8). How amazing that God would use a man like Paul (Philippians 3:5), to reach out to the people he once despised! Ask God to help you step outside your comfort zone and tell someone about the amazing mystery of Christ's love.

Reach Up: We learn that the mystery of the church was given to Paul "by revelation" (3:3). Read the *Word Study* defining "revelation." How has God revealed Himself to you in nature and through Scripture?

Reach In: How can those who put their faith in Christ approach God (3:11-12)? How can this new assurance improve your personal and intercessory prayer life?

Reach Out: Amazingly, we find that God's wisdom is "made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (3:10). What new information do you think the angels and demons can learn from the church (see also 1 Peter 1:12)? How does knowing that these beings are gazing into your life and the church impact the way you behave?

Remember: "The Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel" (3:6).

Word Study: Revelation (Ephesians 3:3): Comes from the Greek word *apokalupsis*. It means "an unveiling or uncovering." Christ's general revelation can be seen in nature; His special revelation can be found in His Word—the Bible.

Week Two-May 10th – 16th

Read: Ephesians 3:14-21

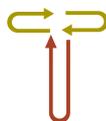
Review: Last week we read of Paul's purpose to preach the "unsearchable riches of Christ" among the Gentiles (3:8). Now, we see Him again turn to His Father in prayer. Notably, His posture was one of humility. He said, "I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (3:14). Erwin Lutzer said, "Although posture is not important, I find that I am able to express my dependence better on my knees, a sign of our helplessness apart from the divine enablement." If you've never bowed your knees in prayer to God, perhaps now is the time to try.

Reach Up: Paul prayed that the church of Ephesus would be "strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man" (3:16). List what you need inward strength for and ask God, according to His will, to bestow this strength upon you.

Reach In: According to verse 17, explain how Christ comes to dwell in a believer's heart. What knowledge is available to all believers (3:18)?

Reach Out: Paul closed his prayer by saying, "To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations" (3:21). How have you experienced Christ's power at work in you and how has this given Him glory?

Remember: "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" (3:20).



Week Three-May 17th – 23rd

Read: Ephesians 4:1-16

Review: We've explored the doctrinal issues regarding the church in the first three chapters of Ephesians. Now we turn to dutiful issues. In simple terms, Paul turned his attention from preaching to practice, and encouraged believers to "walk the talk." For Paul, it was not enough to simply believe—he wanted to make sure all Christians behaved in a manner befitting their heavenly calling. In this week's passage, he urged believers to walk in unity and maturity.

Reach Up: According to 4:1-3, what does it look like to "walk worthy" of the Lord? How do you think these attributes would help promote unity in the church?

Reach In: God has given spiritual gifts "for the equipping of the saints" and "for the edifying of the body of Christ" (4:12). List the spiritual gifts mentioned in this passage as well as those described in 1 Corinthians 12:8–10. What gift(s) do you think God has given to you? And how do you use them to build up the church?

Reach Out: Paul explained that spiritual children are tricked by "every wind of doctrine" (4:14), but the spiritually mature "grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ" (4:15). Part of growing up includes the idea that "every part does its share" (4:16). How do you fight false doctrine when you encounter it? How are you doing your share to help the body of Christ grow?

Remember: "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift" (4:7).

Week Four-May 24th – May 30th

Read: Ephesians 4:17-32

Review: Last week we learned about the gifts given by the Holy Spirit to bring unity to the church and maturity to individual believers. Now we learn that believers have a responsibility to "put off" (4:22) our former conduct and "put on the new man which was created according to God" (4:24) so that we can live pure and holy lives. As you study this week's lesson, ask God to help you change your way of thinking, feeling, and acting so you can please God and be a blessing to others.

Reach Up: Today's passage reveals that we can "grieve the Holy Spirit of God" (4:30). Spend time asking God's forgiveness for anything you've done, said, or thought this week that may be displeasing in His sight. Rest assured that, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Reach In: Paul drew a contrast between "you" (the believers) and "them" (the unbelievers). Describe the differences between the two. What area of contrast do you most need to work on in your life?

Reach Out: We're encouraged "to give him who has need" (4:28). What do you have in your food pantry that could help feed someone who is hungry? Would you be willing to share it with someone in need?

Remember: "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (4:32).

JUNE

Week One-June 1st – 6th

Read: Ephesians 5:1-19

Review: We've seen Paul use the metaphor of walking to depict progress in the Christian life. In a positive way, he has encouraged us to "walk worthy of the calling" (4:1). He has also warned us that we "should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk" (4:17). This week, we are taught to imitate God as we "walk in love" (5:2), walk in light (5:8), and walk wisely (5:15). If an outsider observed your Christian walk, would they see God in you?

Reach Up: According to Ephesians 5:3-4, what should and should not proceed from your mouth? How does this affect your spiritual inheritance according to verses 5-7?

