Discover how to have a close, loving, vibrant family!

Got fun?

Never Alone

Almost!
We hope that many of you have visited www.foreverfamily.com and seen the translated editions of the magazine. Just this week, we received an email from the Czech Republic (see From the Mailbox) with an expression of appreciation for translating the magazine into their language.

We have also heard from a Family Life Director in Puerto Rico who requested the magazine in Spanish. While we do not currently have anyone to translate the magazine into Spanish, we trust the Lord will provide someone to fulfill this need in His time. In the meantime, we are grateful to those who have acted as translators, enabling families around the world to be encouraged by the articles contained in this magazine. It is a joy and privilege to work on the publication, knowing it has been a blessing and encouragement to so many.

We want to thank those of you who have responded to our appeal for financial assistance to help offset the cost of publishing the magazine. It is our desire to keep
the magazine in hard copy form, making it easy to pick up and read or share with neighbors, friends, family, co-workers, etc. Again, we appreciate your thoughtful support and your desire to play a part in strengthening families across the globe.

May God bless each of you as you press on in this journey of life in preparation for life everlasting.

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” 1 John 5:11.

Alane Waters
Editor

Pause & Ponder

“He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has.” Epictetus

“It is right to be contented with what we have, but never with what we are.” James Mackintosh

"...be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Hebrews 13:5

HAVE YOU BEEN BLESSED BY FOREVER A FAMILY? DROP US A NOTE—WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Czech Republic
What a blessing the magazine is. I am thrilled it is being translated into Czech also! I read most articles several times and I am being encouraged over and over as a mum and a wife. Thank you for your good work.

Minnesota
Thank you for FAF. I much prefer the printed page to something audio.

California
May God bless you as you continue in this good work! Your magazine is great!

Oregon
I love the magazine!

FROM THE MAILBOX

www.foreverafamily.com • Winter 2010
I F YOU’RE old enough to remember telephone pagers, Sony Walkmans, and bulky women’s shoulder pads, you’re probably familiar with the wildly popular “got milk?” advertising campaign. A slight variation on the theme yields, “got fun?” which is an oft-overlooked aspect of a strong marriage.

Nancy and I agree that fun is not the most important component of a happy marriage. If creating a list, “fun” would probably not even make the top ten. After all, you won’t find scripture commanding, “Go forth and have fun”. We have, however, seen marriages that appear dull and joyless, even unhappy; and I’d contend one of the reasons is that they’ve spent no time systematically and purposely injecting Christian fun into that relationship.

What do I mean by “Christian” fun? Certainly not what most of my non-Christian friends and co-workers view as “fun”. Their version would involve drinking, dancing, inappropriate music, movies, professional sports, etc. We Christians need to redefine the meaning of “fun”. Our children should be able to look to us and say, “I want to have that kind of relationship some day”.

To inject fun into our marriage, I make it a point to plan something enjoyable for Nancy and I to do every Thursday evening. We don’t take the kids, answer the phone, or run church errands. In other words, it’s time dedicated to just us.

To some, this may sound selfish but I believe part of “cherishing” our wives is to invest special time in our relationship and as such, is part of God’s plan for our family.

What you do will depend on your specific interests, but since Nancy likes to eat food that someone else has prepared, our plans usually include a nice meal out. It need not be expensive. Often we’ll order sub sandwiches or Chinese food to go and then eat it while taking a leisurely drive through the mountains or sitting by the river.

Your wife may have forgotten what fun is, given the pressures of child rearing or work; but I encourage you to invest time, energy and yes, even money into making your marriage fun. Your wives will remember and appreciate it. And one day someone will ask your kids if they come from a happy home and they’ll respond, “Yep…my parents got fun!”

Scott sells production printers for Canon and lives in New York with his wife, Nancy, and their five children.
WE EACH are confronted with battles every day. How we choose to face those battles is up to us. One of my greatest battles is appetite. I have struggled with it since childhood. When I was about six years old I had a traumatic event occur in my life. During this time, food became a safe haven for me. It was my protection. It soothed me, if only for a moment; and it gave me something I felt I had some control over.

Using food as my security, joy, and comfort continued throughout my life. I had some head knowledge of Christ, but He was not who I turned to for help. I tried almost anything I could think of to lose the weight I was gaining, including fad diets, diet pills, exercise programs, etc. I tried so many different things I can’t even remember them all. I would lose some weight and then gain it all back and more.

