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

That’s Just the Way I Am!
Learning to Trust
NO TURNING BACK
Recently, my husband had a serious injury to his left shoulder that required a shoulder replacement (see www.restoration-international.org and select current news for details). Because of the injury and surgery, he has needed around the clock care which has included ambulation, therapy, meds, bathing, and much more. He thanks me for everything I do to help him in his recovery and often says, “Thank you for serving me.” I don’t feel like I am a servant. I am joyfully caring for Tom, and my motivation stems out of my love for him.

In going through this process over the last few weeks, I have developed a new picture of Christ’s love for His children. He came as a servant of servants (John 13:1-17), yet He did not come to save us as a duty but because of His great love for us – a love beyond our comprehension, a love that never wearies or fails. While He stooped to
the lowest position of a servant, His heart was filled with joy as He sought to meet every need. And although His earthly work is completed, He continues to complete the restoration of mankind as He serves us 24/7 with joy unspeakable motivated by an unending love.

How thankful I am for this deeper understanding of His wonderful love!

Alane Waters
Editor

Pause & Ponder

"Big jobs usually go to the men who prove their ability to outgrow small ones."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."
Luke 16:10

Have you been blessed by Forever a Family? Drop us a note—we would love to hear from you!

California
We do appreciate the Forever a Family magazine. Thank you for being a channel of God’s love to those around you. May God bless you.

North Carolina
I just wanted to tell you “thank you” for the Forever a Family magazine. It has blessed me so much!

Tennessee
We enjoy your little magazine so much. Keep up the good work.

FROM THE MAILBOX
A Place to Say ‘Yes’

Sometimes, I run at very high “npm’s” – “no’s” per minute. It’s all pretty understandable. After all, my children really shouldn’t jump off the couch, slosh water out of the bathtub, throw blocks, climb up on the table, pull the leaves on my houseplants, or wear muddy shoes inside. I also say “no” to certain sights, sounds, and foods for reasons they do not yet understand. There are things I must teach, like safety, hygiene, respect for others, respect for property, and guarding the thoughts. It’s all part of vigilant parenting, right?

Then I look in the mirror and wonder whether I would like to have me as a parent. Too many “no’s” are wrinkling my forehead and pinching my face. What do I want my children to do? Is there a remedy for restless children and nay-saying parents?

Many times my Father in Heaven has beckoned to my heart and my husband’s to come outside, to find a lake, a tree-shaded path, a beach cove or stream. He wants us to bring the children. He wants us to be like children. Out in nature my children can hear me say “yes”:

“Yes, you may get wet! Get very, very wet! Then sit on a towel where the sun can warm and dry you.”

“Yes, you may throw rocks! Throw them far out into the lake. Learn to skip them.”

“Yes, you may shout! Let’s shout loudly. Listen for an echo.”

“Yes, you may look. Look closely. You might find something looking back at you.”

“Yes, get dirty! Enjoy some dust. Add water to make mud and sand for texture. Then rinse it all off in the stream.”

“Yes, you may jump! Jump the waves. Jump every one.”

To be truly restful, the setting must be age-appropriate, of course. When my children were toddlers, a trip to the huckleberry bush in the back yard was enough of an outing. And the newts we found along the way provided twenty minutes of wholesome amusement.

I have come to revel in the parenting resources God provides in nature. The entertainment is always appropriate and never the same twice. There may be toads to hold, bouquets of flowers to collect, or a garter snake to follow. We may hear an owl, photograph a sunset, or catch minnows. Sibling rivalry is dwarfed in the enormity of cre-
A Choice to Make

How powerful is attitude? Does it have an influence on our destiny? Herein lies our success or failure in the little things of life to the seemingly impossible. Example: You say, “I can’t spell.” And you are absolutely right; you can’t because you have already decided it. Once we tell ourselves that we can’t do something, then it becomes our reality. How thankful I am that God had the attitude of, “I can send my Son to die for mankind to redeem them.” Because of His choice and attitude, we all have the hope of eternity.

What a difference it would make in our characters if we would follow the model God has shown and choose the right attitude when we face things we don’t like or think we can’t do. Our lives will be much happier, more fulfilling, and more peaceful when we choose the attitude so simply stated in Scripture, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Philippians 4:13.

So let’s not wait for the feeling. Let’s begin today to have the attitude of success in Christ, for there is nothing too hard for Him. Jeremiah 32:27. Whatever we face, whatever we fear, can have a different outcome if we choose the right attitude and move forward in God’s strength. Everything is possible!
My family recently had a celebration with some inexpensive decorations and a cake with a “0” candle on top. What were we celebrating? A zero balance on our mortgage!

