

For Your Own Good

Using the Tough Times to Grow

David Scharf

“Please, Father, don’t make me go through this!”

The father’s face was warm, though some might think his response cold. “Son, it’s for your own good.”

“But, Father, without the pain I could be so much more effective.”

The father remained resolute. “Just trust me.”

The child pleaded, “Father, it’s driving me crazy. Please take it away!”

The father explained, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

What kind of backward parenting is this? What father allows his child to suffer? Answer: our heavenly Father. He knew best how to parent his dear child the apostle Paul. And Paul finally got the message. “Ah, when I am weak, then I am strong.” But he could only come to this conclusion after wrestling with his *thorn in the flesh*. Without it he couldn’t have smelled the rose . . . or come to the conclusion he did.

Parents are frequently torn. Should I step in when a painful thorn is making my child’s life miserable? Or, for my child’s sake, might it be better to let the thorn remain? At one extreme is the parent who will do anything to keep his or her child from suffering hardship, pain, or personal struggles. At the other end is the parent who remains completely aloof, uninvolved. For godly parents, both extremes are to be avoided. But finding the middle ground can be difficult. And making the right choice can be a nightmare.

From suffering to perseverance

To Christians enduring terrible persecution, Paul wrote, “We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. *Not only so*, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance” (Romans 5:2,3). Those are great words to keep in mind. We stand before God at peace. Nothing can change that. Our whole lives are a joyful waiting for the glory that will be revealed in us on the Last Day. As a result, it is possible for us to rejoice even in suffering.

EACH OF LIFE’S TRIALS CONTRIBUTES TO A CHARACTER THAT WILL BE MUCH STRONGER NEXT TIME.

We all experience hard times—devastating losses, painful events, the pressures of being Christians in a sin-filled world. But our suffering has a purpose; it forces us to reflect on God’s grace. And God uses these speed bumps in life to lovingly build our stamina.

Will protecting your child from every thorny eventuality really help? Probably not. Will bailing your child out of every painful situation make your child’s faith grow stronger? It’s unlikely. The cold, harsh reality is that our children will experience hard times in their lives.



Illustration by Tom Nachreiner

Thankfully, God deals with our children in the same way that he deals with us. He uses the difficulties they face to build up their endurance. Tough times are opportunities to teach that one’s personal relationship with God changes everything. When the tears flow, reflect on Jesus’ great love, which drove him to suffer the anguish of Calvary’s cross for us. Your child’s personal struggles represent perfect openings for pointing to the finish line. Suffering produces perseverance.

(Continued on page 2.)

(For Your Own Good . . . cont.)

From perseverance to character

Have you ever heard someone say, “God got me through it”? That same individual would not have had the confidence in God to *get him through it* had God not first allowed him to *get into it*. The more often God *gets us through* hard times, the stronger our character becomes. It is then that we see that God’s promises are always kept. He comes to us in his Word, always. And he answers our prayers, always; even if the answer is “my grace is sufficient for you.” When faith passes through the fire, it is tested and found to be genuine. That’s character.

We need to remember that our children sometimes have to face hardship: a loved one’s death, a disloyal friend, a disappointment, a troubled relationship, illness, peer pressure, frustration, anxiety. No parent can hope to isolate his or her child from every challenge.

So what, then, is your job as a parent?

It begins with reassuring your child of forgiveness in Christ. Jesus is at the heart of your child’s relationship with God. But your job further involves helping your child see value in every difficulty . . . to demonstrate how God uses life’s trials to produce a character that will be much stronger next time.

From character to hope

Character leads to hope. But what kind of hope?

If I bragged that a brand-new Hummer would be parked in my driveway tonight, such a hope would not be based in fiscal reality. Making such a foolish claim, I would have embarrassed myself. But our hope is in Christ. The hope we place in him will never make us ashamed; his promises have been



proven to be real and reliable. Being able to give our children that perspective is a wonderful privilege, even when their lives are filled with disappointments and hardship.

God shapes us, and our children, through the heartaches of life. Through the tough times, he draws us closer to himself, leading us to place our hope in Jesus our Savior. No matter how difficult the challenges of life become, he will never abandon us or stop loving us. God’s grace truly is sufficient. With confidence in him, we can stand up to the harsh realities of this life again and again. And we can teach our children to do the same.

David Scharf is the pastor at Immanuel in Greenville, Wisconsin, where he lives with his wife, Beth, and their three children.



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www.parentscrosslink.net.