My turning point came when my husband left me for someone else. I was broken-hearted and depressed and weighed over 320 lbs. As I tried to pick up the pieces, I turned to Jesus. I started reading the Bible again and began searching for a church to attend. I spent many hours on my knees wrestling with God. How could He allow this to happen to me? As I prayed, God began to open up my mind to health principles and led me to people that helped me in my journey to a healthier lifestyle.

Spend time with God gave me the strength to walk into a gym day after day. That time spent with Him each day continued to strengthen my will to resist eating for the wrong reasons. I lost a few battles here and there; but in His strength, I would get back up to fight again.

I lost 150+ pounds over a couple of years. Then, God brought a godly man into my life, one that continues to encourage me in my battles to overcome appetite. The battles still arise, and I still struggle, but praise God He is with me every moment of the day.

Andrea lives with her husband, Daniel, in Michigan and works part-time for a Christian ministry.
Could it be? Surely, she hadn’t! I was trying to convince myself that our cat couldn’t possibly have swallowed a sewing needle, but at the same time I had a sinking feeling it was true.

While working on a sewing project, my daughter had left a needle lying on her desk. When she returned to her room, she found the needle missing and our cat perched on the desk chair looking somewhat less than innocent. A trip to the emergency vet clinic quickly replaced our previous plans for the evening.

X-rays revealed that Twinkie had indeed swallowed the needle. Upon learning that it would cost up to $1200 to remove the needle from her stomach, my heart sank. We didn’t have any surplus money, but we didn’t want to lose our cat either. Since nursing Twinkie back to health after finding her as a kitten, barely alive in below freezing temperatures, she had become a firmly-entrenched member of our family.

We had been doing our best to be good stewards of the funds the Lord had entrusted to us, faithfully returning tithe and offerings and whittling away our debt. This unexpected expense would mean a significant setback for us financially.

Sending up a prayer, I asked the vet for our options. He suggested our regular vet might charge less. I pressed him again, “Is there anything else we can do?” He explained that if Twinkie were a large dog, a high bulk diet might help the needle pass through her system, but he was doubtful this strategy would work on a seven-pound cat. We left the clinic with an increasing awareness of our dependence on the Lord.

Late that evening, I found myself hand-feeding Twinkie tuna fish mixed with psyllium seed powder which yielded a concoction not unlike rubber cement. I went to bed feeling hopeful. The night passed but, unfortunately, the needle did not.

The next morning, we sought advice from our vet who suggested we bring Twinkie in for surgery right away. She wasn’t confident a long, stiff needle could twist and turn its way through the intestines of such a small cat. Once off the phone, my family and I again sought the Lord in prayer. Shortly thereafter, we heard a scratching noise coming from the litter box. To our delight and relief, we discovered our prayers had been answered!
When facing financial challenges, we have learned to seek the Lord, trusting Him to help us find creative solutions to our problems. "And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." Psalms 9:10

Pam writes from Montana where she lives with her two daughters, Twinkie, and two other less curious cats.

As we face our fears in this way we can overcome any obstacle. We can also help our family and friends by our example and words of encouragement. We have experienced this blessing in our home and we have seen many weaknesses and fears conquered through this cooperation.

Don't let fear keep you paralyzed. Begin today to develop courage!

Alane is a co-founder of Restoration International and lives in Montana with her husband Tom.

“I can’t!” “It’s too hard!” “I’m afraid!” These are all too common phrases in our day to day experience. No matter how young or old, we are all subject to the fear of something. I know from personal experience the paralyzed feeling that comes when fear strikes. No matter how much we may try to convince ourselves otherwise, we are incapable of action. The following is the only true way to find victory over our fears.

• **Pray** - This is the first and most important step in calming our fears. Our Heavenly Father has given us many precious promises in His Word that He will do in us what we cannot do ourselves. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13.

• **Choose** - Next, we must make a choice to go forward in action even if our feelings don’t correspond. Our choice of faith which extends beyond our perception is empowered by God and enables us to do what seems impossible.
I T SEEMED that my dream of a godly family had come true. We were quite happy, my husband, our two girls and I. My husband was well respected in his field; and I homeschooled our children, taught Sabbath school, had a large garden, and spent most of my time teaching our girls to love the Lord and the importance of a close family. My husband had a desire to move to France, which we did. Shortly after moving my perfect life shattered into a thousand pieces when he left us. We were alone; utterly alone.

