Last quarter I shared with you about my husband’s shoulder accident. Much has happened over the last three months during the recovery process. After surgery he could only have passive, assisted rehab for eight weeks until we knew that the bone grafts had healed. We thank the Lord that He has answered many prayers and the bone grafts have taken.

Now my husband has begun active rehab and will continue with this program for the next six to nine months. We have learned many lessons through this process, but the most prominent one in my mind is the need for perseverance. When his shoulder is aching or it seems that it won’t move any more, he needs to push past it in an effort to gain a little more mobility each day. In a week’s time the progress is very noticeable. So also in our Christian life—there are times when we are assailed by
difficult circumstances and there seems no way to get past them, yet if we trust God and continue to persevere we will experience joyous victories. We want to encourage you to not weary in the struggles of life whether they are in your family or from outside sources. We can find the solution and victory in Christ!

Alane Waters
Editor

“Remember not only to say the right thing in the right place, but far more difficult still, to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.”
Benjamin Franklin

“In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.”
Proverbs 10:19

Pause & Ponder

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

New York
Our family really enjoys “Forever A Family” magazine. Everyone scuffles (in a friendly, good-humored way, of course!) to get the magazine out of the stack of mail. Then it’s snatched up again as soon as it’s laid down.

Michigan
Thank you for sharing the experiences of families and individuals seeking to follow the Word of God. We are encouraged by their stories and strengthened by their counsel. May God richly bless your ministry.
On This Note

Are you taking full advantage of one of God’s most beneficial gifts? The Lord has promised to be our strength and song. Exodus 15:2.

This could be the antidote you’ve been looking for. This precious blessing, when correctly applied, is so potent that it has been used in sickness and in health, to comfort the deepest sorrows or to express joy or victory, to teach, rebuke, discipline, and disciple, to elevate the spirit, restore balance, and mend broken hearts.

Most people would agree that music has many benefits. Studies indicate that early musical training helps develop the areas of the brain involved in language and reasoning.

Music is mentioned in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation covering every circumstance. Music generates optimism, stimulates courage, encourages diligence, enhances teamwork, and fortifies faith. You can give the gift of music to your children even if you feel you do not possess it yourself. Sing along with prerecorded music if you need to. God has promised to put a song in your mouth! Psalm 40:3.

In our home at those moments when emotions seem to be running high, the introduction of a hymn or spiritual song seems to melt the tensions away. When harmonious songs break forth in the middle of chores, it binds our hearts closer together.

Family devotions are a great training ground for developing musical abilities in our children. Whether singing or playing instruments, even the youngest child learns to cheer others through music, reinforcing that music is for God’s glory. Our children look forward to Friday evening singspirations where we sing favorites and enjoy composing and arranging hymns.

These experiences will be forever stored in their hearts and minds as a constant encouragement on their spiritual journey. God wants us to come before His presence with singing and into His courts with praise. Psalm 100:2, 4.

This prescription plan is cost effective, has lingering benefits, and only positive side effects. Music is good medicine for a happy home!

On this note, sing unto the Lord a new song. I encourage you to start today!

Camellia lives in Vermont with her husband, Ty, where she enjoys homeschooling and inspiring their eleven children to sing and play music.
Teaching Obedience

We are living in a society where obedience is nearly an obsolete word. At best, most parents are only getting compliance from their children. Even the laws of the land are using the term compliance rather than obedience. But there is a big difference between the two. Compliance means that one does the right thing because they have to in order to avoid getting in trouble. Obedience, on the other hand, is choosing to do what is right from the heart because one wants to, not to avoid a consequence. As children of God, we need to learn obedience and teach our children to obey also. There could be much written on this subject, but following are just a few simple ways we can experience the joy that true obedience brings.

• Show love and respect—If we treat our children with love and respect it will naturally draw from them the desire to obey.

• Be consistent—In other words, say what you mean and mean what you say. This means that you don’t ask your children if they would like to help you clear the table if you are expecting them to help you, rather state your expectation clearly. Also, our children need to understand that no means no and yes means yes; not thinking a no will turn into a yes if they fuss and cry enough. They will feel motivated by this security and will respond out of love with yielding obedience.

• Be positive—Encourage the right choices our children make. Thank them for coming quickly when called. Thank them for doing what you have asked them to do. Smile at them often.