Our household sometimes seems more like a battleground for quarreling siblings than a place of peace and harmony. This saddens me and causes me to wonder, Where is the love? How can I teach my kids to resolve their disputes without fighting?

A Make no mistake. When siblings fight, they are sinning. God wants parents to establish what is right and wrong and train their children to behave accordingly. At times, it is easier to ignore or justify fighting behavior by thinking that siblings should *work it out* by themselves. However, the first step in restoring peaceful relationships is to establish God’s law in your home. Psalm 119:165 says, “Great peace have they who love your law.”

Jesus also provided direction on how to admonish one another when we sin. He says in Matthew 18:15, “Go and show him his fault, just between the

two of you,” meaning that sin is a personal matter to be addressed individually and discreetly. Siblings can also be taught how to discuss sinful behavior, like fighting, in one-on-one conversations. If this first step does not lead to a penitent heart, then “take one or two others along” to confront the sin. What might be missing, and is necessary, is accountability and admonition of each individual child for his or her individual behavior. This is a far different approach than the parent who reprimands fighting children as a group.

Confronting sin in the way Jesus outlines will lead to sorrow and repentance from sin on an individual basis. In turn, God’s peace of forgiveness will strengthen each child’s heart of faith.



My best friend loves to celebrate Halloween with her family. I’m reluctant to let my kids get into this rather meaningless holiday. Could you please help me sort out the pros and cons?

A Many parents struggle with Halloween. Scripture does not address this day by name, but God has much to say about the ways in which we mark it.

As fall approaches, commercialism’s ability to make light of a serious subject is overwhelm-

ing. Witches and ghosts are everywhere, either made cute to endear them to our children or ghoulish to appeal to a darker side. When it comes to witchcraft and related topics, God is very clear. We are to have nothing to do with them (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). Halloween has been and still is a sacred day of high activity for members of the occult. For this reason, many Christian families choose to abstain from celebrating this day. God writes, “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right . . . think about such things” (Philippians 4:8). For some, Halloween simply does not fall into that category.

For others, Halloween has nothing to do with the evil side of the spiritual realm. They cherish the family fun of digging through closets, attics, and Mom’s makeup drawer to create costumes. They enjoy the fellowship of parents and children walking through neighborhood streets, collecting candy, and displaying their costume creations. We know of one family that makes use of the pumpkin-carving ritual to illustrate how God “cleans us up” and puts his light inside of us. These activities by themselves are not sinful, and God tells us not to bind consciences where he has not (Romans 14). That simply means that we are not to accuse someone of sin when God has not clearly commanded or forbidden a certain kind of behavior.

Flirting with the MACABRE

Emily Kratz

Why are there dead bodies in that front yard?" The unexpected question came from my daughter in the backseat.

I swerved back into my lane and scanned the neighborhood to see what could have prompted such a question. Soon the cause for her concern was apparent. Out of the car window I beheld a beautifully manicured front lawn filled with headstones, skeletons, and other gruesome decorations. I sighed as we drove past, hoping that would be the end of the topic.

It wasn't. I was suddenly inundated with dark questions and morose themes. *Why do people use bones to decorate? Whose bones are they? Is it a cemetery? What do the graves say?* And the inevitable: *Can we get some?*

By the end of that trip, I was ready to say a special, sarcastic thank-you to that neighbor for introducing my kids to the macabre. But I also realized my neighbor was not the only one exposing children to shocking things. I remembered that the house down the street was celebrating the Halloween season by hanging fake spiders and webs from all the trees. It seemed pretty innocent as we walked past later. But at two o'clock in the morning I wasn't as sure when I found myself vacuuming under the girls' beds because they were convinced there were spiders under there. I remember mumbling to myself, "Halloween has sure gotten out of control. With the blood and gore increasing each year, I certainly have not changed my mind about it."

To be completely fair, though, children seem to have a natural curiosity about all things hideous. And it's likely this has been going on for a long time. My kids' grief turns to excitement if they sustain a wound bloody enough to require a Band-Aid. Injuries and battle scars remain favorite topics for kindergarten show-and-tell. A little boy with a cast on his broken arm became an instant celebrity. I scolded one of my children (I won't tell you which one) for picking her nose, then cringed when I got the response, "But it tastes so good!" I'm relatively sure nobody taught her that. Kids are born interested in all the parts and systems that make up the human body.