Five years earlier my husband and I moved, along with our three children, onto raw land in an old, very small borrowed RV. The conditions were fairly primitive, much like an extended camping trip, but we were debt free.

As parents, we had our fears. The children, however, were thrilled. Having grown up in cities, they had never spent much time outside. Now they had several acres to explore and plenty of garden-fresh produce. They were so healthy they almost glowed.

Eighteen months after the move, we had to return the RV. We moved in with my mother and stored our belongings in tents. We had no money, but we couldn’t stay in my mother’s tiny apartment indefinitely, and winter was coming.

The Lord blessed, and a friend offered to help us build a house. He showed us plans for a simple, metal shop building with windows. He arranged for all the work and for private financing. The lender let us choose our monthly payments, and our friend even paid for the windows and doors when the project ran over budget. God truly is a miracle worker.

Now we had a house, though unfinished, but we also had a mortgage. My husband became convicted that we needed to be out of debt and started paying extra on the note.

When my mother died, we received a small inheritance. We discussed what to do – take a dream vacation or finish the house? The Lord showed me that the money had to go toward the mortgage. With half the debt suddenly gone, my husband was inspired. He started paying even more each month, sacrificing wherever possible. The day arrived when our family went to the bank together to pay off the remainder of the loan. A fifteen year mortgage paid off in just over three years. Praise the Lord, we were debt free again!

Though often a struggle, what we remember most are the many miracles God performed to bring us to where we are today. Our house still isn’t finished, and may never be, but we still call it our “House of Praise.”

JJ is a full-time mother who lives with her husband, Billy, and their three children in Oklahoma.
Learning to Trust

Much of my life I have been afraid. Afraid of failure, loss, what others will think of me, conflict. But most of all, I lived in terror of stinging insects. My fear was not of being stung or having an allergic reaction but of the insect itself. I had horrible nightmares about the insects chasing me and crawling on me. I knew my fear was irrational, but I could not control myself. If a wasp or bee came anywhere near me, I would scream and run.

I became convicted that my fear was actually due to a lack of trust in God. I asked God to teach me to trust Him completely, to take away my fear.

My husband became interested in beekeeping and convinced me to attend a class with him. We studied honeybees for eight weeks and at the end of the class, I consented to getting bees. Gradually, I started to work with the bees, always in a full body suit, of course, but at least I could be near them.

About four years later, I was told I had a large tumor on my kidney and that it was cancer. I was filled with horror and fear. Immediately, I called out to God and asked for help to trust Him. Very quickly, I was overwhelmed with a supernatural peace. All fear was gone. Soon after, I read Isaiah 51:20, “Behold, I have taken out of your hand the cup of trembling, you will drink it again no more.” I was overwhelmed and in awe. The tumor turned out to be benign. Now when I feel fearful, I remember that experience and ask God to help me trust Him.

It has been about thirteen years since that day when I asked God to take away my fear and trust Him more. Now I can go near the bees without a suit on. I am no longer living in terror. I know God is not finished with me yet, but I believe He will bring me the rest of the way, because He has said, “Fear not for I am with you, be not afraid for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, I will help thee, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41:10.

Thea is a Community Health Nurse Specialist who lives with her husband, Randy, in Maine.
I was raised in a loving Christian home. Our family went to church every week and had family worship together. We read the various Bible stories, and I developed a good sense of right and wrong. I grew up in the country and enjoyed some of the more simple things in life; such as playing outside and taking care of our many animals. I went to Christian schools and at the age of twelve, followed in Christ’s example of baptism. God had great plans for my life.

From my baptism, fast forward ten years. I was away at a public college and had completely turned my back on God. I was no longer going to church and had no interest in religious things. By this point, I had been drinking for several years and was completely immersed in the world’s culture, music, entertainment, etc. I was living life “my way.” How could this happen? What caused me to walk away from everything that I had learned growing up?

The answer is complicated and there are many reasons as to why I turned my back on God. There is, however, one very evident mistake I made. I don’t remember exactly when or for what reason, but shortly after being baptized, the little bit of devotional life that I did have ceased to exist. Without a devotional life and a living, vibrant connection with God, I was an easy target to be led astray by the Devil. It’s easy to try and cast the blame on someone or something else, such as our parents, hypocrisy within the church, etc. But when it comes down to it, God gives us freedom of choice, and we must each choose whom we will serve.