Reach In: Paul described believers as "light in the Lord" (5:8). Explain how "children of light" should walk (5:8-14).

Reach Out: We're told to "walk circumspectly" because "the days are evil" (5:15). According to verses 17-21, what does a wise person do and not do in such evil times? How will you now apply this to your life?

Remember: "And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma" (5:2).

Week Two-June 7th – 13th

Read: Ephesians 5:20-33

Review: This week we turn our attention to relationships within the home. In these verses Paul drew upon the imagery of marriage to depict Christ's special relationship with the church. We'll see that Jesus offered sacrificial love and sanctifying cleansing in order to gain His bride. In return, Christ teaches that husbands must love their wives and wives must respect their husbands in order to show the world the "great mystery...concerning Christ and the church" (5:32).

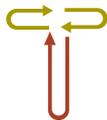
Reach Up: According to verses 22-24, why should wives submit to their husbands? What do you think this means in practical terms?

Reach In: How are husbands to treat their wives? How did Christ set the perfect example for this (5:25-33)?

Reach Out: According to verse 33, what did Paul instruct the husband to do? What did he instruct the wife to do? If you are married, how will you begin to obey this command?

Remember: "For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones" (5:30).

Word Study: Submit (Ephesians 5:22): The word "submit" comes from a military term that literally means to willingly be subordinate to or to arrange under in ranking, as a private to a general. This does not mean that the wife is a lesser person than her husband, but that she willingly places herself under the loving leadership of her spouse as unto the Lord.



Week Three-June 14th – 20th

Read: Ephesians 6:1-9

Review: Last week we examined the marriage relationship, viewing it as a portrait of Christ's relationship with His church. Now, we turn our attention to the relationship between children and parents, and servants and masters. In Paul's day, slavery was an accepted part of society. There were several million slaves throughout the Roman Empire. Many bondservants and their masters became Christians, so Paul instructed them on how to live and work honorably together. Thankfully, we live in a society where slavery has been abolished, but we can take these lessons to heart concerning employer/employee relations.

Reach Up: We're taught that children are to be obedient to their parents "in the Lord" (6:1) and bondservants to their masters "as to the Lord" (6:7). How do these verses take obedience from the natural to the supernatural realm?

Reach In: What phrases throughout this section teach that your obedience to parents or employers should be wholehearted and sincere? If you are an employer, how should you treat employees?

Reach Out: Despite the fact that some were slaves and some were free, some adults and some children, Paul wrote that "there is no partiality with Him" (6:9). How does it make you feel to know that God does not play favorites? How will you exhibit this characteristic in your daily life?

Remember: "Whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free" (6:8).

Week Four-June 21st – 30th

Read: Ephesians 6:10-24

Review: Paul concluded his letter by reminding the church that life is not a playground but a battleground. He warns against the "wiles of the devil" and encourages the church to wear the "whole armor of God" (6:11). Each piece of this armor is a powerful weapon—useful in the spiritual battles against the principalities and powers that hinder your spiritual walk. As you study this passage, ask God to equip you for the oppositions you face.

Reach Up: According to Ephesians 6:10, what is the source of your strength and power?

Reach In: On a separate piece of paper, draw a soldier with each piece of the spiritual armor (6:14-18). Which piece of the armor do you most need for the battle you are facing this week? Ask God to supernaturally equip you with His might.

Reach Out: Paul sent Tychicus to comfort the Ephesians on his behalf (6:22). Who needs your words of comfort? How will you send this comfort?

Remember: "Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (6:13).

From the **blog**

with Pastor Skip Heitzig

Question: *Pastor Skip, I came from a church that did not emphasize any type of relationship with the Holy Spirit. Yet, I see many churches that seem to have an unusual stress on the Holy Spirit (using techniques such as throwing Him around like a ball, slaying in the Spirit, etc.) And still others teach that the Spirit is like your own conscience. Needless to say, I'm confused.*

My question is: Do Christians have a relationship with the Holy Spirit and, if so, what type of relationship are we to have?

Answer: Great question—and many Christians continue to struggle with the answer. Many churches don't teach concretely or correctly about the Person and work of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the third Person in the Godhead. No matter what others tell you, He is not your conscience—because your conscience can be manipulated. However, the Spirit can work through your conscience. The Holy Spirit is God: He is divine, and possesses all the characteristics and attributes of God. This is a biblical truth.

Now, what type of relationship does the Christian have with the Holy Spirit?

To answer this, you need to understand three Greek prepositions: *para* (with), *en* (in), and *epi* (upon or over).

In John 14:17, Jesus states that the Holy Spirit “dwells with [*para*] you



The Holy Spirit is not a force or some intangible feeling to be tossed around like a ball.



and will be in [en] you.” So, the Holy Spirit has a two-fold relationship with people.

The first relationship we have with the Spirit is prior to our conversion. Here, the Spirit is “with” us: coming alongside of us, convicting us of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and pointing us to Jesus. It’s almost like the Spirit is a doctor saying, “You’re sick. Please let me tell you how you can get healed.”