I had taught my children that the father was the head of the home, that they had to be obedient to him and to me. Now our family circle was broken. It took time until I realized that though my husband had left us, we were still a family. I held on to Isaiah 54, claiming the promises of God, that He is my husband (verse 5) and that the peace of my children shall be great (verse 13). God’s promises became my life line through this terrible time of hurts, court trials, suffering, and loss.

I tried to find little ways to make my girls happy. We spent almost all our time together, working together, laughing and crying together, playing together, and talking together for hours on end. We developed new family traditions. Birthdays became special to us, and I used them as opportunities to teach my girls that it
is better to give than to receive. To open Sabbath, I would light all the candles in our living room and give each girl a small inexpensive present, such as a little card telling them how much I loved them or a special treat. One winter, when we had a lot of snow, we dug seven holes in the snow bank in front of the house and filled each with a candle. When Sabbath began we lit the candles. It looked so lovely through the windows! Many times during these moments, family scenes popped into our minds and we cried together; but looking to Jesus, our friend, husband, and father, we pressed on.

Our old house needed a lot of repair work. Initially, we had a mason helping us; but when our budget got tighter and tighter, we learned to do most things ourselves. I taught my girls to use band and chain saws and to work with cement, plaster, and wood. Though I am a trilingual secretary, I have always liked to work with my hands; and we learned as we went along. Sabbath afternoons often found us out in nature, enjoying God’s handiwork. Our dogs always accompanied us. Animals mean more work, but how often they brought comfort and laughter to my little girls. My tears flowed when I would see them sitting on the floor, hugging the dogs with sad little faces.

When winter arrived, we would decorate wood scraps with moss and candles and other pretty little things to give to our neighbors. We also sewed our own clothes or altered those we were given or had purchased at the second hand store.

In summer, we tended to our large garden and canned, dried, or froze our produce. Sometimes we picked healing herbs to dry, then made our own tinctures and ointments. We also gathered flowers and leaves to dry to make our own pretty cards and enjoyed picnics under a tree. Our lives were simple, but we loved each other and persevered together.

Sometimes, we visited friends for a weekend. Each family member participated in setting aside travel money to visit a camp-meeting once or twice a year, where our spiritual needs were filled and we got to visit with our friends. This was and continues to be very important to us, just as our morning and evening worships are an important part of our spiritual life. These edifying activities have helped us stay faithful to God and redirect our lives. While traveling we spent hours in the car singing. How we enjoyed those times and the songs whose words brought us closer to God.

One of the most important things that helped us through difficult times was reading together. I would save on clothing purchases or find bargains for food to be able to purchase good reading material. I would read to my daughters for two or three hours in the evening, on rainy days, in the winter, or on Sabbath afternoons. It not only helped us to spend quality time together but also broadened my girls overall knowledge. Reading books inspired them to write their own stories. I encouraged them to continue because I realized that in those stories they were able to describe and let go of some of their hurts.

It has not been easy. Both young ladies are ready for university and our financial situation is worse than ever. But God has been faithful in the past and He stands behind every promise He has made. We have to take Him at His word – and that is a learning process – to live by faith, and by faith alone. Let’s not give up, but hold our little flock close. What He has promised He will surely do.

"FOR THY MAKER IS THINE HUSBAND: THE LORD OF HOSTS IS HIS NAME. ...GREAT SHALL BE THE PEACE OF THY CHILDREN." 
Isa. 54:5, 13

Anita lives in the countryside of France with her two daughters and does translation work on a part-time basis.
T HE DICTIONARY defines the word almost as “very nearly, but not exactly or entirely.” As strange as it may seem, almost is a word we are trying to eliminate from our family’s vocabulary. There’s nothing inherently wrong with the word itself; the “almost” mindset is the focus of our curtailment campaign.

We are blessed to be able to homeschool our two children. Homeschooling, though rewarding, isn’t without its challenges. Some days, the kids seem to have the perfect disposition. They fly through their school and can be finished early. Other times, we are forced back into, well, reality.

Not long ago, we were having one of those “real” days. The kids’ classes were needlessly dragging on due to lack of determined effort. Subjects that should normally take thirty minutes were taking over an hour. Instead of completing all the assignments, most were given only half-hearted effort. When asked if they were finished yet, the standard reply from both kids was “almost.”