Because of my upbringing and my knowledge of the Bible, I was not fooled into having a false sense of security in my spiritual condition. The Devil had me fooled about many things, but knowing my standing with God was not one of them. I remember talking to a college friend and sharing with him that I knew I was lost and if I died that night, I would not be saved. I couldn’t even explain to him exactly why. I just knew that I was not surrendered to the will of God and had no relationship with Him.

At times, the Holy Spirit would speak to me but my response was always “not now.”
or “maybe later”. I wanted to have my “fun” and figured I would come to God when I was ready. On this point the Devil had me fooled. I realize now how dangerous it is to think this way. I had a minimal understanding of Bible prophecy, but I knew there were certain signs and events that would happen shortly before the close of probation, when our characters will be forever fixed; “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” Revelation 22:11.

I thought that once I began to see these events taking place, I would repent of and confess my sins and surrender to God. At the very heart of my conversion was a realization that if I waited until these “signs and events” took place it would be forever too late. The Bible warns repeatedly of living this way, and it is a very dangerous way of thinking.

This is not where I am at today. Praise God! I surrendered my life to God (as much as I knew how at the time) and was re-baptized. Looking back on my life, it is amazing to contemplate the mercy, patience, and love of God! “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8. What was it that brought me back to God and caused me to surrender to Him?

“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” Romans 2:4. Ultimately, it is the grace and love of God that draws us to Him. However, we are free moral agents and have the power to choose. The first step in my conversion was something that may be seemingly insignificant, but I believe was very pivotal. I almost never prayed, but I remember at some point praying “Father in heaven, I don’t want to give up the things of this world. I don’t want to give up my drinking and my music. Please make me want to give those things up.” I think this prayer gave God “permission” to start working in my life.

Since my conversion my life, happiness, and relationships with my family and God have gotten better! God is fulfilling His promise in my life when He says, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you” Ezekiel 36:26. The things I once thought I couldn’t live without, I no longer want. I love Paul’s words, “But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord”. If only I had seen through the Devil’s lies sooner! Having personally experienced what it is like to live at both ends of the spectrum, rebellion against God and surrender to God, the choice is an easy one.

David lives in Maryland where he works with his father in excavation.
Roger (an ER physician) & Margaret live in North Carolina with their three children and all participate in their family based health ministry.

Doing things together and spending time with each other did not solve all of our attitude problems though. When we wanted to change the other person, we instead looked into the mirror to see what we needed to change. Our prayers became, “Change me, O Lord, so I can be pleasing in Your sight,” and “How can I serve You today?” Our focus changed to how we could serve God, rather than how we could be served.

Now our six words to each other are, “God is not done with me!” We have allowed God to be the Potter, to mold and make us after His will. Looking back at how we related to one another just a short time ago, we praise God for all that He has done in our lives. Remember, with God all things are possible.

Roger (an ER physician) & Margaret

live in North Carolina with their three children and all participate in their family based health ministry.
MEASURING MANHOOD

Three Steps Forward

How can men show the love of Jesus to our families? How can we, as the head of the family and priests of the home, invite God into the special union called family?

First, we must realize that we are human and are in great need of a Savior. As head of our home, we should recognize that God is truly the King of Kings and He wants to be King of our homes. He is willing to guide and direct our paths if we will only let Him.

Second, we need to be setting an example for our spouse and children. Saying one thing and doing another only confuses and irritates our loved ones. If we become impulsive and impatient during times of stress and frustration, we are not God’s character.

The third way to keep God at the center of our homes is by constantly developing a relationship with our Creator. This requires spending time with Him daily. Taking time out of our day and spending it with God in devotion will strengthen our vulnerable and weak areas. After working all day, we can refuel our souls with God’s word.

Dwelling on the things of this world will only bring ongoing heartache and pain. There will always be a void. Remember the rich young ruler? He had everything this world could offer! But he didn’t have a complete relationship with our Lord. He was not willing to fully surrender his will. God desires to replace pain and suffering with restoration as we fully surrender ourselves to Him.

Many of us are not raised to temper our emotions. And most men are not socialized to provide emotional support to their spouses and children. We assume that someone else will provide this need for our families. Do we recognize what a wonderful opportunity we have? Are we willing to walk with our heavenly Father? What an example of faith and love we would be to our families if we followed the example of Jesus!

If it’s our goal to display the love of Jesus in our homes, why not take these three steps: recognize our need of a Savior, strive to set an example, and continue to develop a relationship with God. We have nothing to lose and a family of God to gain!