• Read to them—Share the numerous examples from the Bible that illustrate the happy results of true obedience.

• Pray—Ask for God to help us be the right example for our children. Also pray with them, asking for God’s love and power to help them obey.

Implement these steps consistently for the next week and experience the difference—you won’t want to stop!

Alane is a co-founder of Restoration International and lives in Montana with her husband, Tom.
Sixteen years ago we were in debt, busy working to maintain the status quo. As we began to transition to a rural, self-employed, debt-free lifestyle, I often compared our journey to that of the Israelites. We moved into a small cabin with no plumbing, in another state where we had no jobs and knew no one. But it was all ours.

Before long we learned the Lord was going to bless us with another child—a big trust opportunity in our grand experiment, especially since I determined to be a stay-at-home mother. Could God really supply all our needs?

Something I read about the Israelites’ journey challenged me—“Let none waste time in deploring the scantiness of their visible resources...energy and trust in God will develop resources.” This inspired me to action and a deeper trust as I began to experience God’s faithfulness. Following are a few practical things we have learned along the way in our grand experiment:

• **Get out of debt and stay out!** We lived without a well for five years while saving for this expense. Know the difference between needs and wants.

• **Waste nothing.** Not only did we learn to conserve water but we composted or recycled most of the trash we could not burn. We learned to reinvent leftovers and preserve nature’s wild and cultivated harvest.

• **Take care of what you already have.** This applies not only to our vehicles and other household equipment, but to our health. Prevention is better (and less expensive) than the cure!

• **Diversify and think outside the box in regard to employment.** My husband’s dental lab business was slow after the move to an area where customers were scarce. He worked various part-time jobs and did mowing and brush hogging in the meantime. I also contributed to our income by teaching piano and breeding Pugs.

• **Barter.** Some of our trades resulted in rock work, a roof, a truck, a horse, a pond, and a hot tub.

• **Be thankful and give God the praise and glory!** Don’t waste time murmuring and complaining. Remember that energy and trust in God will develop resources. Our Heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing!

*Connie writes from Missouri where she enjoys being a wife, mother, and grandmother.*
we would be celebrating our 40th wedding anniversary in a few months. My husband was close to retirement and we were looking forward to the freedom to travel and take some time for ourselves. Then suddenly he was gone; killed in an accident. There was shock, disbelief, and heart-wrenching grief.

I prayed constantly for strength, and the Lord graciously answered my prayers. My children were very supportive; giving much of themselves even though they were hurting, too.

After a few months, I felt the need to get away. I have always enjoyed road trips, but I wasn’t sure I could do one on my own. I put a lot of miles on my little car that first trip and discovered that the hours behind the wheel gave me time for needed reflection. Since then I have taken many road trips; some alone, some with friends. I found I can do so many things I wasn’t sure of before.

One day I received a call from a dear friend. She wanted to know if I would consider doing some cooking for a weekend retreat. I had done some group cooking before, but this was a new challenge. We planned the menu together, made up the grocery list, and went shopping. It was a lot of work, but I enjoyed it so much that I continued helping out for a number of years. I’ve met so many new friends in this way.

Almost three years ago I had the opportunity to host a young foreign student. I was very excited about this new venture and it has been wonderful, having someone so bubbly and fun-loving in this too quiet house. She is such a ray of sunshine, and I keep busy cooking for her and running her to and from classes. We’ve taken several long trips together; it’s so much better than traveling alone.

Sometimes when I lie awake at night and the tears come, though not often these days, I think of Isaiah 54:5, “For thy Maker is thy Husband; the Lord of hosts is His name.” The lyrics “Count your many blessings; name them one by one” come to me, and I know I am not really alone.

Eunice lives in Minnesota where she hosts a foreign exchange student and enjoys spending time with her dog, Johnnie.
Growing up I had all the things a child could ask for—except love. My parents split up when I was eighteen months old and I don’t remember seeing my mother again until I was twelve. She took a bad turn and has spent the rest of her life battling drug addiction. I believe my father tried his best in raising me, but after suffering his own abuses as a child he was unable to grow past his father’s mistakes.

I had such feelings of emptiness dealing with being abandoned by my mother and ignored by my father. I filled my life with music, wild parties, and anything else I could to block out my pain.