Almost, almost, almost was repeated until 5:00 P.M. when I needed to run an errand. The kids had wanted to go with me all day, and now the moment had finally arrived. There was, however, one big glaring problem. Their schoolwork still wasn’t finished.

“Can we go, too, Dad?”

I thought, “Now is my opportunity to teach that lesson I’ve only inadequately conveyed during the day. Lord, help!”

“Well, it depends. Have you finished your school work?”

“Almost,” was the duo’s expected response.

Without missing a beat, I said, “Good! Then you can almost go with me. Bye!”

I got in my car, praying that the lesson would be understood. It was.

We don’t want our kids to almost do their school work and chores. Almost doesn’t count in any worldly activity. You get no points for almost making a soccer goal; there’s no presidency for almost winning an election.

This situation caused us to ponder: are we almost on the right path with God? Almost certainly isn’t good enough with God either!

Kids, do you almost always obey
your parents? Parents, are you almost always patient with your kids? Are you almost all God’s, almost His completely? If that’s the case, then you will only almost be saved. Perhaps you might want to eliminate the almost mindset in your family, too.

Lloyd lives in Montana with his wife and two children and is director of A Thoughtful Hour, a Christian TV ministry for children.

I WAS RAISED in a Christian home, and our family attended church at least once a week. I found myself very early searching for the true meaning of faith, longing for a deep relationship with God and observing everything around me that seemed to be a manifestation of religiosity.

One thing I have discovered is that people tend to divide their lives into a religious part and an ordinary part, usually separating them by song and prayer. That’s how they begin and end their family worship, their church services, and other religious occasions, creating a somehow artificial world of its own.

My soul was not satisfied with this faith. I longed to walk with God outside of these “religious” rituals, minute by minute. I wanted to be transformed, not for special periods during the week, but for good; to be filled with God’s light, to become transparent so that He could shine through me to my loved ones and even to my enemies.

Today, I regard Deuteronomy 6:5 to be one key to this desired experience, “And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

I have started making communication with God a priority in my life. I do not only open my heart to Him, I also look for Him to open His heart to me. This is why I read and meditate on His word. This is also why I anticipate His speaking to me through nature, other people, and Providence. This is why I never give up waiting for His answer to my frequent question: “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” I want to have Him live in my heart, and spread out from there like a leaven, affecting every aspect of my life.

Clinging to the angel of the LORD until He blesses me (Genesis 32:25-32) has proven to be the way to love God with all my heart.

Kai works as an editor and translator in Germany, where he lives with his wife and their three children.
If there was only one lesson we could learn from Jesus, it would be that of His unselfish spirit in serving and caring for others. In contrast with humanity, our greatest battle is the struggle with self. The natural tendency of self is to only see our own wants and desires and to place our needs before the needs of others.

My family had the opportunity to care for my aging father for many years. This brought many challenges, including giving up space and privacy at times, and adapting to his ways. It required us to make changes in our schedule, give of our time and adjust our routine to address his needs.

Soon, we realized that the blessings reaped from giving of ourselves far exceeded anything we had given up. Having our children involved in helping taking care of my father created a strong bond between them. They got to know him better, and the details of his life were very interesting to them. It was as if my children were exposed to a living book of wonderful stories. They will always treasure special moments spent in conversation with my father and having fun as they played together. To serve him was not another chore but looked upon as a privilege.

During his stay with us, my dad also impacted my wife’s and my life, as well. His devotion as a Christian touched our hearts and set an example for us. His faithful prayer life and study of the Word made his a life that truly reflected Jesus. His experience challenged us to seek and enjoy the same relationship with Jesus that he did.

His wise counsel over the years has been so helpful and we can’t thank him enough. We so much admired his hard working spirit, always trying to find something to do around the home to cooperate with the family and keep busy. This was such an inspiration to us all, especially the children.

We found that having my dad live with us brought our family together. We had given of ourselves; but in return, we received untold blessings. Earlier this year, my father decided to spend his last years in his native homeland; but his positive influence remains with us to this day.

Osman writes from New York where he lives with his wife and four children.
"I almost forgot!" Mother sighed. "We need to can the pears, but I have so much to do!"