We bought our kids a doctor kit a few years ago and laughed as they pressed the stethoscope

to each other's foreheads and wrapped the blood pressure cuff around their ankles. It remains a favorite toy to this day. And it's only right that kids should be curious about their bodies. The human body is an amazing creation. We can only lose about one third of our blood and still survive. Our bones are so uniquely suited to our bodies that no man-made substitute even comes close. I'm amazed by how often doctors admit that they are only beginning to understand the complex workings of the human body. As the psalmist observed, we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

Luckily, discussions about blood are not limited to gruesome Halloween decorations. A few times each month I hear children's whisperings in church. "Did the pastor just say *body* and *blood*? Eeeoohh!" Their reactions are not too different from the way pagans reacted to the Sacrament in the first century. Without proper instruction and understanding, the whole idea sounds a little gross.

Still, unlike the questions about Halloween, I welcome the opportunity to discuss the Lord's Supper with my children. Through the bread and wine of Holy Communion, we are strengthened by Jesus' own body and blood, which is really present in, with, and under the bread and wine. Through this miracle our faith is strengthened. We are assured of the forgiveness of sins, and our hope for eternal life is renewed. No earthly blood transfusion could accomplish so much.

You know, I think I'll encourage my children's interest in death. Not that I don't take Paul's admonition to heart when he says, "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (Philippians 4:8). I do. After all, it is only through Jesus' suffering and death—gruesome and bloody as it was—that we have eternal life. We embrace Jesus' death as our own, reminding our children daily of all it does for us. And we do this not in a macabre or grotesque way but with great joy and profound thanks. His death means life for us. That's one gruesome story that I will cling to all my life, and I will pray that my children do the same.

Emily Kratz lives near Birmingham, Alabama, with her husband, Benjamin, and their three daughters.

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WITH THE GORE
INCREASING EACH
YEAR, HAS HALLOWEEN
GOTTEN OUT OF CONTROL?

When It's Hard to

“Your son is one of the brightest kids in the class,” said one of his teachers. “But his grades don’t reflect that.”

In one sentence my heart went from elation to dejection. It was great to know that my child was intelligent. At the same time, it was enormously frustrating to see his grades indicating something else. Why was this happening?

The answer was both simple and complex. Memory. My son would routinely forget his assignments, neglect to write notes in his daily planner, and even omit his name from the homework he handed in. Dubbed “the absentminded professor” by one of his teachers, memory issues were an ongoing struggle for years.

As most parents of school-aged children soon realize, being successful in school isn’t only about intellect. It’s simply not enough to be smart. A child must also be able to adjust to the social

and administrative dictates of the school environment. If a school teaches in a way that does not fit the memory strategy of a child, learning is going to be problematic.

While there is no universally agreed upon model of how memory works, there are a few things you can consider to begin helping your child make the most of his or her ability to remember.

How does your child’s memory work?

Everyone’s memory works a specific way. Consider, for example, the last time you were traveling to an unfamiliar place. Did you ask someone to tell you how to get there? Did you need to see a map in order to remember which highways to use and where you needed to turn? Or did you write the directions down, perhaps noting landmarks along the way? The answer to each of those questions

represents a distinct approach to remembering necessary details.

Patty Dwan, a special education teacher in Frankenmuth, Michigan, says, “Frequently it is by either hearing or seeing that a child will best remember, but you have to determine which works best for each child.” Some kids need to take notes. They need to see the words on the paper before committing them to memory. Others, however, will do better when they hear information being read to them. That’s probably why a combination of lecture and note taking is often an effective teaching approach.

This is the case for many learners, but not all. If a child can only remember material in one particular way, then it’s up to parents to make sure teachers make the appropriate allowances and adjustments.

One often-overlooked memory type is called *kinesthetic memory*. With kinesthetic memory, movement is combined with learning to aid the child in remembering new material. You might think of this as the *hands-on* activities in the classroom. In this approach a topic is not simply lectured or read; rather, it is physically acted out in some way, as in a science experiment or through role playing.

Some children need to move around or stand to best absorb new material. A lot of schools already give children the freedom to walk around the room, stand, or even lie on the floor while working. Still, too often the value of space and movement is overlooked. “Much of the time it’s the adult’s problem, not the



And E

Remember...

kids,” says Ms. Dwan, adding, “A lot of teachers will allow for that sort of thing when kids are younger but not when they’re older. That’s a mistake.” Traditional schools that line up children’s desks and have them sit all day are putting some kids at a disadvantage. “Think about sitting in a long meeting. In that situation I’m often swinging my foot or fidgeting a little. But I don’t tap on the table because that would be crossing the line of what’s appropriate. In the same way, if a child needs to move a bit, there’s nothing wrong with that within certain parameters,”

says Ms. Dwan. If you’re in a school that’s very traditional, consider asking the teacher to move your child’s desk to a corner or an edge. That will at least give your child a bit more space.