After I turned eighteen, my father no longer wanted me in his home. After many years of running away, disappearing for months at a time, I wasn’t ready to leave now! For the next year I learned many lessons and I now realize being kicked out was just what I needed.

My husband’s upbringing was quite different than mine, but still so familiar. He grew up in a home with two parents, brothers and sisters. It was a home where alcohol and violence were not uncommon. Problems at home left him with nowhere to turn but the streets. He soon found the family and acceptance he had been longing for by becoming a gang member.

As a teenager he spent many years in and out of juvenile detention centers. Things had gotten so bad he was no longer welcome in his parents’ home. It seemed he was stuck in a hopeless cycle.

After a year of living at my aunt’s house, my future husband and I were introduced by a mutual friend. After ten months of dating we were married.

I began managing a sandwich chain and met lots of new people. One couple stood out. They were friendly and came in often. The wife gave me an open invitation to join their Bible study group. My husband wasn’t interested, figuring for once in his life things were going well. Why did we need God now?

When home alone one evening I watched a movie about end time events which terrified me. I called our Christian friend and grilled her with Bible questions for hours! I was so satisfied with our conversation I decided to join her Bible studies.

I nervously shared this experience with my husband and cried as I told him, “I know I need God in my life.” He listened and then agreed to join me in Bible studies. God had touched his heart! Six months later we were baptized.

It was wonderful news when we found out I was pregnant with our first child. As we prepared for her birth we decided I would not be returning to work after she was born.

After a hard delivery our daughter was finally here! I was
exhausted and so was my husband. He had taken a second job to keep us afloat. We hardly saw each other and things had begun to get tense. I was in a deep depression and he was quickly drifting away.

When our daughter was four months old, things were so bad that I left. It was devastating. We reconciled after a few months and I became pregnant with our son. I wanted to believe that we would grow closer but by the time our son was born we were separated again. This time I filed for divorce. I found myself desperately trying to keep it all together, but without Christ I could do nothing. One afternoon as we were talking, my soon-to-be ex-husband said, “I want my kids back and I want to return to God.” I was shocked. Like the prodigal son returning to his father, my husband had returned to his Heavenly Father.

Faithfully my husband began taking our children to church by himself. Satan was trying hard to convince me that if I went back to church, he would think all was forgiven. The Lord spoke to my heart as I realized I wouldn’t spend eternity with my children if I refused to forgive. God had made my husband a new man. I saw him bonding with his children and my heart began to break. He encouraged me to give my life back to the Lord. After several months I made the decision to recommit myself to God and to my marriage.

For a year I tried my best to do all the things a good wife should do. I couldn’t deny God had done a miracle in my husband’s life but somehow I was still bitter and resentful toward him. I was haunted daily by old thoughts and hurt feelings. I had hit a wall and felt I had nowhere to turn.

A good friend suggested we attend a Restoration International family camp that included seminars on marriage, parenting, and walking with God. He was well aware of our history and knew we were trying to save our family.

Before we left for camp I uttered a prayer of desperation, “Lord if something doesn’t change at this camp, I’m leaving this marriage.” I remember the first night at camp, watching as grown men wept. We’d never seen anything like it. As it turned out, we were blessed and changed forever as we listened to messages about trials and victories in marriage, parenting, and personal walks with God.

My husband learned that he didn’t have to be a failure, but that he could be empowered to be a man of God. He realized that true acceptance lies in acceptance by his Heavenly Father. I’ve learned that God can give me the same forgiveness for others that He so freely gives me. He has given me a deep love for my husband that I could not have generated on my own.

Our new baby is a constant reminder of God’s love, grace, and power to make all things new. God has given us hope and has changed our lives!

DeeDee writes from California where she lives with her husband, PeeWee, and three children.
Karen and her husband, Ron, have been married thirty years and live in Tennessee. One morning after a long exhausting week, I woke up embracing my husband and expressed how I would like to spend the day. His response was not unkind, but I perceived his ideas to be inconsiderate of my needs and feelings. We went back and forth until, instead of the cozy feelings I woke up with, I was relishing thoughts of feeling unloved and uncared for. Instead of coming to a mutual solution, we were heading down our old path of lapsing into an argument.