Suddenly, I could hear the Holy Spirit calling, "Why don't you can the pears?" I had watched Mom many times and knew what to do; but the hot, sticky job did not appeal to me! I hesitated. "If Jesus were here, I would do it for Him; then why not for my hard-working mother!"

While Mom was busy, I washed the canning jars and began heating some juice. Then I peeled, sliced, and slipped the juicy pears into jars. Before I knew it, I was sealing the last jar. I quickly cleaned up the mess and hurried off to find Mom. "Come see my surprise!" I led her to the kitchen, bursting with my secret.

Mother gave me a big hug. "You canned the pears all by yourself!"

"At first I didn't want to; but when I surrendered my will, Jesus helped me enjoy it!"

Boys and girls, there are many things you can do to lighten your mother's load. Do the activity to get a few ideas.

Sarah is fifteen years old and lives in Minnesota with her parents and two older brothers.

---

Fill in the blank spaces and write the circled letters on the lines below. You'll be surprised at how happy you will be when you are a ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___.

1. W __ __ the dishes
2. Dust the F __ r __ t __ __
3. Fold the aid __
4. Obey P __ __ m __ __
5. Empty W __ __ t __ baskets
6. Work C __ __ __ __ f __ l __

---

Sarah is fifteen years old and lives in Minnesota with her parents and two older brothers.
Longer winter evenings offer the perfect opportunity to spend some cozy time enjoying inspirational messages meant to encourage and strengthen your family. Take advantage of our Winter special by purchasing any of the following DVD’s at 20% off. Sale runs from Dec. 1, 2010 through February 28, 2011.

**Regularly $9.00 -- Now $7.20 each**

**FAMILY**
- Family Council
- Family Leadership
- It Is Written
- Refreshing Recreation
- Spiritually Special Sabbaths
- True Leadership
- The Ten Commandments

**PARENTING**
- Child Rights
- Daddy & Daughter
- Practical Helps for Parents

**PERSONAL WALK**
- A Faithful Friend
- Knowing God’s Will
- Recalculating
- The Final Test
- Women - A High Calling
- What Will We Do?

**MARRIAGE**
- Reestablishing Reality
- Reestablishing Romance

**YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS**
- Count It All Joy
- Faith Works
- Positive Associations
- Positive Principled Relationships
- Purpose of Life

To place an order visit our website at [www.restoration-international.org](http://www.restoration-international.org) or call toll free 1-888-446-8844. Office hours are Mon-Thur from 9:00-5:00 - Closed Fri-Sun.
Jan. 7-9, Stuarts Point, NSW Australia
Stuarts Point Convention Center
Contact: Doug & Emma Loberg
Phone: (02) 6567 8146 or (02) 6567 8149 (207)
Email: dougloberg@me.com

Jan 21-23, Sydney, Australia
Auburn SDA Church
Contact: Wanda Copaceanu
Phone: +61 415 174 121
Email: dawancop@hotmail.com

Feb. 25-27, Mentone, California
Mentone SDA Church Retreat
Contact: Cecil Templeton
Phone: (909) 894-4616
Email: genki5@ymail.com

Feb 25-27, Centerville, Virginia
Cartersville SDA Church
Contact: Lee & Lynelle Perschino
Phone: (804) 441-3600
Email: lee.perschino@mcdean.com

Mar. 18-20, Cluj, Romania
Contact: Horst Müller
Phone: 011-(49)-178-4935-636
Email: drmuellerh@aol.com

Mar. 25-27, Alexandria, Romania
Contact: Horst Müller
Phone: 011-(49)-178-4935-636
Email: drmuellerh@aol.com

February 17-20, FLORIDA
Hosts: Milton & Brenda Adams
(407) 429-7281 fl@fcmhost.info

April 6-10, OKLAHOMA
Hosts: Mike & Connie Opeka
(417) 683-6740 ok@fcmhost.info

May 4-8, UNITED KINGDOM
Hosts: Jack & Joy Rayne
(01550) 740-353 uk@fcmhost.info

May 18-22, NEW JERSEY
Host: David Pritchard
(570) 595-9321 nj@fcmhost.info

June 1-5, WASHINGTON
Hosts: Ed & Jean Schlittenhart
(509) 292-0836 wa@fcmhost.info

June 29-July 3, CALIFORNIA
Hosts: Santoyo Family
(714) 360-3406 ca@fcmhost.info
“Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter.” Psalm 74:14