Is stress affecting your child’s memory?

We know that stress can affect a person’s health and emotional stability, but it’s certainly also a factor in memory. Test anxiety is one good example of this. Ms. Dwan remembers, “I gave a test recently of some material that the class was absolutely confident in. The highest grade was a B-. When I did the same thing later but didn’t call it a test, everyone did great, and the kids even said it was easy.”

Have you ever experienced that “deer in the headlights” feeling when you couldn’t remember what you were going to say or do? Perhaps it was an emergency situation or maybe you were doing some public speaking. No matter the situation, it’s easy

to understand how being under stress can significantly affect memory.

What if my child can’t remember?

There are many things that can affect memory. Injuries, like a concussion from a blow to the head, can cause a child to forget what happened. More serious injuries, like traumatic brain injury from a car accident, can have long-lasting or even permanent effects. Drug use, strokes, or disease are just a few other ways the brain can be damaged. If you suspect that your

child has a memory problem, take him to a doctor for an examination. Through testing we learned that my son’s problem

remembering things had nothing to do with how smart he was but could possibly be traced to an injury he had as an infant.

There are many adjustments teachers can make and many exercises and strategies that you can use to help your child utilize his or her memory more effectively. Most teachers are quite sensitive to the individual needs of their students. It’s up to you to help them know what those needs are and to advocate for your child.

Lynn Marie-Ittner Klammer is a psychologist, educator, and author. She lives in Michigan with her husband, Mark, and their four children.



IF a SCHOOL teaches in a way that does not fit the way YOUR CHILD’S MEMORY OPERATES, LEARNING IS GOING TO BE PROBLEMATIC.

What Works?

MAKE IT FUNNY. Children relate to humor. My son once had a teacher named Seabright. She was a high-energy woman.

Whenever I saw her, I’d say, “See how bright she is.” We never forgot her name.

RHyme IT. Songs and rhyming words are great memory aids. One you may remember from your own childhood is this: Columbus sailed the ocean blue in 1492.

KEEP IT SIMPLE. Learn a small amount of information. Take a break. Come back to review. Then learn a little more.

MAKE IT REAL. Experiencing things and then talking about them makes things more real in a child’s mind and, therefore, more memorable.

USE SHORT-CUT MEMORY. Break information down into one-word reminders.

MAKE IT PERSONAL. Have your child relate personally to a story or historic event. What would she feel like if she were Columbus? What would he do if he were the main character in the story? Making information personal makes it easier to recall.

DO IT OVER AND OVER. Repetition is a wonderful way to cement information into memory. I still remember our home phone number from 30 years ago because I used it so often.



Easy to Forget

Lynn Marie-Ittner Klammer

Viewpoint

A Model of Thanksgiving

Have you had one of those parenting moments when you think, *Uh-oh, we really need to work on this?*

Here's one. Your youngest is bouncing around the house like Tigger. Family and friends have gathered to celebrate his birthday. That charming, magic moment that everyone has been waiting for finally arrives—the opening of the gifts. Then, suddenly, joy turns to embarrassment as your beautiful offspring turns into a greed monster. He shamelessly tosses gifts aside in order to grab the next one in the pile, giving no thought to the giver.

Moments like these remind us of the important work we have. Children need our guidance, and the best way to do this is by our example and patient teaching.

Articulate your appreciation

An *Ole and Lena* story makes the point. Ole was telling his friends about the delicious meal Lena cooked for him that day—his favorite meal, cooked to perfection. “It was so good,” Ole said, “I almost told her.”

What good did it do for Ole to remain silent, keeping his appreciation from Lena? Imagine if he had thanked her for such an excellent meal. She would have felt appreciated and perhaps would have thanked him for a job he had completed. At the very least, Ole would have communicated his sincere feelings for her skill and effort.

When your toddler helps in the kitchen, or when your teenager mows the lawn, express genuine appreciation for the help: “You are such a good worker! I am very thankful for your help today.” Your child will be encouraged and better equipped to pass on to others the attitude of gratitude that you have modeled.