It was then that we decided to hold hands and pray about our difference of opinion, ceasing to focus on our own desires and turning our attention to how we could best meet each other’s needs. My prayer began selfishly, but then turned to one that harmonized more with the Lord. Before I finished I was repenting over my selfish heart. This miracle took place in both our hearts and soon we were embracing each other and praising God for the thoughts and plans He had led us to. Let’s not forget that our Lord can and will work miracles for us all as we cooperate with Him.

Fall 2011 • www.foreverafamily.com

Miracles of the Heart

When my husband and I came together we were blind to how to truly love each other. I had an unfortunate background that left very hurtful scars but Ron thought his love for me would take away my emotional pain. It wasn’t long after the honeymoon that we discovered his love wasn’t enough to erase these scars. We became more like enemies than allies.

In desperation I broke down, and in tears gave myself to God the best I knew how. Ron followed with new hope and we began a journey of God’s guidance, providence, and blessings.

Somehow through the busyness of life we found ourselves at odds with each other again. What Satan meant to use to destroy us, God used to restore an even closer intimacy. Trials brought old wounds to the surface allowing us to recognize the need for healing.

My husband and I determined to stop defending our negative responses to one another and instead identify them as “trigger points” to deeper hurts and unresolved issues from the past. We learned to use these opportunities to “care for the heart” and deal with the deeper issues to resolve each other’s pain.
I had just finished a presentation in Bogota, in a Christian school with 560 students. As I was packing my computer, an eight-year-old girl approached me. In a very quiet voice she thanked me for sharing with her and her school. A little later I was playing soccer with the kids on the playground. The same little girl tapped me on the arm and said something ending with the word “contigo.” I asked my daughter, who knows Spanish, what she said and with a look of wonder she responded that the little girl wanted to know if she could be with me while I was playing. I smiled at her and told her that it would be okay. Somehow in the excitement of the game Estefania lost her grip on my hand. A few minutes later I noticed her sitting quietly on the sidelines. I motioned for her to hold my hand and she happily joined me. But she didn’t smile as the other children. She was content to stand by me and gently lean her head against me for a moment or two.

After recess one of the school employees told me about Estefania’s less than ideal home situation. I decided to give her a few gifts from the US, including a large stuffed rabbit, a super ball, a story book, and some clothing. Estefania did not bounce the ball or read the book. She was content to hug her rabbit and lean on my shoulder. Then Estefania gave me the most profound compliment, “I would like to live with you.” She didn’t speak those words because of the gifts, but because I paid attention to a little girl looking for love and acceptance. I took the time to look her in the eye, to talk with her, to treat her as a valuable human being. Perhaps this was missing in her home. How many children are there who would rather live somewhere other than home? Home is where the greatest amount of love and acceptance should be. God ordained it that way. Then I wondered if my children felt that home was the best place on earth. What about yours?

Society is breaking down everywhere and it can be traced back to the family. We can’t fix all the broken homes but we can do something about our home. With assistance from God we can be the kind of father or mother He desires and have a home where children love to be.

Van lives with his family in West Virginia where he works in excavation and enjoys mission trips during the winter months.
A Flavorful Life

I grew up in a small town in Tajikistan. My dad was Muslim and my mom had a mixture of atheistic and Russian Orthodox views. After finishing school I moved to Siberia and taught English. In 1992, I gave my heart to the Lord and was baptized before moving to Moscow.

In 1995, God brought someone special into my life and later we were married. We moved to the United States and Washington State became my new home.

When you move to a different country you acquire new cultural traditions but tend to retain traditions from your childhood, too. When I was growing up, hospitality was considered very important. If a stranger came to our house, we wouldn’t stand at the door conversing with him. We would immediately invite him inside, offer food, and enjoy his company for a couple hours or even let him stay overnight if needed. When I moved to America and visited people’s homes, it was strange to me that they didn’t offer food. They would only ask if I wanted something to drink. Although I have adjusted to this cultural difference when visiting others, I have retained the Russian tradition of offering food to guests in my home. I like to model this gift of hospitality to my children.

Another cultural trait I brought from my home country is how we treat food. Bread is very sacred. Thousands of Russians survived World War II because of those who shared their last piece of bread with them. My dad taught me not to waste food and I am teaching my children that same principle.

In Russia, elderly people are valued and respected. People commonly stand up and give their seat to an elderly person when they get on a bus. My parents helped me to understand that elderly people are a gift and should be appreciated. I want my children to experience the joy of respecting elderly people, too.