After our conversion—the second relationship we have with the Spirit is our conversion. Here, the Holy Spirit comes into us. This is what we call justification; what is referred to as being “saved” or “born again.”

Finally, the Bible teaches that there is a third relationship we have with the Holy Spirit. In Acts 1:8 Jesus said, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon [epi] you.” In this relationship with the Spirit, we

are filled with Him to be witnesses of God’s grace, mercy, and love to the world. It’s the Spirit who enables us to be bold and strong in our faith for Christ. This is sometimes called the “baptism” of the Spirit: the process by which the Spirit flows from our life as living water.

So the Holy Spirit isn’t a “force” or some intangible feeling that we can toss around like a ball. He is to be respected as God. Along with the Father and the Son, the Spirit is co-existent, coequal, and coeternal.

In His Strong Love,



Skip Heitzig

To read more of Pastor Skip’s personal blog, visit his website:

www.SkipHeitzig.com



Chauvinist!

What's up with this book, the Bible? Does it belittle women? And why are the wives the ones who have to "submit"?

S P O T S

By Skip Heitzig

Many people read what Paul said regarding the roles of husbands and wives and conclude he was a chauvinist pig. They complain that he reflected a totally patriarchal mindset. Nothing could be further from the truth. Paul wasn't down on women. In fact, the New Testament was like a "Declaration of Independence" for women. The ancient Jews put marriage down and had such a low opinion of women they used to pray, "God, thank you that I am not a Gentile, a slave, or a woman."

In the Roman world, marriage was little more than legalized prostitution. Divorce was rampant—as simple as signing a check. Seneca wrote that women were married to be divorced and divorced to be married. Jerome confirmed this by recording that in Rome there was a woman who had married her twenty-third husband, and she was his twenty-first wife!

Yet out of these circumstances, a feminist movement arose. Women were tired of being treated so poorly, and many decided they no longer wanted to be wives or just have babies. Instead, they wanted to hold jobs and hunt like men! It was in the midst of this climate that Paul directed husbands to love their wives and wives to submit to their husbands as to the Lord.

The atmosphere and covenant of marriage for Christians was, and should be, vastly different from that of the world.

Husbands are to love their wives unconditionally, "just as Christ also loved the church." The Living Bible puts it this way: "And you husbands, show the same kind of love to your wives as Christ showed to the Church when He died for her." God's love dif-

In the Roman world, marriage was little more than legalized prostitution.

fers greatly from the worldly "What's in it for me?" kind of love. The world's love is object-oriented; a person is loved for possessing the right positive characteristics of physical beauty, wit, charm, or other qualities deemed worthy of love. These criteria make love fickle because when those characteristics begin to fade away, love diminishes.

The wife is called to live for her husband, but the husband is called to die, if necessary, for his wife. The Bible says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her..." This is the kind of sacrificial love Christ had for us—He gave Himself, His life, for us. And that is love. Not chauvinism. 🔥

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2 Make your friendships flourish. Long to serve your Savior and dearest Friend, Jesus Christ.

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4 Be a fierce firefighter. Keep yourself from the contamination of tainted talking in your relationships. Reflect Jesus' light and deflect Satan's smoke.

5 Jesus Christ desires a real relationship with you. He wants to make you a child of God.*

*If you have **not** already accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and personal Savior—do it now. Please don't wait. With a sincere and repentant heart, simply pray:

"Father, I know I am a sinner. I repent of my sin, and turn away from it. I turn to Jesus. I believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose again, saving all who believe in Him. Fill me with Your Spirit and come into my life. Transform me. Make me into a new creation. I pray this in Jesus' name."

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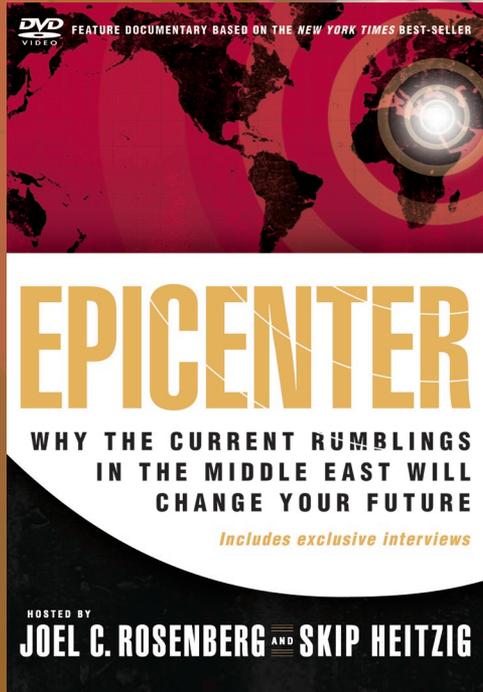
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