Avoid material rewards

Living in an affluent society offers many material blessings, but it also has some dangers. We need to keep the importance of material blessings in a proper biblical perspective. If we are putting too much emphasis on having the newest, latest, and greatest beyond our needs, we can expect our children will crave material blessings beyond what they need.

Polly Holz

Refrain from giving material rewards. There may be goals that you set for your child where a material reward may be fitting, but material rewards on a regular basis may result in your child developing an attitude of entitlement. This can become an infectious mind-set that undermines genuine thankfulness.

Cultivate true thankfulness

Thankfulness and thoughtfulness really go hand-in-hand. As you interact with your children, look for *Imagine if* . . . conversations that help them think about their many spiritual and physical gifts from God. *Imagine if* the sun did not rise or no one invented shoes. *Imagine if* it was hailing outside and we had no shelter. *Imagine if* Jesus had sinned, even once. Brainstorm the possibilities. Each conversation can lead to a deeper realization of what life would be like without some of the blessings we have.

Express thanksgiving

Children do need many reminders to say thank-you. Teach them to go beyond those two words. “Thank you, Grandma, for coming to my ball game today.” As we approach Thanksgiving, let your children hear who you give thanks to and for what you are truly thankful—daily bread, home, health, loving family and friends. Don't forget to give thanks for things that are more abstract: good education, democratic government, music, art, nature. And, above all, begin by giving thanks for your spiritual blessings: heaven, forgiveness of sins, a godly purpose here on earth, hope, etc. “Thanks be to God! He gives us

the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Polly Holz is a special education assistant. She lives in St. Peter, Minnesota, with her husband, Curt, and their two children.



UPCOMING CHAT @
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The Off Season

Angie Lindeman

A few weeks ago our family was wandering through the aisles at our local Target store. Near the office supplies section, our seven-year-old daughter asked, “Dad, what is the meaning of life?” Now we're used to India being a deep thinker, but this question definitely caught us off guard.

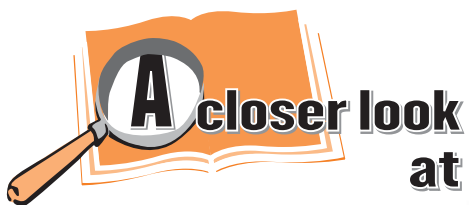
Children are full of questions that might be considered difficult, or even impossible, to answer. I've occasionally found myself taking the easy way out. “Let's talk about that another time.” Or, “You'll understand when you're bigger.” Sometimes I stammer or mumble. I know then that I don't really have an answer.

So there we were—a serious question deserves a serious answer. I thought of 2 Timothy 4:2: “*Be prepared in season and out of season.*” The puzzled look on my husband's face told me he wasn't prepared to answer. But I was just as flummoxed. He bought some time, teasing India about her thoughtful question, and then tenderly told her that life would have no meaning at all without Jesus. That was it. She listened. The lesson registered. It was easy—a devotional moment reduced to a few thoughtful words.

Thank you, God, for those precious, unexpected opportunities.

Angie Lindeman is a kindergarten teacher. She lives in Waterford, Wisconsin, with her husband, Loren, and their three children.

Keep the importance
 of material blessings
 in a proper biblical
 perspective.



at JACOB'S WRESTLING MATCH WITH GOD

Kenneth Kremer

Have you ever wondered why things happen in life? The life of the patriarch Jacob answers that question. God turned Jacob's world upside down to bring his attitudes in line with his faith. It required nearly 20 years and culminated in a mysterious wrestling match before Jacob finally got the message.

Jacob means "heel grabber." From the beginning, it was clear: Jacob was inclined to take matters into his own hands. Jacob was born a twin after his brother, Esau. By tradition, Esau claimed the family birthright. The birthright was a special blessing that included God's promise of ancestry to the promised Savior. But Jacob didn't let tradition stand in his way. Always the opportunist, one day Jacob took advantage of Esau, getting him to swap the cherished birthright for a bowl of bean soup. Later Jacob conspired with his mother, Rachel, to trick his father, Isaac, into blessing him instead of Esau. Then, fearing his brother's wrath, Jacob fled from Canaan to faraway Haran, where he would live with his Uncle Laban for the next 20 years.

On the way to Haran, God came to Jacob in a dream that featured a stairway connecting heaven and earth. Angels traveled in both directions, attending to Jacob's needs. God appeared at the top of the stairway, promising to bring Jacob back to his homeland. Jacob would think often of this remarkable event and the promises attached to it.