I am so thrilled that God loves all cultures. He will help us to blend our cultures and traditions but leave each of us unique. Life with Him has many wonderful flavors.

Ella lives in Washington state with her husband, Kelly, and homeschoools their two children, Anthony (9) and Katya (6).
Visits with Grandma were always special but one of the highlights was the treasure hunts she prepared for my siblings and me. Sometimes they were about Bible people or places, and other times she used plants and flowers she had taught us to identify. Whatever the topic, we could hardly wait to begin! When everything was hidden, Grandma handed us the first clue. After quickly reading it, the three of us hurried away to begin our search. Once we discovered the final clue, a little surprise awaited us! Eagerly we crowded around to seize the final prize and then raced inside to show Grandma.

God has a treasure hunt for us, too. In the Bible He has hundreds of “clues” for us to follow. As we learn more on God’s treasure hunt each day, we will begin to be more like Him. When we finish the treasure hunt, Jesus will come and take us to the best prize we could ever imagine—heaven! There we will actually see Jesus, play with all the friendly animals, and fly through the stars. Doesn’t that sound wonderful? Are you ready to begin God’s great treasure hunt now? Look in the puzzle for some hidden “clues” to get you started!

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Glesni writes from Michigan where she lives with her parents and two siblings and enjoys the treasures she finds both in God’s word and in nature.
We could use your help.

It’s hard to believe this issue represents the 11th edition of Forever a Family magazine since it was first published in the spring of 2009. Since that time our readership has grown steadily and we are thrilled as we receive reports that this little publication has been a blessing to so many.

When this venture began we were determined to provide the magazine free of charge for as long as we possibly could. Over the years, the cost of printing has risen right along with our readership, creating increasing expenses each quarter. While it is our desire to continue to provide the magazine free of charge, it is becoming more and more difficult for the ministry to absorb these costs and still meet our other financial commitments. This is why we must now appeal to you, our readers, for help.

If you have found the magazine to be a blessing, we would like to ask if you would be willing to make a donation toward the expense of producing it. If you would like to help us and be a part of “passing on the blessing” you may contribute online at www.restoration-international.org or use the enclosed envelope to mail in a check or money order. You may choose to make a one time donation or you may make a recurring monthly contribution toward the cost of publishing the magazine.

Thank you for considering this appeal and for helping to strengthen and encourage families around the world as we work together to continue producing Forever a Family magazine.

In His service,
The FAF Staff

P.S. If you would like to order quantities of the Winter 2011 issue to share with family, friends, neighbors, or co-workers over the holidays, please contact the office at www.restoration-international.org or call toll free 1-888-446.8844 no later than October 25th.
UPCOMING EVENTS

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

September 10, WOLVERHAMPTON, UK
Contact: Joy Rayne
joy@ministryhelpsus.com

September 11, GRANTHAM, UK
Stanborough Press Open Day
Contact: ppoddar@stanboroughpress.co.uk

September 14 – 18, VIRGINIA FAMILY CAMP
Hosts: Lee & Lynelle Perschino
(540) 420-0028 va@fcmhost.info

September 30 – October 1, RIO PIEDRAS, PUERTO RICO
Contact: Pr. Edgardo Ortiz
(787) 758-8282 ext 246 eortizzn@gmail.com

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

October 28 – 29, PUNA, HAWAII
Contact: Kevin & Desiree Castillo
(808) 345-3536 dezcastillo@yahoo.com

November 4 – 5, HONOKAA, HAWAII
Contact: LeRoy Washington
(808) 769-4548 lbwashington@comcast.com

November 18 – 20, SWANZEY, NH
Keene SDA Church
Contact: Pat & Rosa Warner
(978) 544-5886 patrickandrosa@gmail.com

December 3, ROME, NY
Rome SDA Church
Contact: Aaron Purkeypile
(315) 560-4657 aaron.purkeypile@gmail.com

December 9 – 10, SACRAMENTO, CA
Sacramento Central SDA Church
Contact: Melissa Martin
(916) 457-6511 www.sacramentocentral.org

Family Campmeetings

2012

Feb 23 – 26, FLORIDA
Apr 4 – 8, OKLAHOMA
May 3 – 7, UNITED KINGDOM
May 16 – 20, NEW JERSEY
May 30 – June 3, WASHINGTON
To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. Ecclesiastes 3:1