Cecil writes from California where he lives with his wife, Denise, and ten-year-old son, and works as a therapist and counselor.
Growing up as an only child in a loving Christian family has been one of the best experiences God has given to me. Although I would have loved to have siblings, the Lord saw fit to give me the experience of having my parents as my playmates. It taught me that you don’t always have to have lots of friends around and you don’t always have to have lots of material things. But above all, it taught me to be extremely careful to not become self-centered as some may become when growing up as an only child.

Mum and dad were always there to be my companions in both sad times and in happy times. They gave me their time, which is one of the greatest gifts that parents can give their children. I didn’t necessarily want material things; I just wanted them! Although they were my playmates and companions, they were also my parents and guided me through the difficult times with wisdom, which can only come from a close connection with the Lord and years of experience.

Looking back, probably some of the fondest memories that I will hold forever in my heart were the quiet afternoons we would spend reading a good book. Sometimes we would have to stop reading as we all dissolved into fits of laughter over some amusing instance that had been related in the book. This quality time together caused the ties on our hearts to grow stronger and stronger. Mum and dad would take turns reading, and sometimes we would finish a couple of books in one session. As I look back, I realize how much of their time my parents gave up, which they could have spent doing what they wanted, to give us quality family time together.

I recently turned twenty-one, and this milestone in my life made me stop and consider how blessed I am to have the parents I do. They have done so much in bringing me this far in life and in shaping not only the person I am, but who I want to be.

As I move on to new and exciting things in my life, I will always be grateful for how my parents have given their time, energy, prayer, and lives to me.

Amy writes to us from Victoria, Australia where she works as a graduate nurse.
I have visited twenty-five states and lived in five. I’ve lived in one place for six years and another for six weeks. I’ve felt lonely while living in most of these places, having left old friends and seeking to make new ones. Whenever I have felt like this, God reminds me of one of His special promises. Psalm 68:6 says that “God makes a home for the lonely.” This home, though, is not here on earth. John 14, verses 2 and 3 say, “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.” No matter where I live, my home is in heaven, and one day, I will live with Jesus in heaven, my real home. I won’t be lonely anymore, I won’t have to move again, and I will always have my friends with me, even my very best friend, Jesus.

**ACTIVITY**

Draw a picture of your house. Do you have a special friend? Draw him with you next to the house. On another piece of paper, draw a heavenly mansion and draw your friend and Jesus beside you. Which place is better? Thank God for the special place He’s preparing for you!
In their new book *For Better or for . . . Best!* Tom and Alane explore the painful pitfalls that married couples encounter and offer practical Biblical solutions that work. Whether you have a vibrant marriage or are headed for disaster, these principles in cooperation with Christ will make your marriage the best it can be. *For Better or for . . . Best!* was written as a sharing book and is being offered at affordable quantity pricing.

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In *The Connected Family*, Paul and Carolyn Rayne present a practical twenty-six step program designed to help parents make their children a priority, lead them to make a commitment to God, and teach them the tools for Christian living. Each chapter in this book contains a Step Forward section and a Journal Question and Answer section, and is intended to bring tangible, rewarding results for both parent and child. *The Connected Family* is not just a book you read; it’s a book you do!

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UPCOMING EVENTS

June 1-5 - Washington Family Campmeeting
Camp MiVoden, Hayden Lake, ID
Hosts: Ed & Jean Schlittenhart
(509) 292-0836 wa@fcmhost.info

June 18 – Seattle, Washington
Southcenter SDA Church
Contact: Calvin Kim
(206) 579-9279 chksda@gmail.com

June 29 - July3 – California Family Campmeeting
Weimar Center for Health & Education
Hosts: Santoyo Family
(714) 360-3406 ca@fcmhost.info

July 21-24 - Kaiserslautern, Germany
US Army Base
Contact: Mike Lambert
mike.lambert1964@gmail.com

August 18-21 – British Columbia, Canada
Northeast Regional Campmeeting
Pounce Coupe Provincial Park
Contact: Cavin Chwyl
(250) 782-6678 pastorcavin@gmail.com

August 31-Sept. 4, COLORADO
Eden Valley Institute
Hosts: Bill & Kelly Plank
(303) 593-2899 wdplank@earthlink.net

Family Campmeetings

2011

September 14-18, VIRGINIA
Hosts: Lee & Lynelle Perschino
(804) 375-3485 va@fcmhost.info

October 5-9, INDIANA
Hosts: Doug & Cyndi Leffler
(217) 322-6184 in@fcmhost.info

www.foreverafamily.com • Summer 2011
Wherefore by their fruits
ye shall know them.
Matthew 7:20