When it came to deception and manipulation, Jacob met his match in his Uncle Laban. For two decades Jacob struggled to outwit his devious uncle. During this time, God blessed Jacob with family and wealth. Nevertheless, Jacob relied most on his own ability.

When Laban became jealous over Jacob's success, Jacob decided it was

time to return to Canaan. Knowing he would still have to face his brother's anger, Jacob sent scouts ahead to determine Esau's military strength. They reported that Esau had gathered a formidable force.

Jacob devised a strategy. The first part of his plan was to send wave after wave of animals from his own flocks and herds as gifts for Esau. The second part of his plan was to divide his entire entourage into two groups. If Esau's men attacked, at least one group might reach Canaan safely.

WHILE GOD BLESSED HIM WITH FAMILY AND WEALTH, JACOB MOSTLY RELIED ON HIS OWN ABILITY.

Then, with his family and belongings on the other side of the Jabbok River, we find Jacob alone, deep in prayer, and fearing the worst. A stranger suddenly appeared out of nowhere and began to wrestle with Jacob. The Bible portrays the event as physical and intimate, as all wrestling matches are. And somehow Jacob understood that he was wrestling with God himself. Considering the dire threats that Jacob and his entourage were facing, he may have even thought of God as his enemy. But Jacob also remembered the promise God had made

20 years earlier. He knew that God cannot break a promise. So Jacob demanded the blessing of God's promise. The stranger, however, did not immediately comply; he knew the struggle was a good one for Jacob.

The two wrestled on through the night. With the strength that only God himself can provide, Jacob persevered until dawn. He somehow found the strength to tell the stranger that he would not let go without a blessing. Then, with a mere touch, the stranger put Jacob's hip out of joint. The resulting limp would be a permanent reminder of God's love. Finally, the stranger gave in, and the blessing the "heel grabber" had wrestled for all night was his.

Guess what the blessing was. A new name: *Israel*. *Israel* means "One Who Wrestles with God." From this moment on, Jacob would be known as *One Who Wrestles with God*. And his offspring would be called the people of Israel—"People Who Wrestle with God."

By virtue of our faith in God's promises, you and I are members of the same spiritual family. We too are "People Who Wrestle with God." We have God's promises of forgiveness from all sin and life eternal as part of his heavenly family. We know that he is the source of all of our blessings. And we wrestle with him daily for the strength we need to persevere.

Kenneth Kremer is the editor of Parents Crosslink.



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WORDS of Encouragement

Have you ever found yourself frantically paging through Scripture trying to find a word of comfort or encouragement to guide a son or daughter through a time of personal crisis? Here are some Bible texts that can be of real help in a time of need.

Proverbs 3:12 To accept discipline as a sign of God's affection: "... because the LORD disciplines those he loves."

Isaiah 55:8 To realize that God's plans for you are beyond your ability to comprehend: "'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the LORD."

1 Corinthians 1:7 To quiet concerns that you cannot handle a crisis: "You do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed."

2 Kings 6:3-7 To know that God is concerned with even the small things of life: "As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron axhead fell into the water. 'Oh, my lord,' he cried out, 'it was borrowed!' The man of God asked, 'Where did it fall?' When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it there, and made the iron float. 'Lift it out,' he said. Then the man reached out his hand and took it."

James 4:7 To battle temptation with confidence in God's strength and power: "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Deuteronomy 8:3 To remember that God uses both pleasure and pain to teach lessons: "He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna . . .

to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD."

2 Timothy 4:17 To be strengthened for speaking God's Word: "The Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed."

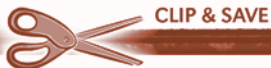
Proverbs 3:5 To face a new situation with confidence: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."

Romans 5:3-5 To gain understanding from the suffering God sends: "We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit."

Hebrews 4:16 To deal with a crisis: "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Lamentations 3:32 To see light at the end of a dark tunnel: "Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love."

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"Lead us not into temptation . . .
but deliver us from evil. Amen."

Parents Crosslink

DEAR READER,

Today's parents learn from each other, sharing ideas and encouraging one another to meet the daily challenges of living in an increasingly godless society. In the context of the gospel, this is a very powerful dynamic. *Parents Crosslink* (PCL) is a response to the demand for an interactive approach to assisting parents with a biblical view of family. Please join our on-going conversation about Christian parenting at the PCL website located at www.parentscrosslink.net.

Kenneth Kremer, PCL Editor

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